

INSPECTION REPORT

THE GREEN SCHOOL

Isleworth, Middlesex

LEA area: Hounslow

Unique reference number: 102542

Headteacher: Mrs P Butterfield

Reporting inspector: Eveleen P Gillmon
Rgl's OIN 2774

Dates of inspection: 1 - 4 October 2001

Inspection number: 189973

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Voluntary Aided
School category:	Comprehensive all-through
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Girls
School address:	Busch Corner Isleworth Middlesex
Postcode:	TW7 5BB
Telephone number:	020 8321-8080
Fax number:	020 8321-8081
Appropriate authority:	Hounslow
Name of chair of governors:	Mr I Harman
Date of previous inspection:	23 September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities (sixth form)	Aspect responsibilities (sixth form)
2774	Eveleen Gillmon	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are students taught?</p> <p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9769	Margaret Morrissey	Lay inspector		<p>Students' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its students?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
5204	Gillian Barnes	Team inspector	English Drama	How well is the sixth form led and managed?
27719	Paul Metcalf	Team inspector	Mathematics	
13067	Alan Quinn	Team inspector	Biology Chemistry	
31332	John Marshall	Team inspector	French	
10759	Lynn Bappa	Team inspector	History Sociology	
15706	Roger Crocker	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
17015	Lawrence Denholm	Team inspector	Psychology	
10060	David Gutmann	Team inspector	Business Education	
18261	Anthony Hill	Team inspector	Art	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd
Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Green School for Girls is a Church of England, Voluntary Aided, comprehensive school for pupils aged 11-18. It has 833 pupils on roll, including 170 sixth form students. The majority of pupils remain at the school for the sixth form. It serves the London Borough of Hounslow as well as taking pupils from neighbouring education authorities, including Ealing, Hammersmith and Richmond. The intake covers a rich multi-cultural mix, and more than half of the pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. Pupils entering the school represent the full range of abilities, although their attainment on entering Year 7 has been marginally above average in recent years. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, just over 10 per cent, is close to the national average for comprehensive schools, as is the percentage of pupils on the school's register of special needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The Green School for Girls is a good school, with many very good features. It provides a high quality educational experience for its pupils within a safe and secure environment. Pupils are well taught in all subjects and the school maintains high standards in all aspects of its work. The school is well led by the headteacher and the leadership team, who are ably assisted by the committed and enthusiastic governing body. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well:

- teaching;
- achieves high standards in external examinations at Key Stages 3 and 4;
- provides high-quality pastoral care for pupils;
- creates a positive ethos in which all are valued and enabled to achieve;
- plans and secures improvements in standards and facilities through the commitment of the headteacher and leadership team.

What could be improved:

- consistency in the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support of teaching and learning across the curriculum;
- planning and teaching that consistently takes account of the full ability range in lessons;
- the monitoring and evaluation skills of middle managers.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1996. Improvement since then has been generally good. Governors are now more fully involved in the work of the school. Greater curriculum time has been allocated to the arts, and an accredited ICT course has been introduced for all pupils in Key Stage 4. The management structure has been re-organised to good effect, though the role of middle managers requires further development. Significant improvements have been made to the accommodation. The school's response to the key issues identified has been good, although in some areas the rate of improvement has been slower than would have been expected.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Pupils do well in National Curriculum tests at the age of 14. Results have been well above the national average in English and above average in mathematics and science over the past three years. Taking pupils' performances in all three core subjects together, results are very high in comparison with similar schools.

In the 2000 and 2001 GCSE examinations, the proportions of pupils obtaining five or more passes at grades A*-C and A*-G were well above the national averages. The great majority of pupils were entered for 10 subjects, and the total GCSE points score per pupil was well above the national average. When compared with pupils from similar backgrounds in other schools, results were very high. In 2000, they were in the top five per cent in the country. The school sets challenging targets for improvement and these are being met.

In the sixth form, the proportion of pupils achieving a pass grade in GCE A/AS level examinations is above the national average. Whilst the average points score per student has equalled the average for students in the LEA, it has been below the national average for some years. The reasons for this are not always clear, but a small number of pupils with high ability choose to continue their further education in other schools and colleges, and this affects the overall results. The A-level results of those who remain are often better than might have been expected, based on their previous GCSE scores.

Standards of work observed during the inspection reflect the good examination results. There are no underperforming or weak subjects at any stage. Examples of excellent work by pupils were seen in art, design and technology, English and geography. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrated high standards of literacy, oracy and numeracy. The significant number of pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve high standards.

Pupils entering the school represent the full range of abilities and, in relation to their attainment on entry to the school, most achieve very good standards. By the end of Year 9, the majority are achieving well above the national average, a trend which continues in Years 10 to 11. In the sixth form, individual students achieve well in relation to their GCSE performance.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are loyal to the school and to each other. They take pride in their work and participate enthusiastically in many activities offered by the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good and often very good. The school has effective systems for dealing with isolated instances of errant and occasionally very noisy behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between pupils and staff are invariably respectful and warm. Pupils relate well to each other and across year groups.
Attendance	Very good and above the national average. Some sixth form students are sometimes late for lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The quality of teaching observed was predominantly good, with some very good teaching in Years 7 to 11 and in the sixth form. Good teaching was observed in all subjects, and examples of excellent teaching well seen in Years 10 and 11 in art, English, and music.

Strengths of the teaching are in overall planning, classroom management and exposition. However, in some lessons work is not well matched to the learning needs of pupils at each end of the ability spectrum. Work is sometimes too hard for pupils with special educational needs and not challenging enough for the very able pupils. This limits their learning.

Pupils usually respond well to the teaching. Most learn well, complete homework set, and show an interest in their work. Older and more able pupils, however, do not demonstrate high enough levels of independent thought and intellectual enquiry.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school meets statutory requirements and departmental schemes of work are comprehensive. A wide range of extra-curricular opportunities is available, including homework support clubs and outdoor pursuits. The lack of opportunity for the physical education of sixth form pupils is a relative weakness. Limited use is made of ICT in subject teaching.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. Individual education plans are prepared and targets agreed and disseminated, but their use by teachers is not always effective.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The high number of pupils for whom English is an additional language are offered high quality support across the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school celebrates its multicultural nature within an environment in which all feel valued. Opportunities for spiritual development are recognised, and the school reinforces a high standard of social and moral ethics.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The standard of care is very good. The pastoral care system is well organised and a strong tutorial team provides very good guidance and support. Individual pupils are well known to their tutors and teachers, and appropriate child protection procedures are in place. The monitoring of academic and personal development of individual pupils is systematic and effective.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The strong commitment of the headteacher and a leadership team, recently strengthened by new appointments, is enabling the school to move forward systematically and with purpose. The skills of some middle managers require further development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body supports the work of the school very well. It meets all its statutory requirements, is well informed and takes an active part in development planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	A developing strength of the school. Detailed analysis of data and the systematic review procedures are being introduced in order to improve both departmental and whole-school planning.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes best use of available resources and provides good educational opportunities for its pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• examination results achieved• the celebration of its multiculturalism• the pastoral care provided for pupils• the good behaviour and attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the frequency and style of assessment and reporting procedures

The inspectors endorse the very positive views expressed by the parents. Parents receive high quality information about the school. The annual written reports to parents, linked to the academic review process and the end-of-key-stage national test results, provide a coherent framework for the assessment and reporting of pupils' progress based on the setting of individual targets. There is, however, a need to communicate the purpose and process more fully to parents.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The majority of pupils move into The Green School's sixth form which currently has 170 students on roll. It has increased in size by about one-third since the previous inspection, and a small number of male students are enrolled in Year 13. The school works in a consortium partnership with three other schools and a college of further education. Within this consortium, a wide range of GCE A/AS level and AVCE courses is available. Entry to courses is usually determined by the grades achieved at GCSE. A high proportion of the students come from homes where English is not the first language, and the ethnic backgrounds of the students provide a rich cross-cultural diversity.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form is effective. Students make good progress in relation to their prior performance at GCSE. The number of students achieving A-E grades at A-level over the past three years has been above the national average. When comparisons are made based on average point scores, however, results are slightly below average. This is because fewer students achieve the higher grades, partly reflecting slight changes in the cohort staying on in the school. The quality of education is very good. The school's involvement in the local consortium has extended the range of courses available. Currently the school is a net provider, as the number of its students who attend other institutions is considerably less than the number that are attracted to study at The Green School. The funding of the sixth form is high, but when unit costs are measured against the range of courses available, the quality of educational experience, and the standards attained, it is cost-effective.

Strengths:

- the high proportion of students who achieve pass grades at A-level;
- the harmonious multicultural ethos and communal spirit engendered;
- the quality of guidance, support and preparation for adult life provided to students;
- dynamic leadership and strategies for improvement and development.

What could be improved:

- the A-level achievements of students who enter the sixth form with high GCSE scores;
- a stronger focus on encouraging independence of thought and pro-active approaches to learning;
- a coherent strategy for the development of ICT as a subject, to improve students' basic skills, as part of a whole-school policy;
- the common room and private study facilities for the students.

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

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES	
Mathematics	Satisfactory. Results are in line with national averages. The commitment and enthusiasm of the teachers in the department and the positive rapport between teachers and students are strengths of the department. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but a greater variety of teaching styles is needed to actively engage all students in their lessons. The department should make greater use of resources including ICT, graphical calculators, videos and mathematics books.

Biology	Satisfactory. In 2000 results were in line with the national average. Results improved in 2001. There is good teaching, contributing to the good motivation and commitment of the students. The monitoring of students' academic performance is good but the use of shorter-term learning targets need to be developed. Students need to be encouraged to make more oral contributions in lessons.
Chemistry	Satisfactory. Results in 2000 were in line with national averages but declined in 2001. The teaching is satisfactory and students make commensurate progress. Students show good motivation and commitment. The monitoring of students' safety and academic performance is good but more use of available data for setting short-term learning targets is needed. Students need to be encouraged to make more oral contributions in lessons.
BUSINESS	
Business Studies	Good. Teaching and learning is good and students make good use of computers and local businesses. Achievement is satisfactory overall.
INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY	
Information and Communication Technology	Satisfactory. Student achievement at A-level in recent years has been above average, and many demonstrate high order skills within complex applications. However, the confidence of other students in the use of ICT is variable and many still lack an appropriate level of basic skill. Teaching overall is satisfactory. A more coherent policy for the development of ICT in the sixth form is needed.
VISUAL and PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA	
Art	Very good. The quality of the teaching enables students to explore their work in depth and attain high standards in public examinations.
Drama	Good. Very effective teaching and students' enthusiasm for the subject enable them to achieve standards overall in line with national averages despite the fact that many have no previous experience of examination drama.
HUMANITIES	
History	Good. Standards are improving as a result of better planning and more focused teaching. Students are achieving well.
Sociology	Good. Standards are high. Teaching is consistently good and the subject is a popular choice in the sixth form.
Psychology	Good. High quality teaching and excellent rapport with students has produced above average results.
ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION	
English	Very good. Students respond well to the high quality teaching they receive. This promotes very effective learning and enables them to achieve above average standards of work. Monitoring and assessment of performance are strong features and the provision of an enriched curriculum contributes significantly to students' personal development.
Modern Languages (French)	Satisfactory. Teaching is by good linguists, including a native speaker, and lessons are well prepared. Numbers recruited to the subject are small, but students respond well, and standards of achievement are satisfactory.

