

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **IMBERHORNE SCHOOL**

East Grinstead

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 126088

Headteacher: Mr J Morrison

Reporting inspector: Mr D Cox  
10297

Dates of inspection: 22 – 25 October 2001

Inspection number: 190009

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 to 18
Gender of students:	Mixed
School address:	Imberhorne School Imberhorne Lane East Grinstead West Sussex
Postcode:	RH19 1QY
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ann Bolt
Date of previous inspection:	21 October 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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10297	David Cox	Registered inspector		<p>The school's results and students' achievements.</p> <p>How well are students taught?</p> <p>Resources.</p> <p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>Assessment.</p> <p>Leadership and management.</p>
13395	Joanna Illingworth	Lay inspector		<p>Students' attitudes, values and personal development.</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents and students.</p>
12499	Marie Durkin	Team inspector	English, Theatre Studies, English as an additional language	
30136	Dennis Johnson	Team inspector		
7428	Ray Jardine	Team inspector	Chemistry, Physics	
23528	Andrew Bird	Team inspector	Mathematics	
19866	Peter Austin	Team inspector	Art	

27407	Bill Stoneham	Team inspector	Economics and business, Travel and tourism	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students. Advice, support and guidance
19029	Brian Downes	Team inspector	Geography, French, Special educational needs	
10759	Lyne Bappa	Team inspector	History, Politics, Sociology	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Imberhorne School is much larger than most other secondary schools, and is a mixed 11 to 18 comprehensive school, situated in East Grinstead. The school operates on two sites. There are 1633 students on roll, which is a significant increase to when the school was last inspected. There are 299 students in the sixth form and the staying on rate is at least 65 per cent. There are more parents wishing to send their children to the school than there are places available. The school takes students mainly from the local area. Although there is a fairly large spread of social backgrounds, the overall social-economic circumstance of the students is well above average. The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average at three per cent and is similar to that at the time of the last inspection.

The school has a lower than average proportion of students with English as an additional language and there are two students at an early stage of language acquisition. Whilst the school attracts students from a wide spread of abilities the attainment of students on entry is above average. There are 285 students on the special educational needs register, which is broadly average. There are 36 students with statements of special educational need, which is broadly average.

Since the last inspection the school has become a Department for Education and Skills (DfES) designated Language College and is in the second phase of development. The school has won a number of national awards: Schools Curriculum Award, Investors in People, Artsmark, Sportsmark and the South East Regional Award winner for Languages and Export, and has twice been listed nationally as one of the 100 most improved schools.

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

This is a very good school. The very good quality teaching, combined with the students' very good attitudes, ensure that students' levels of attainment are improved significantly whilst they are at the school. The very good leadership provided by the headteacher, the governing body and other senior members of staff is successful in bringing about a commitment to improving standards in all areas of the school's performance. The school is providing good value for money overall and the sixth form is very cost effective.

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

- The examination results that students attain are well above the national average overall.
- The leadership provided by the headteacher, governors and senior staff has developed a culture of success that pervades all aspects of the life of the school.
- The school's management makes very good use of data to promote high standards.
- Students are mature young adults with very good attitudes to their work as a result of the very good provision made by the school for students' moral and social development.
- The very good teaching in the school promotes standards that are well above average by the end of Years 9 and 11; students achieve standards that are much better than would be expected given their attainment on entry to the school.
- The school's curriculum makes very good provision for enrichment activities.



### **What could be improved**

- The arrangements for religious education in Years 10 and 11 and in Years 12 and 13, an issue raised in the previous inspection report, still do not meet statutory requirements.
- Students in Years 12 and 13 have insufficient access to information and communication technology resources.
- There is insufficient accommodation for students in Years 12 and 13.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in October 1996. Improvements to the quality of teaching, which was already good at the last inspection, have ensured that levels of attainment have risen. The progress made by the main school and the sixth form is a result of the determination of the headteacher, the governing body and senior staff to improve even the smallest weaknesses and to promote an ethos of high expectation that permeates the school. The emphasis that the school's management has placed on improving teaching and learning has led to a very good teaching provision, which ensures that results in examinations are well above the national average in GCSE and GCE/GNVQ. The school's response to the key issues identified has been good although further work is needed in ensuring that there is a daily act of collective worship and the statutory requirements for religious education are met fully.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	C
A-levels/AS-levels	C	A	N/A	

**Key**

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

NB: National comparisons for 2001 were not available for GCE/GNVQ at the time of the inspection.

Results in the 2001 national tests for 14-year-olds were well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools results were well above average in science, above average in mathematics and average in English. The attainment of both boys and girls was similar. The trend in the school's results has been in line with the national trend.

Results in the 2001 GCSE examinations were well above the national average. These results represent very good levels of achievement. The attainment of both boys and girls was similar. The trend in the school's results has been in line with the national trend.

Results in the 2000 examinations at General Certificate of Education Advanced level/Advanced GNVQ were well above the national average compared with all maintained schools. There was no significant difference in the performance of male and female students. These results represent the best the school has achieved. Since the last inspection, results have showed a significant improvement. The headteacher and the governing body have set challenging targets for improvement. The 2000/2001 results indicate that the school has been successful in meeting these targets.

Standards of literacy and numeracy are well above average in Years 7 to 11. In Years 12 to 13 the standards that students attain in the key skills of communication and application of number are well above average; information technology skills are average.

In the work seen during the inspection, the standards that students attain by the end of Years 9 and 11 are well above average. From the time they enter the school until the end of compulsory education at age 16 students achieve very well. Year 13 students are achieving very well.

Students with special educational needs achieve very well at the school and make very good progress towards their individual targets. Higher attaining students, including those who are particularly gifted or talented, also make very good progress as a result of the specific provision that is being made for them. Students for whom English is an additional language make very good progress because of the good quality of support that they receive.

#### **STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Students are enthusiastic about school and learning. Most have very good attitudes. The few students that are inattentive in lessons respond promptly to teacher intervention.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Behaviour is very good in and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very Good. Students show a good deal of respect for the opinions of others. There is a good degree of harmony in the school. Relationships are excellent.
Attendance	Students' attendance is well above average.

#### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of students:</b>	<b>Years 7 – 9</b>	<b>Years 10 – 11</b>	<b>Years 12 – 13</b>

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

Teaching at the school is very good overall. The quality of teaching, and of the learning that such teaching promotes, is good in Years 7 to 9, very good in Years 10 and 11 and very good in Years 12 and 13. Teaching was at least satisfactory in nearly all lessons. In four out of five lessons teaching was at least good and in two out of every five lessons teaching was very good or better.

Teachers' high expectations, obvious from the start, are maintained throughout the lesson. Teachers often expect extended spoken answers in response to their questions to the class. Teachers expect answers to be detailed and to include the correct vocabulary. Such practice in forming clear explanations provides students with the necessary experience for producing detailed written answers in response to examination answers at a later stage. Usually there is little need for obvious management of students; behaviour is very good and there are excellent relationships, based on mutual respect, between students and teachers. Lessons provide a very good environment for learning. Students have the confidence to try things out, to attempt a more ambitious answer or to put forward an opinion, secure in the knowledge that the reactions of both teacher and fellow students will be sensitive and supportive.

Teaching of students with special educational needs and for those students for whom English is an additional language is very good.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school's curriculum makes very good provision for enrichment activities. Extra-curricular activities are of a high standard. Imberhorne School has twice been awarded a certificate of distinction in recognition of out of school enrichment activities.
Provision for students with special educational needs	The curricular provision for students with special educational needs is very good.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Very good. Students for whom English is an additional language make very good progress in the school. Other students, as well as teachers, show a willingness to help them.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good overall provision. Students' moral, social and cultural development is very good and has a strong impact upon students and the life of the school. Spiritual provision is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its students	Very good. Standards of care are high. This is a caring school where staff know the students well.

Many students do not have their full statutory entitlement to religious education in Years 10 to 13. There is a very good partnership between home and school, and the contribution that parents make to their children's learning raises standards of attainment.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The leadership provided by the headteacher, governors and senior staff has developed a culture of success that pervades all aspects of the life of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors have a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The monitoring of the school's performance is very thorough.
The strategic use of	Good. Resources are carefully deployed to those areas

resources	where they will provide the greatest benefit. The school applies the principles of best value extremely well.
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In Years 12 and 13 although teachers make very good use of resources, the lack of ready access to information and communication technology equipment severely constrains research opportunities and restricts students' ability to work on their own. The quality of teaching is constrained by insufficient accommodation; teachers have to continually improvise in their teaching strategies.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most parents are very positive about the examination results that students achieve.</li> <li>• Students have very good attitudes.</li> <li>• The school is open and welcoming.</li> <li>• The very good teaching.</li> <li>• The leadership provided by the headteacher.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school working more closely with parents.</li> <li>• Parents being kept better informed about how their child is progressing.</li> <li>• The school setting a more appropriate amount of work to be done at home.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. The majority of students attain well above average results and achieve very well because of the very good teaching. Students have very positive attitudes. The school is open and welcoming. The headteacher, governors and other members of the senior management team provide very good leadership.