Geography was not inspected as a subject, but scrutiny of Year 13 students work and sampling of teaching in geography indicated high standards. Examination results in the subject have been above average in recent years.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Good. Tutors and teachers are caring and concerned to help students achieve. A stronger focus on developing the independent learning skills of all students would be beneficial.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Very good. The energetic and visionary approach of a newly appointed leader has already made a significant impact on planning and development. A strongly democratic system enables the sixth form students to participate in the leadership of the school in a pro-active way. The commitment to equality of opportunity is explicit and recognised by the students.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> opportunities to exercise responsibility the support and encouragement of teachers the range of courses available the secure and friendly multicultural environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> careers' advice the sixth form common room facilities the amount of encouragement to work and information on progress in some subjects

The inspectors endorse the students' positive views and recognise that the current building programme will address the issue of the sixth form common room. All students have access to a comprehensive careers advice service. Inspectors were unable to support the views expressed about this through the questionnaire. The many students interviewed praised the advice that they received strongly and knew how to access further help. Students' perceptions of lack of encouragement and information on their progress were not borne out by observation or interview. Inspectors considered, however, that students have a high degree of dependency on their teachers that has been carried forward from the earlier years and this is a contributory factor.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Inspectors make judgements about provision in subjects and courses, and about leadership and management, in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement "outstanding" in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to "very weak".

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Teaching

1. Teaching is good overall. Of the 51 Lessons observed in Key Stages 3 and 4 during the inspection, seven out of ten were judged to be good or better. Ten lessons were very good. Teaching of the highest order was observed on three occasions, in art, English and music in Key Stage 4. The remainder of lessons, with one isolated exception, were satisfactory. Examples of very good teaching were observed in design and technology, French, history, ICT, and mathematics in Key Stage 3, and in English, ICT, mathematics and science in Key Stage 4. Overall, teaching observed in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in Key Stages 3 and 4 was always satisfactory and mainly good and the quality of pupil learning reflected this. In other subjects sampled, the teaching was generally satisfactory and frequently good.
2. In the sixth form, teaching was never less than satisfactory and in seven out of ten lessons it was good or very good.
3. Teachers have very good knowledge of their specialist subjects and of the relevant programmes of study in the National Curriculum. Classroom management skills are generally good throughout the school, and relationships with pupils are excellent. The most consistently good teaching was observed in English where a range of effective teaching strategies stimulated pupils' interest, challenged the full ability range, and involved pupils in critical self-assessment and evaluation.
4. Where the teaching was less good, the relative weaknesses related to lack of pace and inadequate planning which led to a tendency to teach only towards the middle range of ability within the group. The use of assessment data to inform detailed planning is not yet consistently understood or applied.
5. Homework forms part of pupils' learning and is generally well planned and used to reinforce classroom teaching. The use of ICT to support subject teaching and learning, however, is more variable. Most teachers are aware of the developing skills of the pupils, many of whom use computers at home, but do not always exploit these in a planned way to enhance subject learning and independent study. In English and geography, samples of pupil work in all years reflect the use of the Internet and generic applications for research purposes and to present work. In mathematics, teachers integrate and reinforce mathematical concepts through the use of spreadsheet software. However, elsewhere in the curriculum ICT is under-exploited as an aid to teaching and learning, and perceptions of its role and scope are limited. There is a need to ensure that planning for the systematic development of ICT skills is addressed across the curriculum and made explicit within departmental schemes of work.
6. Pupils respond well to the good teaching they receive and the quality of learning observed during the inspection matched this.

The school achieves high standards in external examinations

7. Overall, the school helps pupils to make good progress. Pupils' attainments on entry to the school have been marginally above national averages in recent years, and this is increased to well above average attainment at the end of key Stage 3, a trend which continues in Key Stage 4. GCSE results from 1998-2001 reflected an average points score well in excess of national averages during the same period.
8. Pupils do well in National Curriculum tests taken at the age of 14. Their results in English over the past three years have been well above the national average. In mathematics and science, results have also been above average. Taking results in all three core subjects together, the school's performance is very high in comparison with similar schools.
9. In the 2001 GCSE examinations, the proportions of pupils obtaining five or more passes at grades A*-C and A*-G were also well above the national averages of 2000. The great majority of pupils were entered for 10 subjects, and the GCSE points score per pupil was well above the national average. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, results were well above average. The school sets challenging targets for improvement year on year and these are being met.
10. In the sixth form, the proportion of students achieving a pass grade in A/AS level examinations is above the national average, although average points score per student, whilst equal to the average

for pupils in the LEA, has been below the national average for some years. The reasons for this are not always clear. A number of pupils with high ability choose to pursue their further education in other schools and colleges, and the A-level results of those who remain are often better than might have been expected, based on previous GCSE scores.

11. Standards of work observed during the inspection reflect these examination results. Pupils and sixth form students were working at levels appropriate to national curriculum levels or stages of the course. There are no underperforming or weak subjects at any stage. Examples of excellent work by pupils were seen in art, design technology, English and geography. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrated high standards of literacy and oracy, well above average in relation to the significant number of pupils for whom English is not their first language. Standards of numeracy are also high.

The school provides high-quality pastoral care for pupils

12. The positive work of the school reported at the time of the previous inspection has been well maintained. Health and safety and child protection procedures are appropriate.
13. The school's pastoral system is effective and well ordered. Pupils' progress is monitored well by year tutors, reporting to Heads of Year, and pupils are well aware who they should approach if they have problems. Many pupils and older students commented on the safe and secure environment which the school provided for them.
14. Procedures for monitoring and supporting academic progress are good. The school has developed an extensive assessment information system that is being used to track pupils' progress. This helps to ensure that targets agreed with pupils and students are appropriate. Parents are invited to participate in individual interviews with their children, where targets are set. This is part of a planned annual cycle of consultation and reporting to parents.
15. The assessment information is also used well by the school to inform the planning of the curriculum and determine grouping. New systems have been introduced to provide thorough analysis of school tests and national examination results, to predict future outcomes, and to inform grouping for teaching purposes. Pupils on the school's register of special needs are assessed correctly and their individual education plans are carefully prepared by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). However, the extent to which these are implemented in the classroom is insufficiently monitored. Work provided for these pupils in lessons does not always match their learning needs.

The school creates a positive ethos in which all are valued and enabled to achieve

16. A significant strength of the school is the quality of the environment provided for its pupils. Physical surroundings are welcoming and well resourced and include aesthetically pleasing areas for relaxation, the climate within which the ethnically diverse population works and plays together is commendably harmonious. Relationships between pupils of all ages and between pupils and adults are warm and friendly. Pupils reported that they knew their teachers were concerned to ensure that they achieved the best possible standards, and they considered that they were treated as responsible young adults.
17. Interaction between pupils during lessons and class change-over times, whilst lively and occasionally noisy, is invariably conducted with courtesy and good humour. Pupils are aware of school rules, and amenable to discipline, but equally capable of exercising a strong measure of self-discipline – as, for example, when congregating in large numbers for assemblies. They take pride in the history and traditions of the school and are keen to represent it in a variety of spheres.
18. A contributory factor to the school's positive ethos is the emphasis which the school places on charitable works and awareness of other less-favoured communities around the world. A partnership which has been developed with a school in South Africa stimulated pupils to embark on fund-raising in order to build a new classroom there. The enthusiasm with which older pupils volunteered to act as mentors to the new intake is a further measure of the care and concern for individuals' welfare which is exhibited throughout the school.

The school plans and secures improvements in standards and facilities through the commitment of the headteacher and leadership team

19. Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has established a new leadership team with revised roles. Within an acknowledged framework of "investing in people", her desire to establish a collegiate style of management is reflected in the emerging teamwork approach. The leadership team is very hardworking and is committed to improvement and development. A clear structure of line management links the leadership team with middle managers, and effective communication systems exist to secure the chain of accountability. During the period of the inspection, good working relationships between members of the leadership team and staff were apparent.
20. The governing body is knowledgeable about the school, very supportive and closely involved. Part of the shared vision for the future has resulted in the planning and provision of better facilities such as the dining area and the sixth form common room which are currently underway.
21. Finance and resources are managed well; long term planning is thorough; curriculum issues are being addressed; and priorities have been clearly established. Monitoring of standards and teaching, through systematic procedures, is well established and a culture of self-evaluation is being developed through the introduction of cyclical departmental reviews. In order to secure appropriate improvements, a more rigorous and judgemental approach to these reviews will be needed. There is a commitment to the development of the skills of middle managers in order to enable this tier to participate fully and influence the longer-term vision for the school. Within this context, realistic goals and timeframes have been set.
22. A very thorough pupil and student progress tracking system to support the planning of teaching, pupil achievement and school self-evaluation has been introduced and is being further developed. This has increased staff awareness of the effectiveness of assessment data as a tool to improve performance.
23. The recently appointed Director of the Sixth Form, has made an effective start in setting out development plans to implement her vision. There is an impressive clarity within the comprehensive documentation and guidelines which have already been produced, and a clear recognition of the need to increase opportunities for student autonomy in learning and social areas.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The use of ICT in support of learning across the curriculum

24. The use of ICT resources to support subject teaching is variable. They are used well in English, geography, and mathematics, but less well in other areas of the curriculum and hardly at all in some. Pupils and students have access to high-quality resources both in dedicated ICT suites and in the Learning Resource Areas, and receive discrete teaching of ICT skills in their first year at the school. A high proportion of pupils also has access to computers at home. In Summer 2002, all Year 11 pupils will be entered for a half-GCSE in ICT for the first time, based on coursework produced across the curriculum supported by discrete ICT lessons as part of a rotation also involving physical education and religious education.
25. At present, the application of ICT across the curriculum is focused on 'using' rather than on the planned extension of skills and knowledge. The range and focus of usage of the technology are limited. This is a transitional phase, related to hardware access and the immediate need to meet narrow examination coursework portfolio requirements. Although most teachers are aware of the level of pupil access and familiarity with generic and communications software, not all take advantage of this to motivate pupils and stimulate their interest. Lack of regular access to equipment and limited staff confidence or competence are constraints. Even where there is frequent use, opportunities to extend skills and knowledge are frequently overlooked. For example, where word processing or display software is used to enhance work, conventions of lay-out and presentation are not taught securely, and there is little evidence of progress in these basic skills between year groups, including in the sixth form.
26. Lack of ready access to ICT equipment is frequently cited as a constraint on developing its use across the curriculum. The school's ratio of machines to pupils is comparable with other schools of a similar size, and its computer suites are of a high specification. However, the demands of examination courses frequently tie up this resource for long periods, effectively excluding non-examination groups at critical times. A suite of computers in the Learning Resource Centre goes some way towards alleviating the pressure, but departmental access to resources for ICT need strengthening.

27. To secure a more coherent experience for pupils and staff alike, a whole-school strategy linking development of staff knowledge, confidence and expertise, planned integration with schemes of work, and closer monitoring of pupil opportunity and access is needed. The management of cross-curricular ICT is currently separated from other aspects of managing this whole-school resource and subject area. Delegated responsibilities require greater clarification in order to secure appropriate accountability for ICT outcomes across the curriculum.

Planning and teaching to take account of the full ability range in lessons

28. Most teachers are aware of pupils' particular learning needs but not all take these needs into account sufficiently when planning lessons. During the inspection, few teachers were found to have set particular learning targets for pupils with special needs, and strategies for ensuring that they could take a full part in lessons were limited. Pupils with identified special educational needs learn effectively where they are supported by classroom assistants, and there are good arrangements to provide high-quality individual help through withdrawal from classes. More detailed attention needs to be given, however, to the planning of targeted tasks and resources for both higher and lower attainers within classrooms and to the monitoring of their impact on the pupils concerned.
29. Some instances of isolated good practice were observed in art and English, but in the majority of lessons observed, teaching was directed towards the wide middle band of ability, with insufficient planning or attention paid to the needs of either the highest or lowest attainers. Where extension tasks were set for the more able, these were often repetitive and reinforcement activities, rather than being intellectually challenging. Too frequently, work failed to extend sufficiently the knowledge and understanding of more demanding concepts.

The monitoring and evaluation skills of middle managers

30. Heads of department currently administer their subjects with commitment and efficiency. They are conscientious in planning for the coverage of programmes of study and examination courses, and in their accountability for the deployment of resources. To strengthen their leadership function, further training is needed in effective management practice, including the direct oversight of teaching, learning and pupil progress.
31. All teachers receive important test and examination data, but there is inconsistency of practice in how it is used and insufficient oversight by some heads of department of the effectiveness with which this is influencing the quality of teaching or pupil progress. The potential of this management tool is currently not maximised. Not enough has been done to enable these middle managers to undertake their quality assurance role effectively, in conjunction with the leadership team, and this limits their influence on whole-school improvement and development.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

32. To raise further the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governors and senior management team should:
1. Devise a whole-school strategy for the resourcing and implementation of ICT skills development, including clearly defined lines of accountability for cross-curricular teaching and assessment; (24, 25, 26, 27, 47, 53, 109)
 2. Ensure that all schemes of work include planned opportunities for the development of pupil ICT skills and that teachers and support staff are fully resourced to implement these by the provision of high-quality professional development, training and access to equipment for pupils; (5, 76, 84, 91, 101, 119, 160)
 3. Widen the range of strategies used within lessons to improve access, and the quality of classroom experience, for all pupils with special needs, including those identified as having exceptional potential; (15, 28, 29, 46)
 4. Develop further the management role of heads of department to enable more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, and the consistent implementation of whole-school policies, such as assessment and use of ICT resources. (30, 31, 58, 110)

5. Develop ways of sharing the good practice that exists in some areas to secure a cross-curricular emphasis on development of independent learning and pro-active enquiry skills, particularly in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. (38, 46)
6. Monitor more closely teaching and learning practices in the sixth form to ascertain why some students do not attain the standards comparable with their earlier GCSE performance. (33, 36, 46)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 - 11	51
	Sixth form	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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Years 7 - 11

Number	3	10	23	14	1	0	0
Percentage	6	20	45	27	2	-	-

Sixth form

Number	0	13	10	11	0	0	
Percentage	-	38	29	32	-	-	-

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	663	170
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	87	10

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	13	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	108	1

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	537

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	56
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	45

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	0	127	127

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	111	96	85
	Total	111	96	85
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	87 (80)	76 (73)	66 (70)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	54 (31)	46 (47)	33 (40)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	113	92	81
	Total	113	92	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	88 (90)	72 (79)	63 (72)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	55 (49)	45 (45)	38 (44)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	0	128	128

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	83	126	126
	Total	83	126	126
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	65 (69)	98 (98)	99 (99)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	49
	National	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 pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	6	83
	National		-

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	5	89	94

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	6.7	14.5	13.7	5.5	3.5	3.6
National	17.7	18.6	18.2	2.6	2.9	2.7

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	10	100
	National		

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	-	-
	National		-

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	52
Black – African heritage	46
Black – other	28
Indian	176
Pakistani	79
Bangladeshi	8
Chinese	6
White	359
Any other minority ethnic group	79

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	6	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	3	0
Indian	2	0
Pakistani	2	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	3	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	50.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.05

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	6*
Total aggregate hours worked per week	152.50

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	69
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**includes 3 part-time support staff employed by LEA*

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 2	N/a
Key Stage 3	29.4
Key Stage 4	23.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	2,479,858
Total expenditure	2,439,825
Expenditure per pupil	2,823.87
Balance brought forward from previous year	213,423
Balance carried forward to next year	253,456

Recruitment of teachers (FTE means full-time equivalent).

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	14.27
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	18

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

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	862
Number of questionnaires returned	195

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	38	5	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	54	37	2	2	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	49	5	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	48	9	2	7
The teaching is good.	41	45	8	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	49	11	1	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	36	3	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	28	2	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	31	49	13	2	6
The school is well led and managed.	51	34	5	2	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	41	5	1	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	39	10	2	12

Summary of parents' and carers' responses (from questionnaires and parents' meeting)

The great majority of parents/carers expressed satisfaction with the education and pastoral care provided for their children. They were pleased with the standards being achieved and gave credit to the quality of the teaching received. Individual concerns raised included the need for extension activities to support the learning of more able pupils, and perceived inconsistencies in the amount of homework given in years 7 and 8.

Other issues raised by parents

Parents paid tribute to

- the amount and effectiveness of support given to pupils in music
- the school's involvement with the wider community and its links with a South African school

PART D: THE SIXTH FORM

The Sixth Form has increased significantly in size since the time of the previous inspection. Following a recent internal review, the school identified areas for development in response to the new scale of operation and changes in post-16 curricula. A new Director of Sixth Form has been appointed, and a new development plan is now in the early stages of implementation.

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

33. Over the past three years (1999-2001), the school has maintained an A-level points score which is below the national average, although in line with that of local schools. Scrutiny of individual students' results over this period reflects satisfactory added value from attainment at GCSE. Although many achieve above what might have been expected, the number of students achieving the higher A-B grades at A-level remains low. A small proportion of students who achieve the higher grades at GCSE move to study at other schools or colleges, but the number is insufficient to wholly explain the below-average outcomes.
34. In 2000 and 2001, the AS and A-level results reflected improvement on earlier years, but in comparison with all maintained schools the average points scores attained by students remained below the national averages for 2000 (latest national comparative data available). When compared with girls' schools nationally, the results were closer to the average. For the small number of students taking vocational courses, standards were satisfactory. For many individual students, their overall performance represents high added value.
35. From the perspective of individual subjects, the percentage of students gaining pass grades at A-level were at or above national averages in 2000 in mathematics, chemistry, biology, business studies, information technology, art, drama, geography, sociology, and English language. In history, psychology, religious studies, and English literature the pass rate was below the national average. The number entered in other subjects was too small to be statistically significant. From a small entry on GNVQ courses in business and finance, all were successful in gaining the qualification.
36. The percentage gaining the higher A-B grades at A-level was above average in business studies, information technology, art, music, geography, sociology, and English literature, but below average in all other subjects. Results in 2001 were broadly comparable with 2000, but national averages for comparison at the time of this inspection had yet to be validated.
37. In the lessons observed, and in the samples of students' work scrutinised, standards were almost invariably appropriate for the stage of the course. Exceptions were in French, where Year 12 students were producing work below the standard which could have been expected at the beginning of their AS level course, and in chemistry where the work of Year 13 students was at a lower level than expectation related to previous achievement. Elsewhere, students' levels of achievement were at least in keeping with their previous performance at GCSE and reflected good progress, particularly in the few weeks during which the new AS courses have been studied.
38. Standards of oral and written work are variable. Many students demonstrated the ability to argue, debate and hypothesise during English, psychology and sociology lessons. In art they are willing to explore new concepts and be adventurous in their execution of ideas. Examples of extended written assignments seen in other subjects reflected appreciation of literary texts and documentary or web-researched evidence. However, levels of student participation in some lessons are insufficient to enable them to develop and debate at the intellectual levels associated with advanced study.
39. Standards of numeracy are good. Students use basic number skills in chemistry for equation balancing and electro potential calculations, although their use in vocational education is less secure. Algebraic skills, such as substitution to determine image size, are used in biology and spatial skills are used in work related to molecular structure dealing with proteins, polymers and DNA. Students make good use of statistical measures such as mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficients in their psychology coursework.
40. The majority of students are industrious and co-operate fully with their teachers. They concentrate well in lessons, and pay heed to teacher comments and periodic reviews of progress with tutors. They use their timetabled independent study periods to undertake extended research, and are confident in the use of books and ICT to support this.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

41. Students demonstrate strong loyalty to the school and very positive and diligent attitudes towards their work. Through the school's prefectorial system and the school council, many have opportunities to exercise appropriate degrees of autonomy and responsibility; they provide good role models for the younger pupils. The small number of students, who enter the sixth form from other schools, or who attend lessons there as part of the consortium provision, are welcomed and well integrated. They add a fresh dimension to the sixth form, bringing new perspectives and styles of response to teaching and learning at the school. Occasionally, a small number of individuals are at odds with the prevailing ethos of the school, but adaptation is usually swift and the sixth form in general is a well ordered community of students.
42. Students work well together and are proud of the harmonious multi-cultural environment established throughout the school. Most respond positively to the extra-curricular opportunities on offer, including volunteering to act as mentors for younger pupils and assisting teachers and tutors with pastoral activities.
43. Attendance in the sixth form is broadly satisfactory, but punctual arrival at the start of lessons could be improved. The behaviour of the majority of students in and around the school is of a very high standard. They demonstrate respect for people and property, and display a high level of courtesy to each other and to visitors. Relationships with teachers and other adults are warm and friendly. The very good standard of behaviour demonstrated contributes to the pleasant and welcoming environment of the school as a whole.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

44. Teaching observed in the sixth form was mainly good. In seven out of ten lessons it was good or better. Very good teaching was seen in art, biology, business education, drama, English, history, mathematics, psychology and sociology. All teaching observed in art and psychology was judged to be very good. These lessons were characterised by effective planning, good subject expertise, good rapport with students, skilful questioning and a variety of activities which stimulated student interest and active response.
45. Most teachers plan well for the demands of the course specifications. Lessons are usually well organised and conducted at a challenging pace, but with sufficient structure to ensure that students acquire essential knowledge in an appropriate format. In sociology, for example, students are successfully taught to organise their knowledge and structure their note-taking so that they can subsequently compose analytical essays.
46. Teaching styles in some subjects are predominantly formal and heavily reliant on teacher exposition. When this style of teaching occurs within long lesson periods, the effectiveness of students' learning diminishes. A wider range of teaching strategies, including seminar style input and whole class debate, is needed in some subjects in order to stimulate active involvement and intellectual challenge for students at this level and to encourage radical and experimental thought and independent reading and research. Frequently, insufficient attention is given to the spread of ability that exists in some groups. The good practice observed in English, psychology and sociology, where there are large mixed ability groups, could usefully be shared with colleagues in other curriculum areas.
47. The planned use of ICT in support of learning and in the presentation of work is limited. Whilst many students have access to computers at home, and all have open access to equipment in the school, guidance for those students not following ICT examination courses is limited. For example, of the many students who produce work using a word processor, few have developed appropriate levels of knowledge about lay-out conventions or skill in applying them. Through the Basic ICT Skills course, some students have access to structured and progressive skill development, but this is not systematically built into the programme for all students. Teachers in all curriculum areas should review planning and assessment procedures to secure this for students, together with appropriate monitoring of progress.
48. Students respond appropriately to the style of teaching they experience. Their co-operative and courteous response frequently leads to dependency on teachers and over-passive reception of information and note-taking. In some lessons, it was noticeable that the efforts of the teacher vastly outweighed those of the students, with similar imbalance in the amount of learning taking place. A

greater emphasis on encouraging students to use their oral skills and an insistence on more active participation in their own learning would be beneficial.