The inspection team found that the annual reports do give parents an accurate picture of the student's learning and of targets for further progress. Homework is generally very appropriate. The school does work closely with parents.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM**

The sixth form of this large 11 to 18 comprehensive school has 299 students and is expanding. There is a very small number of minority ethnic students, mainly Icelandic, who speak English well. The school provides a wide range of subjects and vocational courses. At least two thirds of students from Year 11 continue into the sixth form, and a few students join from other schools. The overall attainment on entry to the sixth form is average. Most students embark on two-year programmes leading to A-level or the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE).

## **HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS**

The sixth form is very successful and is very cost effective. The sixth form has made good progress since the last inspection. Students learn very effectively and achieve good results. The sixth form caters very well for its students through a wide range of courses, and provides a very rich environment for personal development. Teaching in the sixth form is very good overall. Of the 13 subjects inspected in detail, teaching is good in most and is very good in economics and business, art, theatre studies, geography, history and English literature. The main strengths and areas that could be improved in the sixth form are:

### **Strengths**

- Students achieve good results overall, and do particularly well in economics and business, English literature, theatre studies and art.
- Students have excellent relations with members of staff and with one another. They respect their teachers and value the support that they receive from them.
- Teaching is very good, with a significant proportion of lessons that are very good or better; the consistency of good teaching leads to students acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding at a very good rate.
- The school offers a wide range of courses, and provides very rich opportunities for students' personal and social development.
- Leadership and management of this large sixth form are very strong, with a focus on raising standards in the development plan.
- The school provides very good guidance and support for students.

### **What could be improved**

- Students in Years 12 and 13 have insufficient access to information and communication technology resources.
- There is insufficient accommodation for students in Years 12 and 13.
- The school does not provide all students with access to sufficient religious education.
- Target grades for students are not used by all subjects to guide students on what they need to learn to achieve their target grades.
- Improve the quality of teaching of French by sharing the good practice that already exists in many lessons in Years 12 and 13.

Further areas for improvement are included in curriculum areas.

*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	Good. Results are well above the national average and rising; they are better than would be expected from students' GCSE results. Teaching is characterised by the good co-operative learning that takes place.
Chemistry	Good. Results are close to the national average in 2000 and students achieved well given their GCSE results. Teaching is generally good although marking, while satisfactory, could focus more attention on providing guidance to help students to improve
Physics	Good. Both the number of students taking up physics and the standards attained have been rising over several years. Results are close to the national average.
Economics and business	Very good. Standards in A-level economics and business are very high; teaching is consistently very good.
Travel and tourism	Good. This is a new course. The quality of teaching is good and this fosters good learning, however the quality of teaching is constrained by the inappropriate accommodation that is provided for this course
Art	Very good. Results are well above the national average. The quality of teaching in is consistently very good because it provides appropriate levels of challenge and a range of opportunities in a variety of media for all students.
Theatre studies	Very good. Results are well above the national average. Some students enter the course without having studied drama at GCSE and the progression of all students by the end of Year 13 is very good. There are outstanding relationships between staff and students.
Geography	Very good. Results are well above the national average and continue to improve. Teachers have a very good subject knowledge that enables students to learn not only the factual content for the course, but also the interpretation skills necessary for success.
History	Very good. Results in 2000 were well above the national

	average, with most students achieving very well. The teaching of history is very good; it is well planned and reflects strength of subject knowledge and understanding.
Government and politics	Good. Results in 2000 were well above the national average. Teaching on the new GCE AS-level and the Year 13 A-level course is good leading to students achieving well.
Sociology	Good. Examination results are consistently well above the national average and achievement is good. Teaching is good: lessons are effectively focused and enable students to learn effectively.
English literature	Very good. Results are well above the national average. In the very good and outstanding lessons there is a brisk pace, students are clearly motivated and a large amount of work is completed. High expectations create an undergraduate atmosphere and an intellectual response from the students.
French	Satisfactory. Results in 2000 were well above the national average. Over the period since the last inspection, the numbers of students entered for A-level has remained relatively low. The quality of teaching is satisfactory.

A very good health and social care lesson was seen which led to students achieving very well. One lesson of AS-level biology was observed. In this lesson, very effective teaching enabled students to carry out their own strategies for investigations about the action of enzymes to a good standard. One lesson of AS-level psychology was observed. In this lesson, very effective teaching enabled students to carry out an evaluation and to develop the students' technical vocabulary of the subject. In a GCE AS-level German lesson, the teaching was satisfactory.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Very good support and guidance is maintained throughout Years 12 and 13. Students are well inducted into the sixth form. Information about sixth form courses is very good. Students are very well informed about career options and opportunities beyond school. The use made of assessment in planning the curriculum is good. There is a rich wealth of assessment data available to subjects although its use is not always consistent.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The quality of leadership and management of the sixth form is very good overall. The head of sixth form is providing excellent leadership and very clear educational direction for this part of the school. Development planning is strong and has a central focus on raising standards. The governing body plays a very effective part in the leadership of the sixth form. There is insufficient accommodation and insufficient access to information and communications technology.

## STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of teaching is very good and teachers are friendly and give freely of their time.</li> <li>• The excellent extra-curricular provision including trips abroad.</li> <li>• Students have a clear understanding of what the school aims to do and how it goes about its work.</li> <li>• Those students new to the school in Year 12 have a very good induction into the workings of the school. They are made to feel very welcome by teachers and students alike.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of accommodation, there is insufficient space for independent learning.</li> <li>• Access to information and communication technology.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with the positive views of the students. The quality of teaching is very good and it promotes very good learning and achievement. The school provides a rich and diverse range of activities for students. Students are made aware of how the school goes about its work and the induction system is very good. The inspectors found that there is insufficient accommodation and access to information and communication technology is limited.

## COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLS

*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 school reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to "very weak".*

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**The examination results that students attain are well above the national average overall.**

1. Results in the national tests for 14 year-olds in 2001 were well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. The results in science were particularly pleasing because they were also well above average in comparison with schools with a similar number of students eligible for free school meals.
2. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2001 were well above the national average and the proportion of A\* and A grades was twice the national average. Virtually all students leave the school with a qualification.
3. Results in the 2000 GCE/GNVQ examinations were well above the national average for all maintained schools. Results were either well above or above the national average in most subjects. Of particular note were the results in GCE A-level economics and business, which were very high and were in the top five per cent of schools nationally.
4. Students achieve very well. From the time they enter the school until the end of compulsory education at age 16 students achieve very well. The evidence from both the inspection and from the statistical analysis of students' test results indicates that students achieve very well. The rate at which students make progress is usually a result of the quality of teaching that they receive, so that where teaching is very good, the standards attained by students are higher than expected.
5. Students also achieve very well in Years 12 and 13. This is because of the very good teaching they receive and their very good attitudes to the school. Because students are very well motivated and behave as responsible young adults, they make the most of the opportunities for learning that the school provides. Overall, students' attitudes and values promote high standards of academic attainment.

**The leadership provided by the headteacher, governors and senior staff has developed a culture of success that pervades all aspects of the life of the school.**

6. One feature that stands out in the leadership of the school is the lack of complacency. Parents say that the school is always seeking to improve and this is certainly true. This drive to improve is shared by staff and governors; they all know that they should always be asking how standards could be raised. There are many examples of this approach in action. Each year there are 'subject reviews' where heads of departments are questioned in great detail about the examination results in their subjects. Even in high achieving

subjects, such as science, questions are raised such as how the proportion of students reaching Level 7 can be increased. In subjects where there have been relatively disappointing results, such as GCSE results in history, the school is seeking ways of improving standards.

7. The headteacher is held accountable by the governing body. Governors have a very good knowledge of the school and are extremely well informed about standards. They are well aware of relative weaknesses and what is being done about them. The school development plan contains very clear targets for improvement; all of which are linked to raising standards. The governing body has a calendar for reviewing the progress made towards the school targets, with deadlines for each of the initiatives. Governors also use their expertise well and play their part in leading the school forward.
8. There is a very high level of delegation to senior managers in the school. The other members of the senior management team share the headteacher's determination to improve; they carry out their roles extremely well. For example, the standards of students' personal development are expected to be just as high as their academic achievement.
9. The impact of the leadership and management is a school where high standards are the norm; academic standards are generally well above average and the personal development of students is very good. The school is providing good value for money.

**The school's management makes very good use of data to promote high standards.**

10. The school is rich in data on the performance of students. The school has been using data about students on entry to the school for a number of years and comparing the same students' test and examination results with their attainment on entry to gain an accurate picture of the progress made by individual students. The school has used this information to develop a model to predict how, given their attainment on entry to the school, an individual student should perform in examinations. The results of these predictions are used in several different ways.
11. Teachers are provided with lots of information that makes clear the potential for an individual student. Teachers can then plan their lessons to accurately reflect the levels of attainment of the students and match the work more closely to their needs. Heads of departments use the information to place students in appropriate teaching groups or sets. In this way, students who may be on the special educational needs register or those who are gifted and talented are appropriately challenged. All students are made aware of their academic targets from mid way through Year 7 until they leave the school. Both students and parents are made aware of these targets at least once a term.

12. The use of data also extends to the school's pastoral system, which is very well integrated with the student's academic records. The result of this integrated system is that form tutors have a very good understanding of their students' strengths and weaknesses and are able to provide support that is appropriate for the individual. From Year 8 onwards, students are provided with tutor mentors that monitor and evaluate each student's progress. Support programmes are provided if it is thought a student is underperforming.

**Students are mature young adults with very good attitudes to their work as a result of the very good provision made by the school for students' moral and social development.**

13. Students have very good attitudes to the school; they like their school very much and speak highly of the education they receive. Students often proudly asked inspectors during the week what they thought of their school. Students place great value on the accessibility and helpfulness of the teachers and other support staff; they appreciate the activities that the school offers and support events outside lessons. Parents praise the positive attitudes of their children.
14. The school makes very good provision for the moral development of students. The school's aims stress individual responsibility and accountability and are understood by all. A well-organised system of rewards and sanctions sharpens perceptions of right and wrong, as do the commendable role models set by the staff and senior students. The excellent relationships that exist between staff and students encourage students to discuss issues of a moral nature openly.
15. A very strong feature of the school is the way in which it encourages and manages the social development of the students. There are many opportunities for students to work together both in school and on external visits. In the school foyer there is an excellent display of how students worked together on various trips and the fun had by all when the new sports facilities were opened. There were many examples throughout the week where staff gave freely of their time to support students who were experiencing difficulties with work; there is a strong bond between teachers and students. Students enjoy their work with each other and their teachers in an atmosphere of achievement and respect.
16. The standard of behaviour overall is very good. In almost all lessons students listen very well to the teacher and to each other. They participate readily and apply very good intellectual and creative effort. Most show sustained concentration and work with commitment; as was seen in a Year 10 art and design class where students were engrossed in the topic. The students held the teacher in high regard and responded very positively and in a mature manner. Around the school behaviour is sensible and orderly. When necessary, for instance at lunchtime, students queue with patience and good humour. The atmosphere in the dining areas is relaxed and sociable.

Students are frequently courteous and helpful. Many show polite interest in visitors and are keen that they should enjoy their visit.

17. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. A high level of informal respect pervades the school. Students are pleased to work together in pairs or groups. They are glad to contribute to the routines of the school. These mature and responsible qualities were demonstrated to excellent effect in a Year 12 health and social care class. Students carried out a difficult role-play situation and made critical and constructive comments about the performance of other students.

**The very good teaching in the school promotes standards that are well above average by the end of Years 9 and 11; students achieve standards that are much better than would be expected given their attainment on entry to the school.**

18. Teaching at the school is very good. Teaching is at least satisfactory in nearly all lessons. In four out of five lessons teaching is at least good and in two out of every five lessons teaching is very good or better.
19. The teaching is excellent or very good in a significant number of lessons in the school. There are certain features that are common to many of these very good lessons and they provide clues to ways in which the satisfactory lessons could be improved. The start of the most successful lessons is particularly significant. The beginning of the lesson is usually brisk, lively and challenging; it immediately makes students think. In science, where many of these lessons are found, there is always a demanding 'starter' to engage students in thinking about science. The teacher is indicating from the outset that he or she expects students to work hard but also that there is enjoyment and satisfaction to be gained from such learning.
20. Teachers' high expectations, obvious from the start, are maintained as the lesson continues. In an art and design lesson, for example, the teacher used very good examples of previous students' work to indicate to students just what they too could achieve. Teachers often expect extended spoken answers in response to their questions to the class. In English, teachers expect answers to be detailed and to include the correct vocabulary. Such practice in forming clear explanations provides the experience necessary for producing detailed written answers in response to examination questions at a later stage.
21. Once teachers have gained students' full attention they keep up the momentum, often with a series of short, focused tasks so that there is no opportunity for students' concentration to flag. Usually there is little need for obvious management of students; behaviour is very good and there are excellent relationships, based on mutual respect, between students and teachers. When necessary, however, teachers are quick to notice and deal with any straying of attention or loss of effort.



22. Lessons provide a very good environment for learning. Students have the confidence to try things out, to attempt a more ambitious answer or to put forward an opinion, secure in the knowledge that the reactions of both teacher and fellow students will be sensitive and supportive.

**The school's curriculum makes very good provision for enrichment activities.**

23. The school's curriculum makes very good provision for enrichment activities. Through a West Sussex Local Education Authority initiative called 'Challenge 21', students tackle key skills as well as involving themselves in various school and community based projects. Such schemes are successful in helping students to develop responsibility and other skills.
24. A further excellent feature of the school's curriculum is the strong and developing partnerships that have been established with the local community. This is particularly evident in the school's very well managed vocational curriculum. Students following AVCE and GNVQ options benefit from the curricular partnerships that have been established. For example, in health and social care, students work with two local health centres. In one case, as part of their course requirements, students have developed an Internet site for one of the centres. The school is justifiably proud of its reputation as a centre of excellence for vocational education and this is characterised by an annual health and social care conference held in partnership with some other local schools. This enterprising venture is believed to be the only one of its type in the country.
25. ImberExtra follows the principles of the national charity Education Extra. Imberhorne School has twice been awarded a certificate of distinction in recognition of out of school enrichment activities. Under the banner of ImberExtra, the school organises regular holiday clubs for primary aged pupils. These make use of Imberhorne students who have undertaken leadership programmes. During the week, ImberExtra organises a wide range of sport and information and communication technology activities. Year 11 and Year 12 students undertake accredited leadership programmes in anticipation of supporting these activities. ImberExtra has also managed training programmes for adults wanting to work with students. Community use of the school facilities is outstanding with 17 clubs operating from the Imberhorne Lane site. The physical education department organises a wide and varied range of activities. A significant number of students participate in these activities.
26. Curricular arrangements are very good with a broad range of learning opportunities being offered. Students are offered considerable choice in their subject options. The school's commitment to inclusiveness is evidenced by the flexible entrance requirements for courses and the quality of advice that students are offered in preparation for the sixth form when in Year 11, and the support provided each summer following the publication of GCSE results. Such excellent advice enables the school to succeed in matching the

students' requirements to the courses being offered. The school is rightly proud of its success in providing all students with the courses of their choice.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**The arrangements for religious education in Years 10 and 11 and in Years 12 and 13, an issue raised in the previous inspection report, still do not meet statutory requirements.**

27. A key issue noted in the previous inspection report was that the school did not comply with the statutory requirements for the provision of religious education in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form and this is still the case. The school has introduced recently a GCSE in religious education for a group of 30 students. However, the current curricular arrangements in Years 10 and 11 and in Years 12 and 13 do not meet statutory requirements for all students.

**Students in Years 12 and 13 have insufficient access to information and communication technology resources.**

28. In Years 12 and 13 although teachers make very good use of resources, the lack of ready access to information and communication technology equipment severely constrains research opportunities and restricts students' ability to work on their own. In a Year 13 travel and tourism class, the lack of ready access to information and communication technology equipment and other office-based technology such as telephones, fax machines and e-mail, severely constrained role play and research opportunities. Both are essential components of the course. This lack of access is affecting standards and means that the students are disadvantaged. This is evidenced by the quality of some of the research work conducted by students.

**There is insufficient accommodation for students in Years 12 and 13.**

29. A significant amount of funding has been spent on improving accommodation over recent years. Expansion of student numbers in the main school and in the sixth form has brought about the accommodation difficulties. However, the quality of teaching of Years 12 and 13 students is still constrained by insufficient accommodation. The teachers have to continually improvise in their teaching strategies. Students are unhappy about the accommodation and the lack of sufficient space or quiet areas for independent learning. In economics and business, the very good teaching and learning is taking place even though some aspects of the accommodation are unsatisfactory. The main classroom that is used is adequate, but the lack of blinds, or curtains, makes it difficult to use videos and overhead projection presentations. This puts pressure on the teacher's planning to find alternative methods for covering relevant theory. In travel and tourism, one Year 12 lesson was conducted in a physics laboratory. The students undertook role-plays associated with customer complaints. The room was utterly unsuitable, but a good lesson, featuring good learning, ensued because of the skill and

experience of the teacher. The positive attitudes of the students also helped. Similar comments can also be made about a Year 13 lesson on the promotion of package holidays. This lesson was taught in a language classroom and there was no access to the Internet, so the students were severely limited in their opportunities to undertake research. The success of the lesson again owed much to the skills and experience of the teacher and the sensible attitudes of the students.

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

30. To raise further the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governors and senior management team should:

Ensure that the statutory requirements for religious education are met fully by teaching the full Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education in Years 10 and 11. (para 27)

### **Sixth form**

\*When funding becomes available, improve students' access to information and communication technology equipment. (para 28, 39, 48, 80, 92, 124, 123, 131 and 150)

\*When funding becomes available, provide sufficient accommodation. (para 29, 48, 80, 92, 119 and 123)

Ensure that the statutory requirements for religious education are met fully by ensuring that students in Years 12 to 13 have their statutory entitlement to religious education. (para 27 and 63)

### **Minor weaknesses in the sixth form**

Ensure target grades for students are used by all subjects to guide students on what they need to learn to achieve their target grades. (para 70, 97, 107, 115 and 134).