49. The school's strategy of individual target setting is helping students to focus on how to improve their work. This is not yet fully developed in all subjects, and greater precision in the setting and monitoring of targets linked to the course objectives should be sought. Students are challenged to do their best, with appropriately frequent progress checks, and the majority respond very well to the demands of their courses.

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

50. The sixth form curriculum is provided through a consortium partnership with three other schools and a further education college. It offers a wide choice of more than 20 A/AS level courses and a developing range of AVCE courses, catering for effective progression from Key Stage 4. Take-up of courses on The Green School site is high in most subjects, particularly in business studies, English, ICT, psychology, and sociology. The numbers following courses in art, French, German, history, and music are much lower and no students were recruited to German in 2001. Physical education courses are not offered to sixth form students due to lack of facilities.
51. The majority of pupils in Year 11 choose to stay at school beyond 16 years and almost all are able to follow a combination of courses of their choice. Effective guidance on post-16 subject choice is provided, and the majority follow four AS level courses in Year 12, reducing to three A2 courses in Year 13. Requirements for entry to two year academic courses or advanced GNVQ courses in the sixth form are usually a minimum of 5 GCSE passes at grade C or above, with preferably an A or B in the chosen and related subjects. Flexibility in interpretation of the entry criteria is accorded to heads of department, however, and particular circumstances are taken into account. Continuation on to A2 is dependent on satisfactory performance at AS level. Less stringent criteria apply to entry on GNVQ foundation or intermediate courses.
52. The sixth form curriculum reflects the school's aim to encourage students in developing their independent study skills. The school's structured approach includes a significant number of timetabled lessons, a small number of home study sessions, private study in school and a commitment to community service. Facilities to support private study are provided through the school's learning resource centre. Plans for the provision of much needed new study facilities and a common room for the sixth form are well advanced.
53. Opportunities for post-16 students to enhance their skills of communication, application of number and use of ICT, by working towards a 'Key Skills' qualification are available to many students. Communication skills are delivered in conjunction with English, drama and focus days. Application of number and ICT skills are provided as separate courses. The complexity of individual timetables, however, prevents a large number of students from pursuing these opportunities, and the locus of responsibility for this aspect of the curriculum is ill-defined,
54. Comprehensive information about careers and higher education is made available to students, and opportunities for individuals to meet with careers officers are arranged. Many students experience work-related experience during their time in the sixth form, and there are opportunities to work in France and Germany for those studying modern languages. In the AVCE/GNVQ business and finance and the A-level business courses, work experience is an integral part of the course, linked to coursework research projects. A high percentage of students continue into higher education and the school provides extensive information and support in the university application process. Further development of the careers education programme, to include structured guidance on interview techniques and formal opportunities to debate more fully with appropriate adults the range of career paths available, would be beneficial.

55. The planned tutorial and assembly programme provides for students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This includes moral and ethical topics, as well as practical topics such as study skills and work management. Attendance at external conferences, compulsory RE (religious education) days, involvement in problem-solving and competitive activities, and visits to cultural events such as art exhibitions, theatres and concerts supplement the many in-school opportunities to exercise autonomy and responsibility. An internal audit had identified inconsistencies in delivering this programme related to timetabling, variable staff commitment, and complex student grouping. These issues are gradually being resolved and initiatives now being introduced should secure a more consistent experience for the students across a wider range of activities.
56. The sixth form students participate fully in the life of the school and those interviewed during the inspection described their life in the sixth form as enjoyable and rewarding. Regular activities include Young Enterprise, the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, the organisation and management of the School Council and the annual prefect election. Through the school's community and international links, they are enabled to contribute to charity work and extend their cultural horizons. Opportunities to work with tutorial teams, lead house activities and mentor young pupils are also offered and taken up by many sixth form students.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

57. Students are inducted efficiently into the sixth form. They are offered an opportunity to sample lessons in their chosen courses before making decisions, and are provided with comprehensive information about course content and methods of assessment.
58. Students are provided with constructive advice on how to improve their work through the thorough and regular marking by most teachers, who endeavour to set them realistic targets. Formal and informal assessment data are used by tutors to monitor students' progress and to inform them about what they need to do to improve further. The school is developing increasingly sophisticated recording and tracking systems which link prior attainment at GCSE to predicted performance grades at A-level and in GNVQ, but this information has yet to be fully exploited by departments. Although target setting with individual students is a feature of the management of sixth form students, it does not receive the same degree of focus in all departments, and the integration of assessment with forward planning for teaching and course development is as yet under-developed. Greater consistency in the effective use of relevant data is required to enable teachers and students to secure the highest possible standards.
59. The school provides good personal support and guidance for its students. The recently appointed director of the sixth form is making changes and improvements which are beginning to show increased recognition of students' individual learning needs through regular monitoring and assessment. Students are confident that they will be supported and advised, and most recognise the worth of the PHSE and tutorial programme. Procedures to monitor attendance are satisfactory and there are plans to make further improvements. Emphasis is placed on encouraging students to develop the skills and working practices to support the necessary independence in learning for advanced education.
60. For the large number of students seeking entry to higher education institutions after the sixth form, the school provides effective advice through its careers education programme and practical support with UCAS applications and interview preparation.
61. The school works conscientiously to ensure students' health, safety and welfare. A sixth form code of behaviour, disseminated to all students and parents, delineates expectations of students and is designed to safeguard the environment in which they can work and socialise. The school actively pursues opportunities to extend the students' personal, health and social education through its tutorial programme, supplemented by involvement with external projects, challenging activities, foreign exchange visits, debates, and other local community initiatives.
62. All students are assigned a personal tutor with whom they are encouraged to build a relationship and seek advice and guidance on any aspect of life in the sixth form and their future aspirations. Overall, the school demonstrates a high degree of care and concern for its sixth form students.

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

63. Parents of students in the sixth form are provided with high quality information about the courses available, and receive regular and comprehensive written reports about their progress. These 'Progress Checks' are issued on a consortium-wide basis twice yearly in Year 12 and Year 13, and parents are invited to an academic review day in each year, with their daughters or sons to discuss them. The information provided is comprehensive and includes monitoring of academic achievement, attendance, punctuality and effective use of time.
64. The school is conscientious about keeping parents informed concerning any problems that may arise in connection with learning, attendance or general welfare when in the sixth form. Where there are concerns about an individual's progress or behaviour, clear procedures have been instituted and parents are involved throughout via the student's tutor.
65. The school uses its monthly newsletter "The Green News" to keep parents informed of forthcoming events and significant calendar dates. Communications also flow between the school and the parents and teachers' association, through which the school has strong links into the community.
66. Parents' views, conveyed through the pre-inspection questionnaire, confirmed the high regard in which the school is held locally. The views of the students correspond closely with those expressed by parents. They are generally very positive about their experience of the sixth form, and where they have reservations they feel able to express these in a mature and responsible way. The inspection team received conflicting evidence of student perception regarding the quality of careers education and teacher support, via the student questionnaire, but the views of the many students interviewed during the inspection were overwhelmingly positive on both aspects.

HOW WELL IS THE SIXTH FORM LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

67. The recently appointed director of the sixth form has a very clear vision for its future development. The impact of her energetic and resolute leadership is reflected in the high level of support and confidence secured from team members for the significant changes and improvements already instigated. These have focused on establishing a more structured approach to student management through, the training of tutors for more effective tutoring; the preparation of students for successful and continued study; the more efficient monitoring of students' movements and progress; and the creation of increased opportunities for students to show responsibility within the sixth form and throughout the school.
68. The efficiency with which the sixth form is now managed is enhanced by the appropriate deployment of key personnel within the team to ensure optimum use of their experience of the school and knowledge of the students. The introduction of clear guidelines, comprehensive documentation and structured meetings has improved communication within the team. A reflective and evaluative approach to management has identified areas for future development. The plan to achieve this builds upon the stability and success of the past and addresses the key areas of raising attainment; the promotion of independent learning styles; widening curricular opportunities; innovative curricular delivery; improving accommodation to facilitate closer contact with students; and increasing the involvement of parents in the preparation of students for higher education.
69. A shared ethos of opportunity, respect and equality is reflected in the positive values sixth form staff and students seek to promote throughout their community while recognising the importance of high academic standards and personal success.

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

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2000.

GCE AS level courses¹

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics (Pure)	4	75	63	0	17	1.5	1.5
Chemistry	2	100	47	0	6	2.5	0.8
Biology	4	75	53	0	6	1.0	0.9
Information Technology	1	100	-	100	-	4	-
Drama	12	92	93	50	19	3.2	2.5
Sociology	8	25	54	12	12	0.8	1.2

GCE A level¹

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	13	92	89	38	45	5.3	5.9
Chemistry	17	94	89	23	42	5.0	5.8
Biology	18	94	88	27	34	4.6	5.2
Physics	2	100	88	0	41	2.0	5.7
Business Studies	12	92	91	33	30	4.8	5.3
Information Technology	17	100	85	53	23	4.1	4.6
Sports Studies	2	50	91	0	25	1.0	5.0
Art	4	100	96	75	45	7.5	6.4
Music	1	100	93	100	35	10.0	5.7
Drama	10	100	99	20	36	6.2	6.4
Geography	6	100	92	50	37	6.3	5.7
History	10	70	89	20	34	4.0	5.4
Religious Studies	4	75	90	25	35	4.5	5.6
Sociology	14	93	88	57	37	6.8	5.5
Psychology	9	33	83	0	30	0.6	4.8
English Language & Literature	26	96	91	19	30	5.1	5.3
English Literature	19	95	96	47	36	6.3	5.9
French	1	100	91	0	39	6.0	5.7
German	1	100	92	0	41	6.0	5.8
Urdu ¹	1	100	-	100	-	10.0	-

¹ National comparisons should be read in the context of size of groups entered for the examination

Vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business & Finance GNVQ Intermediate Part I	4	100					
Business & Finance GNVQ Advanced	6	100					

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The commitment and enthusiasm of the teachers in the department
- The teachers' subject knowledge and awareness of examination requirements
- The positive rapport between teachers and students in the sixth form

Areas for Improvement

- Ensuring that the most able are challenged sufficiently and the least able supported
- A greater variety of teaching styles to actively engage all students in the lessons
- Greater use of resources, including ICT, graphical calculators, videos and books