Improve the quality of teaching of French by sharing the good practice that already exists in many lessons in Years 12 and 13. (para 51 and 173)

\* Denotes already identified by the school for improvement.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 - 11	41
	Sixth form	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students		53

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Years 7 - 11</b>							
Number	1	11	19	9	1	0	0
%	2	27	46	23	2	0	0
<b>Sixth form</b>							
Number	2	21	21	8	0	0	0
%	4	40	40	16	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for Years 7 to 11 and/or the sixth form as each lesson represents more than two percentage point[s].

### Information about the school's students

#### Students on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	1334	299
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	38	0

#### Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	21	4
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	285	18

#### English as an additional language

	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	6

#### Student mobility in the last school year

	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	23
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	51

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	7.7

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	150	135	285

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	128	133	133
	Girls	128	113	121
	Total	256	246	254
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	90 (69)	86 (81)	89 (82)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	44 (28)	61 (52)	62 (45)
	National	32 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	110	129	120
	Girls	123	117	110
	Total	233	246	230
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	82 (84)	86 (83)	81 (81)
	National	65(64)	68(66)	64(62)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	31 (46)	60 (56)	54 (45)
	National	31(31)	42(39)	33(29)

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

n/a: Not available at the time of inspection.

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2001	112	109	221

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	74	111	111
	Girls	82	109	109
	Total	156	220	220

Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	69.9 (62)	98 (97)	99.6 (98)
	National	47.2(47.4)	88.9(90.6)	94.6(95.6)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per student	School	46.3(46)
	National	38.1 (38.4)

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

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

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	121	135	256

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	19.4	21.4	20.4 (16.6)	2.8	2.7	2.7 (4.2)
National	17.7	18.6	18.2 (17.9)	2.6	2.9	2.7 (2.8)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those students who achieved all those they studied	School	32	100
	National		82.5

**Ethnic background of students**

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	5
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	1
White	1621
Any other minority ethnic group	0

**Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Perman-ent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	1	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	73	1
Other minority ethnic groups	1	0

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	107
Number of students per qualified teacher	14.9

**Education support staff: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	29
Total aggregate hours worked per week	681

**Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76
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**Average teaching group size: Y7– Y11**

Key Stage 2	N/a
Key Stage 3	16.7
Key Stage 4	15.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	22.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	29.7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	4327810
Total expenditure	4447016
Expenditure per student	2734
Balance brought forward from previous year	34503
Balance carried forward to next year	-84703

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1621
Number of questionnaires returned	266

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	33	56	9	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	34	56	6	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	20	65	8	2	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	11	63	20	2	4
The teaching is good.	19	72	4	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	53	15	3	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	37	51	9	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	44	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	23	59	14	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	42	48	3	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	59	5	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	54	4	1	8



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

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

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

31. Results in the 2000 examinations at General Certificate of Education Advanced level/Advanced GNVQ were well above the national average overall when compared to all maintained schools. There was no significant difference in the performance of male and female students. These results represent the best the school has achieved. Since the last inspection results have showed a significant improvement.
32. In the 2000 examinations at GCE/GNVQ results were very high in comparison with the national average in economics and business and place the school in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Results were well above average in most other subjects with the exception of computer studies, home economics and sports studies where they were above average; chemistry, general studies, German and physics where they were average and biology where they were below average.
33. In the AS-level examinations in 2000, results were well above average in general studies, other social sciences and art and design; above average in health and social care and average in leisure and tourism.
34. In the most recent set of examinations in 2001 at GCE/GNVQ level, results declined slightly. However, whilst results overall declined slightly, an analysis of what students attained compared to their GCSE results shows that students achieved very well. At the time of the inspection there were no national figures for comparison with the results in the new AS-level examinations taken in Year 12, but the school's results are encouraging.
35. The headteacher, the head of sixth form and the governing body have set challenging targets for improvement. The 2000 results indicate that the school has been successful in meeting these targets.
36. The proportion of students that enter the sixth form varies from year to year and is between 65 and 80 per cent. Of these, nearly all students stay on to complete their courses.
37. Standards in the key skill of communication are well above average. Teachers are good at improving students' reading and writing in individual lessons. Students' reading skills are very good and sufficiently well developed to enable them to have access to the full range of subjects on offer. Most notably in English and history, students are set many tasks which require them to read extensively, to conduct their own research and generally to find pleasure in reading.

38. Students' writing skills are well above average. Students broaden and improve their writing skills in English, history and geography. Students structure their writing to best effect and re-draft it so as to improve its quality. Opportunities are provided for extended writing in a number of subjects, including English, history, science and French.
39. Standards in the key skill of application of number are well above average. Whilst there is no single approach to the teaching of numeracy the teachers do well. The majority of subjects make a good contribution to developing numeracy skills. In science, there are opportunities for students to use their understanding of formulae in calculations and they plot line graphs of rates of chemical reaction. When some lower attaining students have difficulties with their calculations, they are well supported by their teachers.
40. Standards in the key skill of information technology are average. Students enhance the presentation of their work using information and communication technology. However, in many subjects the lack of ready access to information and communication technology equipment severely constrains research opportunities and restricts students' ability to work on their own.
41. In the work seen during the inspection, the standards that students attain are well above average in economics and business, English literature, geography and art; above average in most other subjects with the exception of French where standards are average.
42. In the work seen during the inspection students are achieving very well overall. They are achieving very well in economics and business, art, theatre studies, history, geography and English literature; well in most other subjects with the exception of French where the level of achievement is satisfactory.
43. Year 13 students are achieving very well. The rate at which students make progress is usually a result of the quality of teaching that they receive, so that where teaching is very good, the standards attained by students are higher than expected. There is no significant difference in the achievement of male and female students.
44. Students with special educational needs achieve very well at the school and make very good progress towards their individual targets. Higher attaining students, including those who are particularly gifted or talented, also make very good progress as a result of the specific provision that is being made for them. Students for whom English is an additional language make very good progress because of the good quality of support that they receive. Other students, as well as teachers, show a willingness to help them.

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

45. Students have very good attitudes to the school, attend lessons regularly, and behave very well. The quality of relationships within the sixth form is excellent. Sixth formers also have excellent relations with students in the main

school and with members of staff. Their personal development is very good. Because they are very well motivated and behave as responsible young adults, they make the most of the opportunities for learning that the school provides. Overall, students' attitudes and values promote high standards of academic attainment.

46. The level of enthusiasm for school is high. Students enjoy learning, have high aspirations, and are hard working. They are eager to be involved in extra-curricular activities and the life of the school. They want to learn and to achieve well in lessons. They show interest in the subject and have very high levels of concentration. They are keen to answer questions and express their views. At the same time they are thoughtful and want to explore issues in depth. Last year a few students felt over-stressed and de-motivated, mainly because they were struggling to cope with the new GCE AS-level courses. Currently, attitudes to learning are consistently positive across the sixth form. There are no significance differences between those of males and those of females. Attitudes also vary very little according to subject or teacher. Students retain their interest and concentration even in the minority of lessons where the teaching is pedestrian. They also sustain their motivation outside the classroom and work hard at home. They are keen to succeed and to get good qualifications. There are no exclusions in the sixth form.
47. Students' attendance is very good, reflecting their very positive attitudes to learning. This contributes significantly to their success in completing courses and achieving very well in the sixth form. A very small minority of students do not like their chosen subjects and therefore change courses some after the start of Year 12, but very few are regularly absent from lessons or drop out of the sixth form altogether.
48. Students have excellent relations with members of staff and with one another. They respect their teachers and value the support that they receive from them. They are particularly appreciative of the way that teachers give up their free time to put on extra classes. Students work very well with one another in lessons. They listen to each other, and whilst they enjoy putting forward their own ideas, they respect other people's point of view. Their good social skills enable them to co-operate effectively in group tasks.
49. Students' very good personal development enhances their academic attainment. They are thoughtful and reflective in their approach to their work. Last year's survey of the views of Year 12 shows that they analyse their feelings and experiences objectively and try to learn from them. The majority is ambitious but realistic about their prospects for higher education and a career. Students also show initiative and the ability to accept responsibility, both in lessons and in the general life of the school. For example, they are keen to become 'senior students' and to take on duties such as organising fund-raising events for charity. Students organise their coursework and home study effectively. They respond well to a challenge and are willing to persevere with difficult tasks. The majority of Year 12 copes well with the change from GCSE to GCE AS-level. However, the school's own survey

shows that a small minority felt in need of more guidance while they are making the transition. Some students also felt that they needed to improve their independent study skills. The findings of the inspection give some support to this view. Opportunities for independent learning are sometimes restricted by shortcomings in the accommodation and insufficient access to information and communication technology. As a result, many sixth form students say that it is easier to work independently at home than in school. Some complain that they are unable to use the library for quiet study as much as they would like.

50. The last inspection report stated that good attitudes enhanced the progress of sixth form students. It said that they worked well collaboratively, took substantial responsibility for their own learning and responded positively to challenges. The school has made good progress since the last inspection by maintaining and building on these strengths.