70. In recent years examination results have fluctuated but overall remained in line with the national averages. In 2000, in the mathematics GCE A-level examination, 92 per cent of the students achieved a pass grade and 38 per cent achieved the higher A and B grades. These proportions were close to national averages. Results in 2001 were broadly similar to 2000. Students' attainment, on the basis of their earlier GCSE examination results, was in line with expectations so that progress in the sixth form is satisfactory. No students were entered for the AS level examination.
71. On the basis of the students' work and the lessons observed, standards of work attained at the end of Year 12 are in line with expectations. Students can simplify surds, factorise quadratic equations and sketch trigonometric graphs for angles between 0° and 360° . In a mechanics lesson, students made good use of their trigonometry, including the sine and cosine rules, to calculate the magnitude and direction of vectors. However, students' basic numeracy skills are weak so that they have difficulty subtracting fractions when solving quadratic equations by completing the square. A significant number of students, especially those who followed the GCSE mathematics course at the intermediate level, do not have sufficient background knowledge to embark on an A-level course in mathematics.
72. A scrutiny of students' work, and their performance in the lessons observed, show standards of work attained at the end of Year 13 to be in line with expectations. The work covers modules in pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics although, prior to the inspection, mechanics was taught in another consortium school. In pure mathematics, students can differentiate from first principles and make good use of differentiation to find the maximum volume of a box from a rectangular sheet of cardboard. In statistics, they have a good understanding of correlation and make good use of Venn diagrams and tree diagrams to solve probability questions. However, their basic numeracy skills remain a weakness and students suffer from poor recall so had difficulty remembering how to find the median of a cumulative distribution function even though the work had just been revised.
73. The quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form is satisfactory. Teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge, confident exposition and clear explanation so that in a Year 12 lesson on vectors, the teacher consolidated earlier work, highlighted important facts and anticipated common errors so that students were able to apply standard procedures accurately and with understanding. In another Year 12 lesson on quadratic equations, the teacher encouraged the precise use of mathematical vocabulary and challenged students' understanding by asking them to explain their reasoning. However, in too many lessons, there is little evidence of a variety of teaching styles and insufficient attention is given to the spread of ability which exists in many of the groups. Too often, teacher talk

dominates and there is insufficient emphasis on learning so that students are not actively engaged in the work. The positive rapport between teachers and students was a strength in all of the lessons observed as highlighted in the last inspection report.

74. Teachers have a good awareness of the individual strengths and weaknesses of their students and reporting gives a clear picture of students' performance. Homework is set regularly and marking, completed to a very high standard with supportive comments accompanying model solutions where errors are diagnosed. In a Year 13 lesson, the teacher made very good use of curriculum time to undertake individual interviews with students to discuss their work, effort and progress to date. The department does keep value added data in terms of projected A-level grades but does not use this data sufficiently to set rigorous targets for itself and its students.
75. Students are confident in their work and they show interest and enthusiasm for their studies. They enjoy positive and productive relationships with each other and with their teachers. They complete homework to a high standard and their presentation skills are very high.
76. There was no evidence of the use of ICT in the sixth form. The department is resourced with graphical calculators and each room is furnished with a TV and video although little use is made of these resources at present. Library resources are inadequate as there are insufficient books for background reading and support.
77. The provision for numeracy across the curriculum in the sixth form is good. Basic number skills are rehearsed in chemistry and biology and students make good use of tables and charts in vocational education classes and in psychology. Provision for students to develop key skills in mathematics is offered through two timetabled periods during the week although there are no written schemes of work and some confusion over who has responsibility for these lessons.
78. The leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory. The leadership of the department ensures a clear direction and the head of department engenders a strong team spirit among her dedicated, hard working and well qualified team of teachers. The work of the department has been suitably aligned to the new curriculum but departmental schemes of work are not yet sufficiently developed to provide a coherent package which caters for the spread of ability and identifies suitable learning resources. The timetabling of mathematics in the sixth form is agreed with other consortium schools and the present arrangements mean that mathematics is taught in only two sessions.

SCIENCES

The focus was on biology and chemistry. It was not possible to observe any teaching of physics during the inspection and insufficient work samples were available for overall judgements to be made. Only three candidates were entered for Physics at A-level in 2000 and one in 2001. The results gained in both years were well below the national average.

Chemistry

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

Strengths

- Monitoring of students' welfare and academic performance
- Motivation and commitment of the students
- Regular subject reviews, leading for example to the adoption of the Salter's A-level syllabus

Areas for Improvement

- Lesson planning, particularly timing, pace, assessment and scheme of work
- Teaching and learning methods appropriate to each student's attainment level
- Development of a strategic plan to raise the proportion of high grades at A-level

79. Students' results in the GCE A-level for 2000 show a decline over those of 1999. Attainment in the grade range A to E was just above the national average but in relation to the average points score, it was below. In 2001, the results for the three candidates entered fell below the national average of 2000 and in relation to their GCSE results, were below expectations. Students' performance in the AS level examination in 2001 suggest an improvement in progress.
80. Students in Year 12 are at the very beginning of the A-level course and at this stage the majority is achieving in line with national expectations. Their recall of background knowledge and understanding of earlier GCSE work is generally sound and assists in moving them on to more complex concepts but their approach is very tentative as yet. In one lesson, on trends in the periodic table, some students were uncertain over simple neutralisation reactions. In another lesson, however, good use was made of GCSE work as a platform to comparing enthalpy changes in the combustion of various alcohols and considering the theoretical explanations behind them. The associated calculations were handled successfully.
81. The standards of work of the students currently in Year 13 are in line with course expectations but they are under-achieving in relation to predictions based on their earlier GCSE results. In the lessons seen they were making satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of the material being taught. In one lesson effective use of molecular models enabled students to understand how condensation reactions occur between ribose and bases and the phosphate group respectively, in the synthesis of proteins in living cells. Molecular models, coupled with explanations of bonding theory, were also used effectively in bringing another class to an understanding of how the structure of polymers determines their properties.
82. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was satisfactory overall and the students made commensurate progress. Of the five lessons observed, three were judged to be satisfactory and two to be good. The positive features noted were the good subject knowledge, the setting of clear objectives, the use of appropriate homework to consolidate the lesson's work, the testing of taught theory through practical application, and the effective use of resources. The key areas for improvement are planning, the setting of learning objectives, provision for differentiated learning and arrangements for short-term assessment. Planning needs to be more structured to include the timing of each phase of a lesson so that a realistic number of appropriate learning objectives is covered and that there is time for a summary and recap of the key points at the end. The learning objectives need to be clearer and the links between these and the means of assessing them, through classwork and homework, specifically identified. Lesson planning would be assisted through a more precise scheme of work.
83. Most students are learning satisfactorily in this early stage of the course. In lessons they do not show the same confidence as they do in their later written work, when they generally recall and apply knowledge more successfully. Oral skills in questioning and explaining ideas are mostly weak. They are well motivated and eager to learn but too often they are content to be passive recipients of the teaching as opportunities for independent learning are limited. The newly adopted Salter's syllabus has potential for developing these. There are good examples of research skills being used in projects and coursework. Students are co-operative with the teachers and support each other in their work.
84. There is some evidence of the effective use of information and communication technology in researched projects where students have extracted information and data from CD-ROMs and the Internet. A class was observed where some students confidently downloaded information from the Internet for a project on the discovery of DNA and some data logging is done in class. The use of information and communication technology needs to be extended in the teaching of chemistry but currently resources are limited.
85. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. There is a commitment to improve standards but a strategic plan on how this might be achieved needs to be drawn up. The adoption of the Salter's syllabus would be part of that strategy, along side an appropriate scheme of work. Target-setting, through close tracking of students, is well established, but the setting of short-term learning targets needs more development and use. Teaching staff are appropriately deployed and resources, with the very able backing of the technical staff, are well managed. Interest in the subject has risen recently and is evidenced by the sharp rise of entrants in both years 12 and 13.

Biology

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

Strengths

- Students' good progress between GCSE and AS level in 2001
- The motivation and commitment of the students
- The quality of teaching
- The monitoring of students' welfare and academic performance

Areas for Improvement

- Scheme of work
- Strategies to raise the proportion of high grades at A-level
- The more active involvement of some students in lessons

86. The GCE A-level examination results in 2000 show attainment to be close to the national average with respect to A-E grades but below the national average in comparison to average points scored. In relation to the cohort's earlier GCSE results, this performance was below expectations. The results for 2000 also showed a decline in comparison with the results of 1999. Attainment levels in 2001, whilst not matching those achieved in 1999, show some improvement over the results in 2000. The results for the AS level examination in 2001 show good progress was made that year by students in Year 12.
87. Currently, Year 12 students are at the very beginning of the A-level course and for the majority attainment is in line with the course expectations at this stage. They have quickly moved on from GCSE to new, advanced topics and firm groundwork is being established but further consolidation and extension of knowledge and understanding will be necessary. A lesson on the organelles in an animal cell demonstrated the jump in conceptual level between GCSE and A-level. By the end of the lesson nearly all could name and describe the function of the most important structures.
88. The standard of work seen in Year 13 was in line with the expectations of the course. In the lessons observed students were advancing their knowledge and understanding as a result of effective teaching. The teachers were clearly in command of the material being taught and, for the most part, took their classes through a sequence of instruction, questioning and application to improve their learning. For example students reinforced their understanding of the theory behind anaerobic respiration through experimentation and then the application of the principles through a range of testing questions. In another instance the use of large, clear photocopied diagrams, in conjunction with three-dimensional models of the brain, enabled students to interpret the text more easily and so grasp the essential features of the brain's complex structure.
89. In two of the four lessons observed the quality of teaching was very good. In another it was good and satisfactory in the fourth. This generally good teaching enabled the students to learn well. The good features of the effective lessons are the detailed planning, clear learning objectives, the very effective use of resources and supporting material, the use of questions to challenge students to think for themselves and, using the application of first principles, through problem-solving, to consolidate learning. Areas for improvement are the use of differentiated learning, making clearer links between the learning objectives set and the means of assessing them in class and through homework, reducing the reliance on note-taking in lessons and ensuring there is time for a summary of key points at the end of a lesson. A more structured scheme of work would assist the planning for these aspects.
90. Most students learn well over time. Written work, module and test results show the majority to be able to recall and apply knowledge successfully but orally they are less effective. Students are well motivated, diligent and co-operative but, in both Years 12 and 13 they tend to be passive recipients of the teaching, particularly where the style of teaching encourages this. There are examples of the good use of research skills in projects, coursework and fieldwork.
91. The use of information and communication technology is largely confined to using word processing and drawing information and data from the Internet and CD-ROMs. The small amount of such work seen suggests pupils are competent and confident in using the technology. Its application in teaching needs to be extended but there is, currently, a shortage of hardware.
92. The subject is being satisfactorily led and managed. There is a commitment to raise standards of attainment but a strategic plan for how this might be achieved needs to be prepared. For examples

the very good teaching in the department would provide a good basis for sharing the most effective teaching and learning methods. A review of the scheme of work would also be required. Tracking of students' progress provides a good means of monitoring progress. The data is used for setting grade targets but the setting of short-term learning targets needs to be developed more. Teaching staff are appropriately deployed and resources managed well.

BUSINESS

The A-level Business Studies course and AVCE Business and Finance course were the focus of the inspection. For reporting purposes, they are combined below.