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

51. The quality of teaching, and of the learning that such teaching promotes, is very good in Years 12 and 13. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all lessons seen. Four out of five lessons are taught to a standard that is at least good and two out of every five lessons are taught to a very good or excellent standard. The consistency of good teaching in Years 12 and 13 is a major strength of the school and leads to students acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding at a very good rate.
52. Thirteen subjects were inspected in detail. Teaching is very good in economics and business, art, theatre studies, geography, history and English literature; good in chemistry, physics, travel and tourism, government and politics and sociology. It is satisfactory in French.
53. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of their subjects. For example, in art, teachers possess very good knowledge of their subject and are well aware of the requirements of the courses they are teaching. This means they are able to communicate to students what they need to do to achieve high standards and they teach in such a way that students are appropriately challenged. This was seen happening in many lessons. This was evident, for example, in one teacher's demonstration of how to combine screen-print, stencil and hand-painted designs in a Year 12 assignment based on the study of the artist, Sonia Delaunay. Students responded positively to this teacher's enthusiasm for her subject and were excited by the results in their own screen-printed fabrics.
54. Teachers are good at improving students' skills of communication in individual lessons. Teachers in history for example consistently use glossaries, word lists and reading aloud as part of their everyday lessons. When a student does read aloud, others listen attentively and so develop their powers of concentration.

55. Whilst there is no single approach to the teaching of numeracy the teachers do well. In economics and business a strong emphasis is placed on numeracy, especially the use of graphs and diagrams and this contributes well to students' coursework. In physics, students calculate the conditions for total internal reflection and can explain its application to the transmission of light in optical fibres. Some lower attaining students make basic errors in their calculations, including signs and ratios but their teachers correct these as they arise in lessons.
56. Teachers plan their lessons very well. They use a variety of activities to keep students interested and maintain a good pace of learning. A feature of many lessons is the very good planning that gives a sense of solid structure to lessons with students very clear about what is expected by the end of lessons. In theatre studies the planning of lessons is detailed and thorough. Lessons are well prepared and all students gain the maximum insight into the subject as well as gaining knowledge of a wide range of sophisticated drama skills.
57. Teachers' expectations are high. For example, in a Year 12 geography class the quality of teaching was very good with excellent levels of challenge that students rose to with enthusiasm. Students responded well to the high expectations of the teacher, and their behaviour and attitudes were excellent. They showed interest and excitement in what they were learning. In a Year 13 English literature class on 'The Tempest', high expectations created an under-graduate atmosphere and an intellectual response from the students.
58. Teachers use good teaching methods. In the best lessons teachers enabled students to discover for themselves, using the students' own experiences to aid development of understanding. Teachers also use demonstrations effectively to bring key ideas to life and to promote students' thinking. For example, in a physics lesson, when showing how changing angles at which light from a laser refracts through a medium, leads ultimately to total internal reflection. In sociology, teachers use very good teaching methods of a practical nature to involve students in their learning. Individual, partner and small group work is well linked to a variety of activities and tasks, which very successfully ensures all students are working at an appropriate level.
59. The management of students is excellent. Teachers never need to raise their voices to control the group. When homework is not completed students are given and accept a detention. There are high levels of participation in lessons and the effort and energy students put into lessons is clearly evident. Students are highly motivated and a large amount of work is completed. Students enjoy their work with each other and their teachers in an atmosphere of achievement and respect.
60. Teachers make very effective use of the resources that are available to them. In a Year 13 English literature lesson, analysing the historical context of Chaucer's poetry, the teacher used works of art from the time to deepen students' awareness and interest. This was just one aspect of a lesson that

combined vigorous and rigorous teaching to further the learning of the students. However, in many subjects although teachers make very good use of resources, the lack of ready access to information and communication technology equipment severely constrains research opportunities and restricts students' ability to work on their own.

61. The quality of marking is satisfactory. In vocational subjects all students benefit from thorough, evaluative marking of their work which clearly shows students where they are going wrong and what they need to do to improve their writing and extend their knowledge. In other subjects, marking can be a little too congratulatory or rely too heavily on ticks with no explanations. The result of this is that, while teachers have a good idea of how the students are progressing, the students themselves have only a broadly average understanding of how well they are doing.
62. The use of homework is very good. Homework is used appropriately.
63. Teaching of students with special educational needs is very good and they make very good progress. Teachers know their students well and generally provide work that is challenging and at an appropriate level. Students for whom English is an additional language make very good progress because of the very good support they receive. Other students, as well as teachers, show a willingness to help them.

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

64. Curricular arrangements in the sixth form are very good with a broad range of learning opportunities being offered. There is an extensive and growing range of GCE AS/A-level courses and a good range of vocational subjects complements this provision. The number of AS/A-levels available has been enhanced by the provision of electronics and law via video links. This development represents an enlightened use of new technology to improve the curriculum. However, the statutory curriculum is unsatisfactory because the arrangements for religious education in Years 12 and 13, an issue raised in the previous inspection report, still has not been dealt with satisfactorily.
65. Students are offered considerable choice in their subject options and some very careful and innovative timetabling has increased the options available. The opportunities for students to exercise choice are further increased by the provision of five vocational subjects at advanced level; with two others being offered at intermediate level. This provision improves equality of access and offers more opportunities for progression into the world of work, as well as to further and higher education. The school's commitment to inclusiveness is evidenced by the flexible entrance requirements for courses and the quality of advice that students are offered in preparation for the sixth form when in Year 11, and the support provided each summer following the publication of GCSE results. Such excellent advice enables the school to succeed in matching the students' requirements to the courses being offered. The school is rightly proud of its success in providing all students with the courses of their choice.
66. A further excellent feature of the school's curriculum is the strong and developing partnerships that have been established with the local community. This is particularly evident in the school's very well managed vocational curriculum. Students following AVCE and GNVQ options benefit from the curricular partnerships that have been established. For example, in health and social care, students work with two local health centres. In one case, as part of their course requirements, students have developed an Internet site for one of the centres. The school is justifiably proud of its reputation as a centre of excellence for vocational education and this is characterised by an annual health and social care conference held in partnership with some other local schools. This enterprising venture is believed to be the only one of its type in the country.
67. The school's curriculum also makes very good provision for enrichment activities. Through a West Sussex Local Education Authority initiative called 'Challenge 21', students tackle key skills as well as involving themselves in various school and community based projects. Such schemes are successful in helping students to develop responsibility and other skills. The curriculum is also successful in offering a variety of other opportunities ranging from sport; the school has very strong netball and soccer teams for example, to music and drama. The School Council includes the 'Senior Students' from the sixth form. These students have a significant input into the work of the school. They meet with the senior management team and the governing body to discuss the work of the school.
68. The opportunities for the social, moral and cultural development are very good. The inclusive nature of the sixth form is a valuable asset for all the students. The wide range of trips and visits is an enriching, social experience that develops students' confidence and self-reliance. Within many subjects the emphasis on paired and group work enables students to learn from each other and to develop their social skills. Students are provided with forums to consider ethical issues surrounding genetic engineering and there is discussion of environmental issues such as energy conservation. Students receive advice on such topics as drug and alcohol abuse, the law and relationships. In art, excellent opportunities exist for students to visit exhibitions and galleries in both London and Paris. Students also benefit from the opportunity to assist with exchange links to a school in Holland. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for students to reflect different cultures in their work. In geography and history, students have the opportunity to study the cultures of a range of countries. Around the school there are many images that reflect the cultural diversity of Britain today. Opportunities for spiritual development are satisfactory. Students are provided with

opportunities to reflect on their work as was seen in a Year 13 theatre studies lesson when students were exploring 'The Women of Troy' and reflecting on the portrayal of 'Helen'.

69. The broadness and variety of the curriculum means that suitable provision is made for all, including those students with special education needs, and a small group of Icelandic students who have chosen to study at the school. Good work placement arrangements exist. Initiatives such as 'Futures Day', a task orientated activity day hosted annually in association with a number of local business, partly redress the balance, but some extra thought might be given about how partnerships with local industry and commerce might be developed to raise the aspirations of all post-16 students.

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

### **Assessment**

70. The procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are very good. A substantial amount of data on students' attainment is collected and recorded when they enter the sixth form. This information is then made available to heads of subject and to sixth form tutors. As students progress through Years 12 and 13 information is gathered on their attainment and stored centrally, updated regularly and available to all teaching staff. Records on students' personal progress also complement the system.
71. The use made of assessment in planning the curriculum is good. There is a rich wealth of assessment data available to subjects although its use is not always consistent. Students' progress is monitored closely through a variety of assessments linked to the published course. Targets grades are set for students on the basis of their prior attainment. They are not yet used specifically by all subjects to guide students on what they need to learn to achieve their target grades as is the case in chemistry and art. There are examples of where good practice is firmly established. In English Literature for example, there is good use of assessment information to identify the needs of individual students. This enables teachers to match their work closely to the needs of all students and results in all students achieving very well.
72. The quality of reports for parents and for students is very good. Annual reports give parents and students a very good picture of the student's learning and of targets for further progress. In most subjects there is a very good level of detail about the student's attainment and progress.