Business Studies

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

Strengths

- Lesson planning and teachers' secure subject knowledge of business
- Teachers' supportive relationships with students
- Students' good progress in their knowledge and understanding of business
- Computers readily available for students' use in lessons
- Use of local consortium to provide a good mix of students and to enliven class activities

Areas for improvement

- Teachers' monitoring of individual students' work in lessons and the quality of marking
- Students' drawing on work experience to enrich their coursework
- The insufficient level of challenge in some lesson activities

93. Standards overall are average, and build on students' earlier above average achievement at GCSE. In 2000, GCE A-level results were above the national average for the top grades of A and B and the overall pass rate was in line with the national average. In 2001 all students secured a pass and the proportion achieving grades A or B was in line with the national average and above the average for the school. Results that year in the new AS-level examination were disappointing. Students performed well in the marketing and finance module examinations, but found the synoptic paper difficult.
94. In 2000, on the vocational business GNVQ courses, at both Advanced and Intermediate level, the proportions of students achieving a pass, or a merit or distinction grade, were similar to the national averages. In 2001, at both levels, the number of higher grades increased with three quarters of students awarded a pass at the merit or distinction level. In relation to the students' GCSE grades at the start of the course, overall achievement is satisfactory. Despite a fluctuating trend in A-level, overall standards show satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
95. In Year 12 lessons have only recently started and standards reached by both female and male students are satisfactory. The achievement of current Intermediate GNVQ students is good as they showed particularly mature note-taking abilities. AS level students made brisk progress learning to use Powerpoint for a presentation on business ownership, demonstrating skill in creating computer-generated slides which integrated text and graphics colourfully.
96. Students in Year 13 show good progress in their current work. In a very good Year 13 lesson seen, AVCE students made rapid progress in accurately locating information on web sites for their market research projects. Students on the A-level (A2) course make good progress in applying statistical analysis to marketing data, and show a particularly good understanding of graphical interpretation for marketing purposes. The strengths of students' work lies in their steady accumulation of knowledge, well organised in their folders, and the basic understanding they show in discussions and tests. Relevant work experience helps students relate business concepts to local examples, both in AVCE/GNVQ work and AVCE research projects. The best Year 13 work shows good primary and secondary research integrated into projects, and in one very good project, ratio analysis was used well to measure staff absenteeism rates in a local company. Students' notes are usually clear and comprehensive.
97. Weaknesses lie in the interpretation and analysis of numerical data. In a Year 13 AVCE lesson students displayed a good grasp of market segmentation but found calculating the percentage of market share held by different segments difficult. In the weakest assignments, large chunks of

irrelevant text are downloaded from the Internet with little critical evaluation. Some reports have poor paragraphing, incomplete bibliographies, and show insufficient use of the “web” for research.

98. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good on all courses. Teachers’ strong and secure subject expertise underpins discussion with students and lessons have a clear focus and good pace. There is an engaging mix of activities combining individual and group work, often involving computer use. In a good Year 12 AS level marketing lesson students explored key features of niche markets and evaluated the way firms could improve profitability by producing new specialist products. In a very good Year 12 AVCE lesson students developed their key skills by exploring and handling statistical data on leisure companies from the “web” and worked in groups to evaluate their results. In weaker lessons some students in groups find tasks too difficult, and leave the work to others without the teacher intervening. There is scope for students to improve writing and drafting skills in discussion-based lessons.
99. Assessment procedures meet examining board requirements very well. Marking is thorough and regular, and helps students improve, although some would welcome more use of written targets on their work. The assessment of AVCE assignments clearly shows students how to obtain higher grades. Intermediate GNVQ assignments incorporate key skills of communication, application of number (numeracy) and information technology, although assessment has not yet commenced.
100. Students work very well, both individually and in groups, to complete their tasks. Male and female students show a mature attitude in discussion and support each other well when evaluating work. In lessons students showed a good capacity to work independently to improve their own work by incorporating relevant research from local business visits and “web” sites.
101. In Business Studies rooms students have access to computers which most use confidently but there are comparatively few computers for sixth formers’ private study. ICT is used well for the presentation of assignments and projects but a minority of students do not paragraph their word processing properly or check spelling and grammar carefully. Students are beginning to make good use of “Powerpoint” for presenting slides that integrate text and graphics. Few examples of the use of spreadsheets for modelling financial problems were seen.
102. The leadership and management of business courses is good, and a clear sense of direction is shown through the well-planned introduction of the new AVCE and AS level courses. Schemes of work fully meet examination requirements, and the department’s progress in meeting school improvement targets is good. Students’ progress is well monitored over time, with their performance measured against predicted grades. The local consortium brings male and female students together in a good range of courses and helps provide efficient class sizes. Further development in the management of key skills across the consortium is required. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, and the department is well placed to improve further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

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

Strengths

- A-level results which are above the national average
- Students use presentation software with confidence
- Higher attaining students apply ICT imaginatively to situations requiring the complex use of ICT
- Planning for the teaching of ICT is good

Areas for improvement

- Preparation for students who enter the A-level ICT course
- Courses matched to the needs of all students in the sixth form

103. In 2000, A-level ICT results were above the national average for both those attaining the higher grades and those achieving a pass. Performance has improved over the last three years and, since attainment by students at GCSE was also above average over that time, represents satisfactory achievement. At AS level in 2001 more students achieved a pass than in the previous year and there was a more even distribution of results for each grade.

104. Most Year 12 students on the AS level ICT course are achieving at an expected level but some lower-attaining students are limited by a lack of experience from Year 11 as not all students entering the sixth form course studied ICT or Business Education as a subject at GCSE level. Most students are tackling their new sixth form courses with confidence and, for example, can work independently, and in groups, to compose slide-show presentations. They use their prior knowledge of a range of software applications including spreadsheets and databases.
105. In Year 13 A-level (A2) ICT students draw upon good experiences of the previous year, which includes GNVQ and GCSE in a range of subjects, including some taken at a Tertiary College by new entrants to the sixth form. Currently, this is an assured group who deal with complex tasks in a variety of ways by relating ICT concepts to real life and work situations. There is good achievement in the analysis of data and understanding of the processes involved. Similarly, in a Business Education lesson, devoted entirely to ICT, a high level of information interrogation skills was shown while using data from the Internet and CD-ROMs.
106. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. In one third of lessons seen it was good or very good. Teachers have competence in the subject and some have worked in industry and use ICT significantly in Business Education. In Year 12 AS level ICT, students are challenged by teamwork in the completion of a project using a presentation package. Students are encouraged to work on ICT graphics and in data collecting aspects of the course without using a computer. In Year 13, teaching is at its best when there is a brisk pace, lively interaction and when all students are engaged, for example, in repetitive data-manipulation in an Internet session on secondary information sources. The teaching is less effective when dealing with examination questions without visual aids. Inexperienced teachers sometimes lack appropriate methods and strategies, have limited classroom management skills and insufficient health and safety awareness.
107. Written work required of the students is often in the form of structured examination-type questions. Both teacher and student evaluation is used. Errors in paragraphing, sentence construction and page header and footer information sometimes go uncorrected. Higher-attaining students in Year 12 use effective screen shots and flow charts in their work. Lower-attaining students sometimes use inappropriate information and have inadequate organisational skills. In Year 13 the work of higher-attaining students shows a high level of investigative and research skills, for example in a project based on a Probationary Ministers System. Scrutiny of a random sample of students' work on the network server revealed gaps in Desktop Publishing capability.
108. Students of ICT as an examination subject are conscientious and interested in the subject. Many use challenging extension activities and are proficient in the formatting of documents and the attaching of files to e-mail. Careful preparation and organisation of tasks enabled a student with special needs to achieve as well as other students. In Year 12, lower-attaining students use a trial and error method of charting information rather than a template provided. In Year 13, most students understand and can develop complex ICT systems in a variety of contexts. For example, when capturing and translating data before using it in an ICT system such as in a stock-control database. They are confident in multi-tasking and keyboarding skills. Visits to external events are mainly through business education but lack sufficient focus in ICT for some students.
109. The school is currently trialling an ICT Key Skills course, but many sixth form students are unable to pursue this optional course partly because of the complexity of the timetable and assessment. Of those following the course, a number are underachieving due, in part, to the lack of time available. Lessons are planned but often rushed and dependent on worksheets, due to pressure of time. A mismatch of teacher expectation and student learning needs, especially for less confident students, results in some students declaring a dislike of working with computers. The achievement in ICT Key Skills assessment in 2001 was disappointing as three quarters of students were unsuccessful in achieving a pass grade.
110. Management of the subject at sixth form level is just satisfactory. Responsibility for ICT at this level is vested in the Head of Business Studies. The school is currently reviewing its strategy to maintain the previously high standards of teaching that have resulted in rising standards at GCSE and A-level ICT. Recent difficulties in recruiting teaching staff with appropriate experience have yet to be fully resolved. There is a shared willingness to succeed and planning and assessment of ICT are robust. Schemes of work strongly underpin teaching. Resources are used well. There is a need for a coherent policy for ICT at this level, to include identification of specific learning targets for identified groups, which will be dependent on the development of a more coherent whole-school policy and culture than that which currently exists.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus for the inspection was on art and drama as in other aspects of the arts numbers were insufficient to provide valid evidence or courses were taught elsewhere.

Art

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching
- Standards of work
- The promotion of independent learning
- Leadership and management of the department
- The creative and intellectual effort that students make in their studies

Areas for improvement

- Resources for information and communications technology
- Lack of separate studio facilities for the sixth form, which will impact on the provision as the present Year 12 move into Year 13.

111. The small numbers taking GCE AS level and A-level art in recent years do not enable valid comparisons to be made with national results in those examinations. All students successfully complete the courses with very good results. There is a strong upward trend in examination results, evident over the past three years, and the numbers attracted to AS and A level art are rising rapidly, as standards rise.
112. Students in year 12 achieve well and make very good progress. They demonstrate well-developed art skills and are very perceptive in their observation of the work of important artists. They recognise the work of the majority of artists in an introductory slide presentation. They refer to the work of Helen Chadwick and discuss her use of overlaid images, using appropriate terms to describe her work. One student has produced a very imaginative collage of a cello, on which she has overlaid the image of a ballerina. Standards of sketchbook work and presentation are high, with very good annotation to explain and develop their work.
113. Students in year 13 make very good progress in exploring a wide range of media over time. They demonstrate the ability to develop their personal and contextual studies through multi-media compositions and constructions. Their work shows a thoughtful and penetrating approach that demands sound research and commitment to the theme under study. One student has studied the Book of Revelations and researched William Blake, Spencer, Caravaggio, Michelangelo and other artists who worked on religious themes. Annotation shows clear evidence of the deepening of her understanding of the Biblical forecast and its relationship to recent historical times and events. Another, who has a very diverse cultural background, explores the places she 'escapes to' in different cultural arenas. This takes her into a wide variety of artistic themes from different cultures.
114. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have an excellent grasp of their subject and teach with confidence and enthusiasm. During an introductory slide show, the teacher was able to draw the students into each of the works of art being studied, by clear perceptive comments that stimulated the students' own perceptions and deepened their understanding of the artist's work. The vocabulary of art is used fluently in lessons and students reflect this in discussions of their own work. Excellent teaching of life studies is provided at an off site studio facility. Students in year 13 make very good progress in their observation of figures and their life drawing skills. Teachers have very high expectations of standards of work and promote independent learning effectively, enabling students to pursue their own line of research and development of their themes.

115. Annotation of project work is a strong feature of both AS level and A-level studies. Students are expected to annotate in their own words, from research they undertake, and their written work is assessed along with their artwork. Annotation is presented to a high standard in sketchbooks and on finished work. It provides the context from which they have developed their work and shows the personal direction they have taken in their research.
116. Students enjoy art lessons and make use of the department to continue their studies in their own time. They apply themselves well to the intellectual and creative demands of their work. The majority have a strong personal commitment to their studies and are able to persevere through lengthy project research and development. In discussion they reveal firmly held values about life and are willing to explore their personal feelings as they look into religious, cultural and social themes. They work confidently and their work reveals the independence of their thinking and artistic application. Two year 13 students plan and teach a lunchtime art club for Key Stage 3 pupils.
117. The department has no computers and students have to use their own home computers or those in the library to research the Internet. Although teachers have had training and are keen to use computers for art, the lack of hardware and software programmes makes this impossible in the context of art lessons. Portfolios show good evidence of Internet research, but no digital imaging or animation.
118. The department benefits from strong leadership, efficient management, effective planning and a clear sense of direction that is shared by department staff. Excellent relationships ensure that students are understood and valued and given sound guidance as they work towards higher education or the world of work. Their progress is monitored effectively through the school and the high standards of achievement in examinations confirm that they have been well supported in their studies and in their personal development.
119. The lack of information communication technology in the department is adversely affecting the prospects of digital art being developed in the school. Although the accommodation for art in the lower school is good, there is no separate area in which the sixth form students can set up their work and pursue their studies away from lower school teaching. With so few students at the present time, this is not having a negative impact on standards. As numbers taking up art and design at AS level and A-level level grow (they have grown from 2 to 9 in three years), then the pressure on accommodation will make it increasingly difficult for students to work on their extended studies. The small number of very good displays of student's work around the school makes a positive and valued contribution to the physical presentation of the school.

Drama

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

Strengths

- Very good teaching influenced by professional theatre experience and practical expertise
- Meticulous planning for the delivery of an enriched curriculum
- Rigorous monitoring and detailed analysis of students' progress and achievement
- High level of students' enthusiasm and engagement particularly in performance activities

Areas for improvement

- Activities are restricted in some lessons as the availability of performance space is limited
- Students' personal reading to widen their understanding of the cultural and historical context of drama and theatre
- The clarity and fluency of students' vocal skills

120. Drama is a popular subject for students, many of whom who have not previously studied the subject to examination level. The retention rates from year to year are satisfactory and in relation to their earlier experience most students make good progress.
121. The good standards reported at the time of the previous inspection have continued but the performance of students in the GCE drama and theatre studies examination has fluctuated over time. At AS level the pass rate has been generally in line with the national average until 2001 when it fell below that level. In 2000 the proportion of students securing a pass in the A-B range was significantly above the national average. At A-level the pass rate is consistently higher than the national average but few students secure a pass at the higher grades.

122. In the course of the inspection it was possible to observe only four lessons. Evidence from those lessons, and from a scrutiny of students' work, confirms that at this early stage of the course there is a wide variation in the confidence with which Year 12 students approach practical and written tasks, the skill with which they carry them out and the bank of knowledge acquired. Most demonstrate a standard of acting skills in voice and movement appropriate to their earlier experience and are beginning to explore the relationship between scenarios, texts and dramatic styles.
123. Year 13 students demonstrate some competence in applied practical skills, individually and within groups and their creative work shows an appropriate understanding of structure. Dramatic skills are evident in the detailed characterisation and stage 'presence' of individual expositions. The use of accent and vocal inflection are beginning to develop and many students demonstrate some flair and originality in the portrayal of characters. Some students display an appropriate knowledge of some theatrical influences, conventions and styles related to the development of theatre and the techniques of some leading practitioners are reflected in their work. All show an appreciation of the roles of director and actor and the standard of performance of individuals, in relation to their earlier experience, is good, as much work demonstrates originality, excitement and occasionally intellectual energy.
124. The quality of teaching was very good in three of the lessons observed and good in the fourth. Diligent planning, variation of pace and organisational strategies, high expectations and excellent rapport stimulated students to share and develop ideas for dramatic exploration. Their performance skills, understanding of dramatic traditions and genres, and analysis of textual interpretations were developed by consistently effective, but unobtrusive teaching, which empowered them to make their own choices and to evaluate their own work. The more experienced were challenged by a demanding level of questioning, insistence on the use of technical language and supportive but rigorous criticism. Demonstrations to aid students' understanding of the styles and conventions of drama were enlivened by the teacher's own professional performance skills.
125. All students respond well to the enthusiastic approach of their teacher and report a respect for his theatrical experience. Most have a very positive attitude to their work and an appropriate sense of urgency, particularly in Year 13. All perform willingly in mixed-gender groups and are sensitive to the strengths and weaknesses of individuals. Many are keen to experiment with ideas, employ critical reflection and revise their work to improve standards but the inexperience of some year 12 students occasionally inhibits the clear expression of thoughts and ideas.
126. Students have access to a limited range of technical resources to support their understanding and use of space, light and sound in production but the use of information and communication technology to support their creativity in set design and contextual research is under exploited. Activities in some lessons are restricted by a shortage of specialist teaching space.
127. The delivery of the curriculum is enhanced by a programme of educational visits, support from the English department in the understanding of dramatic texts, the opportunity to participate in a range of productions and performances throughout the year, and the personal flair of the teacher. The subject makes a significant contribution to broadening the spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding of students and is poised to assist in the delivery of key skills.
128. Exceptionally conscientious and energetic leadership provides a clear direction for the subject. A strong commitment to raising standards is supported by methodical assessment, rigorous analysis of attainment and the training of other staff to assist in the delivery of post-16 work. The challenging task of managing the subject would be eased, and effectiveness further improved, by some training for key personnel in the translation of expectations into efficient management practice, as identified in the subject's development plan.

HUMANITIES

The inspection focus was on history, psychology and sociology, but geography was also sampled. In geography, examination results in 2000 and 2001 were above national averages for those achieving pass grades and the higher A-B grades.

History

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good and standards are improving
- Average and below average students are achieving to their full potential
- Students are enthusiastic

Areas for improvement

- There is room to more effectively challenge the most able students
- The number of students opting for the subject at A-level is still low

129. Students' performance in GCE A-level examinations over the past three years has shown some fluctuation. Results in 2000 were below the national averages both for the proportion of students achieving a pass and the proportion achieving grades A or B. However, in 1999 results were above average for the number achieving A or B grades and the 2001 results show some improvement over those for 2000.
130. Observation of lessons and a scrutiny of samples of students' work show that standards are generally appropriate for the stage of the course and are showing some improvement. Comparison of individual students' AS level results in history in 2001 with the GCSE grades they obtained before starting the sixth form show that they have achieved better than expected. Several students in Year 13 achieved a B grade at AS level in 2001 even though they had not studied history at GCSE level. This represents higher standards than in recent A level outcomes. There are several reasons for this. Teaching is now focusing more effectively on strategies that enable students to organise and deploy their historical knowledge so that they are enabled to develop better skills in analysis and the use of historical sources. The department has also changed its syllabus so that periods of study better match students' interests.
131. Students analyse historical sources critically and evaluate a wide range of evidence to produce well-balanced and convincing arguments. This was evident in a lesson where they considered whether the Treaty of Versailles was the product of revenge or a rational response to World War One. Students are able to articulate their own views with growing confidence in paired and small group discussion. They achieve well in lessons overall. Average and below average students are enabled to work to their full potential; there is still scope to more effectively challenge the most able and thereby increase the number of A and B grades gained in the subject.
132. The quality of teaching students receive is good overall. Teaching is well planned and confronts students energetically with issues surrounding evidence and with the significance of historical controversies. Teachers make very good use of resources such as departmentally produced materials which support and extend what students learn in lessons. This was evident, for example, in a Year 13 lesson where students analysed a variety of historical sources using a chart prepared by the teacher. This chart enabled them to more effectively evaluate the sources and then to make judgements on relevant historical events. Teachers also make creative use of music and lyrics to illustrate themes in modern American history. Assessment of students' work is thorough and informative.
133. The subject is well managed by an experienced head of department. She has developed a range of strategies designed to improve standards in history and increase its popularity as a subject in the sixth form. She has a clear view of the priorities for the subject and leads an enthusiastic and committed team.

Sociology

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

Strengths

- Standards are above average in both years 12 and 13
- Teaching is good and uses a range of methods which result in effective learning
- Students are enthusiastic and sociology is a popular subject

Areas for improvement

- In a minority of lessons, teachers' questions do not help students to develop detailed answers.

134. In 2000 and 2001, GCE A-Level results in sociology were above the national averages both for the proportion of students achieving a pass and the proportion achieving grades A or B.
135. The standards of attainment observed during the inspection were in line with those shown by recent examination results. The work of Year 13 students is at a level which is above the standard expected, while that of the Year 12 students represents above average attainment for the stage of the course they have reached. Year 13 students have a good understanding of the theoretical foundations of the subject. They work hard to apply theoretical concepts to a range of familiar and unfamiliar situations. Students' notes show an ability to pick out the important points relating to theoretical perspectives, individual theorists and research studies. Files are well organised and provide a valuable learning resource. Year 12 students have made a good start to their course. Their conceptual understanding is better than that normally found at this stage of the course, especially given that they have not previously studied sociology. Their achievement is good.
136. The teaching of sociology is good. Teachers' understanding of the subject enables them to give clear explanations of concepts, theories and principles. They are skilled in making use of anecdote to illustrate propositions and assumptions. A particular strength of the department is the range of strategies to help students to organise their knowledge effectively so that they write better analytical essays. Although in most lessons teachers ask searching questions which enable students to reinforce and extend their learning, there are occasions when teachers are less skilled in helping students to do this. Teachers' comments on students' written work are generally helpful with guidance on what they have done well and what they need to do in order to improve.
137. As a result of this good teaching, the students show enthusiasm for their learning. They show interest and insight in discussions in lessons, are keen to express their ideas but also ready to listen to and consider the views of others. This was evident in a Year 13 lesson when students considered whether all religions in Britain are declining equally.
138. The head of department provides good leadership and is managing the department well. Schemes of work are effective. Worksheets and other departmentally produced resources are of a high standard. Although accommodation is at present unsatisfactory, there are plans to provide the department with a permanent classroom in the near future.

Psychology

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

Strengths

- Growing numbers on the course are matched by year on year improvement in results
- A well qualified team of teachers bring the strength of varied specialisms to the different strands of the subject and produce a good standard of teaching
- In Year 13 coursework is a particular strength, showing considerable skill in the application of quantitative methods to experimental data.
- A department of strong teachers with very good leadership combines good internal communication and effective planning to offer coherent routes through a complex subject.
- Good relations between staff and students who report considerable interest in psychology, talk positively about their response to the subject and understand its application to a range of careers.

Areas for improvement

- Strategies to engage the quieter and more passive students and help them develop a more assertive learning culture.