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

73. The educational, personal support and guidance for students is very good. The school has a very good induction programme that helps students settle effectively into sixth form work. Those students who join the school for the first time in Year 12 are made to feel welcome and are integrated well into the life of the school. The transition from Key Stage 4 to the sixth form is very good. Students speak of the very good induction programme that enables them to have first-hand experience of what it is like to be a sixth former and a clear indication of what it will be like to study their chosen courses.
74. The quality and accessibility of information, advice and guidance provided for students is excellent. Tutorial support for students is very good and provides an overview of how individual students are coping with their work. Each student is a member of a tutor group with a personal tutor. Regular individual interviews take place and feedback is given to students



on their progress towards individual targets. Students also have access to support staff who offer counselling to students who have been referred or who have referred themselves. Students are also offered good quality learning support sessions to aid specific learning difficulties. The whole process is co-ordinated extremely well by the head of sixth form who holds regular meetings with staff and students.

75. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. An electronic swipe-card system is in operation.
76. Appropriate and effective procedures are in place to maintain the school as a safe working environment.
77. The school offers a very good programme for careers education and guidance. Much thought is given to preparing Year 11 students for post-16 education and a very good advice programme has been established which extends into the summer period after the publication of GCSE results. Much care is taken to ensure that students entering the sixth form are recruited onto appropriate courses. The careers education and guidance programme also endeavours to ensure that individual needs are met. Good provision is made for aspiring Oxbridge students and for those contemplating other demanding courses such as medicine and veterinary science. Students within the sixth form benefit from the school working closely with three local providers of higher education through an organisation called SLAPA (Sussex Liaison and Progression Accord). This organisation encourages students to apply to the local institutions and will guarantee interview in most subject areas for suitably qualified applicants. School staff meet regularly with their higher education colleagues to discuss areas of common concern and co-operation. Many higher education staff visit the school as a result of this co-operation.
78. Though overall the provision for careers education and guidance is very good, and the programme is helping students to make informed choices about their futures, some enhancement to the work placement scheme for GCE AS/A level students is desirable.

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

79. Parents and students express very strong, positive views about the school. Parents are keen for their children to do well and choose Imberhorne School knowing that if their child works hard then their child will have every chance of success. Parents and students are particularly keen on the extra time that teachers spend with students in preparing them for the rigours of examinations and for life when they leave the school. Parents value the considerable number of extra-curricular activities that the school provides that enrich the lives of the students. There are many trips abroad of which parents and students speak highly.
80. The views of parents are sought each year and the findings are used to review different areas of the school such as curricular provision. The quality of reports for parents and for students is very good and informative. Very good numbers of parents attend the annual consultation meetings with staff. There are appropriate additional events to inform parents at key times such as when Year 11 students make their sixth form subject choices. Parents feel they can approach the school at any time to discuss any concerns they may have. Students value the time spent with personal tutors, both teachers and governors, and speak highly of the sensitive manner in which personal problems are dealt with.
81. Last year's survey of the views of Year 12 shows that they analyse their feelings and experiences objectively and try to learn from them. Students were very happy with the quality

of teaching. Students have a clear understanding of what the school aims to do and how it goes about its work. Those students new to the school in Year 12 have a very good induction into the workings of the school. They are made to feel very welcome by teachers and students alike. Students are unhappy about the insufficient accommodation and the lack of sufficient space or quiet areas for independent learning. They are also unhappy about the lack of access to information and communication technology.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

### Leadership and management

82. The quality of leadership and management of the sixth form is very good overall.
83. The head of sixth form is providing excellent leadership and very clear educational direction for the sixth form. Central to the head of sixth form's work is a commitment to continuous improvement and to ensuring that all students achieve well. The result of this approach can be seen in the improvements in examination results, the quality of teaching and the very good provision for enrichment activities that are successful in helping students to develop responsibility and other skills.
84. The head of sixth form has the confidence of the staff and is fully supported by a well-informed and experienced group of tutors. There is a shared commitment to improvement and a very good capacity to succeed. The head of sixth form meets on a regular basis with the headteacher.
85. The school's aims and the values that underpin the work of the sixth form are relevant to the needs of the students and are embedded very well in all aspects of the school's work. There is a very good relationship between the sixth form and the main school. Students in the main school and in particular students in Years 10 and 11 who share the site with the sixth form students, appreciate the support and guidance provided by the older students. Sixth form students appreciate the opportunity to work with younger students in Years 7 and 8 as part of their citizenship programme.
86. Systems and structures are in place that provides a good framework for the work of the sixth form. These systems ensure that the sixth form operates smoothly and efficiently.
87. The leadership and management provided by many subject leaders are good. For example, the subject leader for economics and business provides very good leadership and management, which has resulted in many innovative schemes being introduced and well above average results being attained. In French, the management of the subject is satisfactory. Participation is relatively low. Subject and school managers must overcome this unsatisfactory leadership issue in order to appropriately address Language College targets.
88. The governors have a very good understanding of the work of the sixth form and they have identified many of the strengths and weaknesses noted in this report through the very good monitoring systems that are in place. Committee structures are very good and there is a clear focus on the work of the sixth form. There is a very good and effective working partnership with the head of sixth form in shaping the direction of the school. The governing body does not fulfil its statutory duties in ensuring that the entitlement for all students in religious education in Years 12 and 13 and the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all students are fulfilled.
89. The school development plan includes areas specific to the sixth form and is of a very good quality, focuses on raising achievement and sets a clear agenda for improvement. The priorities are appropriate and some of the issues noted in this report are highlighted in the school development plan.
90. The school applies the principles of best value extremely well. The headteacher and head of sixth form have set challenging targets for improvement. The school compares its performance with similar attaining schools in the authority and nationally.
91. The strategic use of resources is good. A tight rein is kept on spending by the administrative staff, the head of sixth form and the senior management team. The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is very good. The sixth form is very cost effective not only in its subject provision but also through the enrichment activities that students receive. There is a need to

ensure that Language College funding is used to improve participation in French and the range and take up of other languages.

## Resources

92. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is very good overall. Teachers are well qualified and have the relevant expertise and experience in vocational areas. The arrangements for the induction of staff new to the school are very good with a well-planned programme of support that helps ensure that teachers settle quickly into the life of the school. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching is well-established and includes observation of lessons by senior staff with arrangements for the regular review of performance. The school has undertaken a carefully prepared programme of consultation with staff in preparation for the introduction of the performance management regulations, and is now well poised to implement this across the school. The in-service training of teachers is planned well and linked to the school and subject development plans and this is having a positive effect on the quality of teaching. However, in subjects such as government and politics, and sociology, although there is scope to share good practice with teachers of other sixth form humanities subjects in the school, there would be benefits from contact with specialist staff in other schools. The work of the education support staff is very well organised, monitored and supported by the senior management team and this helps ensure that they are fully integrated into the life of the school.
93. Insufficient accommodation and resources hamper the work of the sixth form. There is insufficient space for the number of students in the sixth form and although teachers work very hard to overcome deficiencies there is a detrimental impact upon the range and quality of teaching provision in some subjects. The lack of ready access to information and communication technology equipment and other office-based technology such as telephones, fax machines and e-mail, severely constrains role play and research opportunities. This lack of access is affecting standards and means that the students are disadvantaged. The insufficient accommodation is also placing an increased burden on staff when they are preparing and planning their lessons. Opportunities for independent learning are sometimes restricted by shortcomings in the accommodation and insufficient access to information and communication technology. As a result many sixth form students say that it is easier to work independently at home than in school.

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

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

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

### GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	4	75	63	25	17	1.5	1.6
General studies	14	93	72	14	18	2.0	1.9
Geography	1	100	70	-	-	3.0	1.6
Other social science	18	94	70	22	18	2.7	1.7

### GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	33	94	89	70	45	7.4	6.0
Chemistry	18	89	89	39	42	5.8	5.9
Biology	20	75	88	25	34	4.3	5.3
Physics	17	82	88	41	41	5.5	5.7
Other sciences	2	100	89	-	31	3.0	5.2
Graphical applications	12	92	81	33	16	5.8	3.9
Home economics	5	100	81	-	24	5.2	4.6
Economics and business	11	100	88	100	36	9.3	5.4
Sports/PE studies	8	100	91	25	25	5.5	5.0
Art and design	15	100	96	80	45	7.9	6.4
Geography	4	100	92	75	37	7.5	5.7
History	14	100	89	50	34	6.7	5.4
Sociology	23	96	88	65	37	6.9	5.5
Other social studies	6	83	88	67	35	7.3	5.3
English literature	28	100	96	46	36	7.1	5.9
English/language	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
French	5	100	91	80	39	7.6	5.7
Communication studies	15	80	85	53	23	5.6	4.6
German	5	100	92	20	41	5.6	5.9

General studies	19	84	85	32	28	4.9	4.8
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## SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

### MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The focus was on mathematics.

#### Mathematics

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

#### Strengths

- Results in 2000 showed a marked improvement and were well above average.
- Teaching and learning are good; lessons are well structured which effectively helps students build up their knowledge and understanding.
- Students have a sound grasp of concepts and apply them well in lessons.
- Teacher's knowledge and understanding of the subject is very good.