139. During the four years that psychology has been offered, growing numbers have been matched by year on year improvements in the quality of results. In 2000, GCE A-level results were below the national average for overall pass grades and for the higher A-B grades. Eighteen candidates were entered for A-level in 2001 and results were close to the national average of 2000. Comparisons with prior GCSE grades show that students have achieved levels at or above those that would have been predicted. However, AS level results in 2001 were less satisfactory as ten of the twenty eight students entered were ungraded.
140. For Year 12 students, even at this early stage of the course, there is evidence of a good approach to the subject. They have made a good start, showing an understanding of the way psychological theory grows from the experimental testing of hypotheses, and, in the module on developmental psychology, showed the ability to apply critical analysis to the different theories of attachment. In the classroom behaviour is very good although some students are too passive to gain all the benefit they need from A-level studies, where a degree of assertion and self motivation is vital. Punctuality can also be an issue with the arrival of latecomers interrupting the flow of the lesson.
141. Students in the present Year 13 have produced excellent coursework, with exam board moderation confirming the high grades awarded by the school. The best students make confident use of complex statistical procedures applied to their experimental data, while the design of experiments and procedures for data collection reflect both personal ingenuity and a sound understanding of experimental method and ethics. Students' files are generally well maintained, many of them containing a mass of useful material abstracted from relevant websites.
142. The teaching seen was either good or very good. It was grounded in excellent subject knowledge, thorough preparation and good rapport with the students. Pace and variety is achieved by using a range of strategies (individual work, group discussions, nicely prepared quizzes, challenging questions to help recapitulate work learned). There are scrupulously maintained records of homework and coursework attainment, supported by good use of target setting and tracking. Students are issued with reports in which each person has a match of the grade to which they are currently working set against their target grade for AS or A-level.
143. Students respond to advice and help given by the department to those who plan to use the subject in their university studies, and have taken advantage of access to conferences and visits (for example to psychology open days at local universities, to the museum of science and to VIP lectures). There is good reinforcement of learning through reference to current issues in newspapers and magazines, and by the use of effective wall displays. Subscriptions to specialist magazines complement a growing library of books and resource materials which also provide extension material for the most able students, helping them not merely to do more work but to extend their understanding of the links within the subject and across other areas of experience.
144. Students make good use of the school's ICT provision. Course work is word processed, and there is good use of graphical display facilities of spreadsheet software to include well designed graphs, tables and diagrams. Many students have exploited a prompt sheet listing useful websites for psychology (ranging from professional associations, through university academic departments, to more esoteric sites such as forums on specific psychologists or theoretical models).
145. The appointment of a Head of Department in psychology both reflects the growing numbers taking the subject and adds the necessary structure to ensure that the department is now very well managed. There is good co-ordination of the three teachers contributing to the subject, effective departmental schemes of work clearly related both to the structure and attainment objectives. In staff training and development, good use has been made of opportunities presented both by the examination board and by the Association of Teachers of Psychology
146. The schemes of work chart a lucid route through a complex specification. In the evaluation of course work academic quality and rigour are secured by ensuring that all coursework is double marked, with the Head of Department acting as a final moderator. The allocation of hours and time is sensibly matched to the demands of each module, while the deployment of staff allows for the rotation of specialist staff into the areas where they bring the greatest academic strength. This distribution of modules among three staff, (each with a different background and curriculum strength) exposes students to a range of experience while maintaining continuity in each module.

147. The subject contributes significantly to understanding the spiritual dimensions of human experience, as well as paying close attention to ethical issues in experimental procedures. Access to the programme for students from other consortium schools brings levels of style and insight which would not be available in a single sex environment, although this also raises a need to attend to issues of equal opportunity in respect of gender and attainment: not all the male students who opt for the subject are in tune with the school's ethos and standards of behaviour, and there is some tendency for them to dominate discussion and perhaps marginalise the quieter girls.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English Literature, English Language and Literature, and French were the focus of the inspection. It was not possible to inspect German, as at the time of the inspection, no pupils from the school had elected to continue with the study of the language in the sixth form.

English

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

Strengths

- Many students achieve above average standards in coursework and examinations
- Very effective teaching captures students' interests and stimulates them to succeed
- Innovative leadership and efficient management of proficient practitioners provide clear vision and direction for the subject
- Efficient procedures for monitoring, assessing and evaluating the performance of students, and teachers promote a culture of improvement.

Areas for improvement

- The promotion and dissemination of students' work through display and publication
- Students' awareness of their responsibility to locate sources and to read widely beyond the set texts
- Access to, and appropriate application of, information and communications technology to support teaching and learning.

148. The opportunity to study the GCE English Literature, or the combined English Language and Literature course, at both AS level or A-level (A2) attracts a large number of students and the retention rate is high. They report and display a high level of enjoyment in their studies and this is matched by high standards of work and examination success.
149. The good standards reported at the time of the previous inspection have improved further. In 2000, the overall pass rate in the combined English language and literature course was above the national average and in English literature a higher than average number of students achieved a pass in the A-B range. The overall performance of year 13 students in the GCE A-level examinations is now above the national average particularly the proportion securing the higher grades. The results for Year 12 students in the new GCE AS level examination in 2001 were close to the national average. The department's flexible approach to course entry means that for many students these outcomes indicate good progress.
150. The students in Year 12 are currently at the early stages of the courses but already the discipline associated with the advance study of language and literature is emerging. Many students use spoken and written language with some poise and accuracy and can structure a logical response or argument. In the lessons observed they were able to analyse and evaluate a range of texts and were developing the ability and confidence to explain and clarify relationships and comparisons. Some students need to develop further their range of background reading.
151. The confident, fluent and perceptive oral contributions of Year 13 students reveal a sophisticated awareness of both literary and social issues. In the lessons observed the level of close reading of A-level texts was often of a high order. In response to the challenges posed by teachers, students sustained analysis of some carefully selected and demanding texts linking understanding of style and structure to meaning, purpose and context. They could also articulate argument, opinion and alternative interpretations. Others showed some confidence in the linguistic and stylistic analysis of both speech and writing and employed a specialist vocabulary when sharing their observations. Many students are competent in their written work, much of which is perceptive, rich in relevant evidence and expressed in an appropriate style.

152. A consistently high degree of teacher commitment and subject knowledge contributes significantly to the high standards students attain and produces a quality of teaching which is usually good or very good and at times exhilarating. Conscientious planning provides a variation in pace and strategy to secure students' understanding of challenging new concepts. High expectations lead students to develop a critical and discerning approach to their work and to the work of others. In the role of consultant, teachers appropriately empower students to experiment as writers and to determine their personal stance. The teachers' enthusiasm for literature and language enlivens their teaching, energises the methods they use, captures students' interest and stimulates their learning.
153. In lessons students show a mature attitude, are motivated by the tasks, respond well to their teachers' high expectations and share their overt enthusiasm for the subject. Good relationships enable students to work successfully in mixed-gender groups where they enjoy debate and argument. They listen attentively to each other, and in class discussions, are conscious of the need to increase their concentration to compensate for the poor acoustics in the rooms. Their competence in the use of information and communication technology is reflected in the content and presentation of their work but the absence of hardware within the English suite restricts application in lesson time.
154. Students feel supported and value the willingness of peers and staff to assist beyond the classroom. They are set challenging written tasks which are marked effectively with constructive but critical comments. Difficulties arising from large groups are minimised by a rigorous monitoring scheme. Documented records of achievement and progress are maintained and course evaluation is thorough. The self-assessment and formative aspects of the comprehensive monitoring and assessment procedures are significant features.
155. Strong, visionary leadership, very efficient management, a team approach and honest evaluation support the delivery of the subject and the team's strong commitment to improvement and development. An enriched curriculum makes a valuable contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students.

French

The timing of the inspection at the beginning of the school year when the Year 12 students had only just embarked on the AS level course, and the fact that there are currently no Year 13 students has provided very little written evidence. The structure of the timetable enabled visits to only two lessons. As a result judgements are based on slight evidence.

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

Strengths

- Detailed lesson planning takes account of the wide range of attainment in the class
- Visits and exchanges, and the opportunity for work experience in France, provide opportunities for building up students' confidence and competence in the language.

Areas for improvement

- Students' knowledge of French grammar is insecure and the range of vocabulary and expression is limited, so that written and spoken French is anglicised and below the level which should be expected at the beginning of an AS level course
- Listening and reading skills need to be sharpened to deal with the more demanding aural and written texts

156. In recent years, numbers taking A-level French have been low. Results have been consistently below the national averages and no students have gained A or B grades. In 2001, although all four students passed, the highest grade awarded was C. Given that all the students had A* or A at GCSE level, these results represent under-achievement. The oral tests and the listening comprehension caused the most difficulty.
157. Students are finding the gap between GCSE and the requirements of AS level daunting. The little written work which they have produced so far is below the standard which might be expected at the beginning of the course. There are numerous errors of structure, verb forms, agreements and endings. Vocabulary is limited and students are unable to manipulate the language they know, with the results that their writing is very anglicised. However, work done in one of the lessons seen, where the students had to collect structures and vocabulary from the texts being studied and then reuse them to produce personal writing about their family life, resulted in a paragraph which was both more

accurate and more fluent. Students speak with good pronunciation and intonation but find difficulty in engaging in dialogue and speaking more than one sentence at a time. Again vocabulary and structure are limited. Because the lessons are conducted in French, students are used to understanding what is said to them; they have much more difficulty in adjusting to the taped aural texts which are much denser and spoken at speed. The reading texts with which the students are presented are also of a much greater difficulty than they are used to and they are still developing techniques to analyse and extract information from them. Important positive features of the provision are the opportunities to take part in visits and exchanges and to undergo work experience in France.

158. The teaching seen was satisfactory overall with some good features. Both teachers are good linguists (one a native speaker) who conduct their lessons confidently in French, setting, thereby, expectations that the students will follow and respond. The lessons seen were both prepared very thoroughly and the planning and tasks took into account the wide range of attainment in the class. Objectives were stated clearly and in one case students were able to read out the paragraphs they had written about family life, which demonstrated the good progress they had made during the lesson. The pace of lessons was generally brisk and was maintained by the setting of demanding time limits for the set tasks. Where there could be some improvement is in the exploitation of new aural texts and in extending speaking skills so that the students are able to engage in longer dialogues using a wider range of vocabulary and expression.
159. It is too early to assess the views of students since they are few in number and have been taking the subject for less than a month. The structure and contents of the course and the modes of assessment have been carefully explained to them and their initial experiences have been positive; they like the variety of experiences which they are having. Nevertheless, the transition from GCSE is a difficult one. In class they are attentive and co-operative, though they are reticent when answering orally and have difficulty in producing extended answers. The students are being helped to develop good approaches for understanding complex tapes and texts, which, if they persevere, will soon lead to improvement. Their files indicate a methodical approach to the subject
160. The course is taught by two teachers who, although they are well qualified and committed, are inexperienced at this level. Furthermore, the course is a new one and the scheme of work is being written as the course proceeds. The structure of the early units of the scheme is appropriate but it needs more detail in respect of methodology and assessment, and further consideration of the use of ICT. The head of department must continue to work closely with the colleagues teaching the course, in order to bring the necessary depth of expertise to this demanding situation.
161. The department should investigate why, given the very good results at GCSE level, only a small number of students currently take French in the sixth form, and consider offering alternative courses.