#### Areas for development

- Marking should be more consistent with more formative annotations to support learning.
- The use of assessment and performance data to identify sharply focused student targets needs further development.
- Teaching resources are limited.

94. Mathematics is offered at GCSE, GCE A-level and AS-level. A strong feature of the courses was that completion rates were extremely high. Results in the 2000 GCE A-level examinations were well above the national average. In 2000, GCE A-level examination results showed significant improvement compared to the previous year. All students entered for the examination achieved a pass grade or better, above the national average. The proportion of students achieving the highest grades, A and B, was well above the national average. Both male and female students attained well above average results. In relation to their performance at GCSE, the students achieved well from a high starting point. In 2001, GCE A-level examination results have declined slightly overall.

95. In 2000, one third of students re-sitting their GCSE mathematics examination after one year, attained grades A to C having previously attained below grade C. At the time of the inspection there were no national figures for comparison with the results in the new AS-level examinations taken in Year 12, but the school's results are encouraging. In 2000, all the students entered for the GCE 'Further Mathematics' examination achieved grades A and B, in line with expectation based on their GCSE performance. Overall, students are achieving well from a high starting point at GCE A-level, AS-level and Further Mathematics.

96. The standard of work of current students is above average. In Year 13, students are achieving well. In the lessons observed, students responded well as a result of effective teaching, which demands much of them. Lesson structure focuses their learning. In one lesson, students drew well on their previous knowledge to understand and use the vector product. In another, students understood the derivation of the coefficient of restitution when working on the conservation of momentum in mechanics. Written work is well presented and reflects the same confidence as their work in class. The students persevere when difficulties arise.
97. Students in Year 12 are only a short way into their courses and are achieving well. In statistics, students are already ahead of the course requirements focusing on probability distributions and the algebra of expectation, drawing extensively on their previously taught skills and contributing confidently to classroom discussion with the teacher. Moreover, in pure mathematics, students apply successfully newly taught skills, such as, integration as the inverse of differentiation, immediately to a variety of complex and demanding questions. Students interpret the outcomes correctly and show the stages of their work in a systematic and rigorous way.
98. The quality of teaching and learning is good with some examples of very good teaching in Year 12 and the students learn well as a result. Teaching is characterised by the good co-operative learning that takes place in all lessons between student and teacher. The lesson on differential equations in Year 12, for example, required the students to work both independently and as a group to check their understanding and formulate common strategies for answering further questions. Teachers' planning, explanation and exposition are good with questions that challenge student thinking. Teachers have high expectations of the students and work is intellectually stimulating and demanding. Teachers' very good subject knowledge and understanding supports learning well. Occasionally the teaching is too relaxed and the pace of the lesson too slow. This results in some students becoming less interested and as a consequence their learning suffers. Technical vocabulary and conventions in the subject are rigorously taught and required of students. Resources are used well but are generally paper based and undermine the efficient and effective development of independent learning skills. Teachers' are aware of students' strengths and weaknesses, resulting in individual needs being dealt with, however, the quality of marking of students' work is variable with few examples of written annotations that support learning. Assessment could be more diagnostic and reflect the target grade expected at the end of the course. These are areas for improvement in the context of teaching that has many strong features.
99. Students learn well. They are attentive, co-operative, work productively and respond well to questions contributing to the rapid pace of many lessons. Students support and help one another effectively, talking and listening, working independently and in small groups. The students respond well to the supportive teaching and different learning styles they experience. In a lesson on solving linear inequalities the start made good use of everyday

experiences, which then required use of students' algebraic skills and which extended to solving quadratic inequalities. The lesson was challenging, conducted at a good pace and accounted for the variation of student academic background, resulting in good learning taking place due to the thoroughness with which the teacher dealt with the topic.

100. The good teaching and learning result from work in the subject being well led and managed. There is a commitment to building on what has already been achieved and to improving standards. Good progress has been made addressing issues raised in the previous report. There is clear educational direction moving towards more dynamic teaching methods and strategies that engage students fully in their learning, self-assessment and target setting. Resources such as information and communication technology and the use of the interactive whiteboard would help maintain the learning momentum that has already been achieved in the faculty.

## **SCIENCES**

101. The focus was on chemistry and physics, but biology was also sampled. In biology GCE A-level, results in the 2000 GCE A-level examinations were below the national average. However, standards improved in 2001 with an improved proportion of students attaining the higher grades. Standards in biology have been rising over recent years. There has also been a trend of rising numbers of students choosing the subject. At GCE AS-level biology, all those entered in 2001 achieved a pass grade and over half of students achieved the higher grades A and B. One lesson of AS-level biology was observed. In this lesson, very effective teaching enabled students to carry out their own strategies for investigations about the action of enzymes to a good standard. The teacher challenged students' thinking through questioning and discussion as they worked and ensured a good pace of work was maintained throughout. The great majority is secure in their understanding of the underlying scientific principles involved.



## Chemistry

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

### Strengths

- Students have a good understanding of key concepts and apply them well. Their experimental skills are also good.
- Teaching is good and there are some very good features. Key ideas are explained very well because teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject. Students are challenged to draw on their knowledge to speculate and explain, and this helps them to build a good understanding.
- Students work well in small groups, discussing and exchanging their ideas.
- The subject is led well and the curriculum planned effectively between teachers.

### Areas for improvement

- The use of practical examples and demonstration to bring teachers' explanations of key ideas to life.
- Attention to the needs of lower attaining students to ensure their full involvement in lessons, particularly in discussions and when questioning.
- While target grades are set, teachers are not yet focussing sharply enough on learning goals for individuals to work towards and to guide their independent study.
- Laboratory accommodation is old and of poor quality.

102. Chemistry is offered at GCE A-level and AS-level. A strong feature of the courses was that completion rates were extremely high. Results in the GCE A-level examinations in 2000 were close to the national average with a good proportion of these students attaining higher grades A and B. Significantly more female than male students studied chemistry and they attained better results than male students. There has been a rising trend both in numbers of students and standards attained over recent years, although in 2001, results were lower overall because fewer students attained higher grades and a minority underachieved considering their standards at GCSE. Almost all students attained pass grades in 2001 and only one student did not complete the course. At the time of the inspection there were no national figures for comparison with the results in the new AS-level examinations taken in Year 12, but the school's results are encouraging. All those entered gained a pass with over half of all students attaining the higher grades A and B.

103. The standard of work of current students is above average in both Year 12 and Year 13, and the majority of students are achieving well. Most students acquire a good understanding of chemical principles and apply them confidently. In Year 13, students have a good grasp of the thermodynamics and kinetics of chemical reactions that enables them, for example, to explain why some are spontaneous and others not. Teachers constantly challenge students to apply their knowledge and explain their reasoning. In one lesson, students applied their understanding of the kinetics of chemical reactions well to explain the processes involved where reactions are reversible. They used basic principles such as Le Chatelier's securely to predict the direction of

change when the conditions for a reaction are altered. When challenged by their teacher, many students were able to explain what the value of the equilibrium constant tells them about the associated chemical reaction.

104. Although students are only a short way into their course, standards seen in Year 12 at GCE AS-level are already good. Students' are developing good practical skills, they work safely and with due regard for others, and their understanding and application of chemistry principles is developing well. For example, they use chemical notations and conventions accurately and students achieve well to explain the purpose of each step in the synthesis of an organic compound they have made. Higher attaining students are secure in their knowledge of molar calculations when finding the percentage yield of their products. They suggest good reasons relating to the process that may explain the low yields of product obtained. Many students recall and apply chemical tests appropriately for the presence of the compound made.
105. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons begin well with objectives for the session and recall and assessment of students' prior knowledge. Very good subject knowledge underpins teachers' clear and effective explanations of key principles in the early part of lessons. Teachers make good use of open questions to challenge students to explain and to speculate in discussions. Technical vocabulary and conventions in the subject are rigorously taught and required of students. In the better lessons, the teacher is careful to engage all students throughout the lesson. However, sometimes, where teacher led discussions are quite extended, the needs of lower attaining students' are overlooked because higher attaining students tend to dominate responses to questions. Teachers sometimes miss good opportunities to enliven these discussions with practical examples to illustrate points being made, for example, when exploring the effect of changing the conditions of a chemical reaction on the direction of change. Teachers use review questions and other assessments in lessons well to check students' progress and their understanding. However, lessons are seldom closed with a plenary session that brings together the key points learned. Marking, while satisfactory, could focus more attention on providing guidance to help students to improve.
106. Students' attitudes are very good and they learn well. Relationships with teachers and fellow students are very good. They co-operate and support each other when undertaking tasks and work independently at a good pace. Students are developing their skills in extracting further information through their independent study and assignments, guided by their teachers who also encourage them to summarise the key points at the end of each major section of work. A few students are reticent in offering comments and answers in discussions and in seeking further assistance when needed.
107. Overall improvement since the last inspection is good. Standards have improved over time, as has the numbers of students taking up the courses and their retention on them. The subject is now making better use of

information and communication technology, for example through the use of data-loggers, modelling and spreadsheets and the internet, although there are some improvements still to be made in making best use of the new equipment acquired.

108. The subject is led well by a very experienced and knowledgeable head of subject. Curricular planning is good but the subject could make more effective use of the wider community to enhance its provision further. Assessment is used well to review standards achieved and to guide improvements in the subject. Students' progress is monitored closely through a variety of assessments linked to the published course. Targets grades are set for students on the basis of their prior attainment. They are not yet used specifically to guide students on what they need to learn, especially in their independent study, to achieve their target grades. Resources for the subject are adequate but the laboratories are old and their quality unsatisfactory.

### Physics

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

#### Strengths

- Standards at AS-level in 2001 were good, with almost half of students achieving higher grades
- Students have a good understanding of key principles and apply them well in solving problems. Their investigation skills, especially their evaluation of likely errors, are well developed.
- Teaching is good and enables students to achieve well. Important concepts are explained very clearly and illustrated well so that students acquire a good understanding and enjoy learning.
- Curricular planning is very good, and enhanced by effective use of the wider community of business and higher education institutions.
- Relationships and attitudes are very good. Students work very well in sharing ideas and supporting each other in group tasks.
- The subject is led well. Very good curriculum resources are being used effectively.

#### Areas for improvement

- Information and communication technology, while improved recently, is not yet utilised to its full potential in capturing, processing and modelling information from experiments.
- Target grades for students are set but they are not yet focussed sharply enough on learning goals for individuals and to guide students' in their independent study.
- The laboratory accommodation is unsatisfactory.

109. Physics is offered at GCE A-level and AS-level. A strong feature of the courses was that completion rates were extremely high. Results in the GCE A-level examinations in 2000 were close to the national average with a good proportion of these students attaining higher grades A and B. More female students studied the course than in previous years. Both the number of

students taking up physics and the standards attained have been rising over several years until, in 2001, standards at A-level dropped overall compared to the previous year because fewer students achieved the higher grades. Some of them underachieved considering their attainment at GCSE. However, all the students who took up the subject completed it. At the time of the inspection there were no national figures for comparison with the results in the new AS-level examinations taken in Year 12, but the school's results are encouraging. Considerably more students have taken up physics in Year 12 and all gained passes at AS level with almost half of them achieving the higher grades A and B.

110. Standards seen in Year 12 are above average because teachers explain physics concepts very well and use demonstration effectively to illustrate key points. This represents a good level of achievement. Students are developing a good understanding of basic physics concepts such as the properties of light and materials. For example, they understand the lens law and apply it well when calculating some effects of lenses. Most students can predict how lenses must be moved in relation to a screen to focus objects at a given distance and as a result, they can check the reasonableness of calculations made. They understand the underlying principles of refraction in terms of the wave properties of light. Students calculate the conditions for total internal reflection and can explain its application to the transmission of light in optical fibres. Some lower attaining students make basic errors in their calculations, including signs and ratios but their teachers correct these as they arise in lessons. Students achieve well.
111. Standards in Year 13 are above average. Students have very good investigative skills and a good understanding of fundamental principles such as thermodynamics. This is evident for example, when students take account of the likely experimental errors when devising a strategy for experiments so that they minimise their effects. In one lesson about the internal energy of materials, students measuring the specific heat capacity of aluminium, explained why the effects of heat loss to the surroundings leads to an over estimation of its value and they suggested ways of reducing the error. Students also have good skills with computers for example, in data capture and processing with spreadsheets. Students learning how very large distances to stars can be measured, used data-loggers effectively when measuring light levels at different distances from a light source as part of their studies in astronomy. They then used a spreadsheet successfully to investigate the relationships between distance and light intensity and discussed the errors associated with their experimental methods. Students achieve well.
112. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Objectives and methods for the lesson are made clear to students at the start and questions used well to remind them of prior learning and to test their understanding. Teachers have very good subject knowledge that underpins their very good explanations of key ideas in lessons. In one very good lesson about measuring large astronomical distances, the teacher gave a very convincing explanation of

how light intensity leaving certain types of distant stars can be measured and how the intensity as measured from Earth can then be used to calculate distances. These students were inspired by the teachers' clear explanations. Many offered their own insights to the discussion before carrying out experiments to extend their ideas further.

113. Students work at a good pace in lessons because teachers support students well in practical and other group tasks through discussion and further questioning that extend their understanding further. Teachers also use demonstrations effectively to bring key ideas to life and to promote students' thinking, for example, when showing how changing angles at which light from a laser refracting through a medium leads ultimately to total internal reflection. Teachers' make good use of review questions and tasks to check students' progress, although occasionally, lower attaining students make slower progress where their errors are not noticed for some time. Sometimes, lessons end with a useful summary of key points learned but this effective use of a plenary is not yet common practice in the subject. Teachers' marking is satisfactory. Close attention is given to calculation work and its correction where necessary, but more could be done to guide students on ways of improving their work and achieving the targets set for them.
114. Students learn well in lessons and relationships are very good throughout. They have very positive attitudes to the subject, are well motivated and enjoy their work, especially practical work. Assignments are closely monitored to ensure students' time is used effectively. They work very well in support of each other during group tasks and produce useful personal notes of lessons to record their learning. Students are learning to use additional information from the very good resources provided by the subject effectively, including a dedicated CD-ROM for the course. Many use a drop in workshop and homework facility provided by the subject to address any physics problems they may have.
115. The subject is led well and good progress has been made since the last inspection. Curricular planning, based on a new published scheme, is very good. The subject has adapted the scheme taking account of the school's resources and enhanced its provision further through very good use of the wider community, local business and higher education institutions. This enriches the teaching of aspects such as materials and the use and calibration of sensors. Information and communication technology is now used more effectively, although there is still some way to go to make best use of the newly acquired computers and associated resources.
116. Target grades are set for students on the basis of their prior attainment and progress is monitored in a variety of ways, but targets could be used more effectively to guide individual students on their specific learning goals and any additional independent study that they can undertake to help achieve them. Equipment resources for the teaching of physics are adequate. A major investment in a new teaching scheme has ensured students have a wealth of references to support them and the subject is successfully adding to this

scheme. The laboratory accommodation is unsatisfactory. For example, services are restricted in number and access around laboratories and blackout blinds inadequate.

## **BUSINESS**

The focus was on economics and business.

### **Economics and business**

Overall, the quality of provision in economics and business is **very good**.

#### **Strengths**

- The quality of teaching is very good and leads to very high standards.
- Students are well-managed in lessons and this aids learning.
- Learning is further enhanced because of the emphasis that is placed on literacy and numeracy in all lessons.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- To enable staff to use further variety in their teaching strategies, the quality of classroom accommodation needs to be enhanced by the provision of blinds or curtains.

117. The Nuffield Economics and business course is offered at GCE A-level and AS- level. Results in the GCE A-level examinations in 2000 were very high and place the school in the top five per cent of schools nationally. All students gained either grades A or B. Though no comparative data is available for GCE A-level results in 2001, the recorded results are again most encouraging. All eight candidates passed, with five gaining either grades A or B. At the time of the inspection there were no national figures for comparison with the results in the new AS-level examinations taken in Year 12, but the school's results are encouraging. Of the 24 candidates 22 gained at least a grade E, with five attaining a grade A. Most of this cohort of students have now progressed to GCE A-level economics and business.

118. The current Year 13 students are achieving very well in the second year of their course and attaining well above average standards. They are successfully building on their achievements of the last academic year and many are developing very good analytical skills. In class, many are confident orally and they are very good at using appropriate language in context. Their learning is further enhanced by the emphasis that is placed on developing numeracy skills and on encouraging the students to analyse diagrams. The majority is emerging as confident and articulate economics and business students. Though the present Year 12 students are still in the early stages of their AS-level course, they too are achieving well. All are developing a basic understanding of essential concepts and are beginning to use appropriate language in context. This also applies to an Icelandic student who has recently joined the school. Though some of the contextual situations may puzzle him, his grasp of English is such that he is more than able to hold his own in class discussion.

119. The strength of this course is the very good quality of teaching offered and this is leading to very good learning. Teaching has many strengths. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and understanding and all lessons are very well prepared. Learning takes place at a very good rate because of the challenges that are a feature of lessons and the students respond positively. As a result, all are acquiring new knowledge and understanding. The emphasis placed on literacy is very strong. This was particularly evident in a Year 13 lesson on the development of monopoly power. The students used a variety of key terms, such as 'monopoly power', 'cartels', 'oligopoly', and 'contestability' in context. They also showed sophisticated analytical skills by outlining many of the consequences of greater monopoly power. What was especially impressive is that their analysis did not concentrate exclusively on negative outcomes such as lower output and higher prices. Some benefits were identified and two students offered arguments that incorporated the costs to society as a whole, including a possible increase in the personal tax burden as a consequence of cartel pricing policies. Such contributions indicate considerable understanding based on very thorough and extremely well planned teaching. It is pleasing to see complex economic concepts being taught so effectively and lucidly.
120. The leadership and management are very good. There is a clear understanding of the course requirements and the subject teacher also takes very good steps to ensure that all students are regularly reading articles from the press. This approach not only stimulates their knowledge of current affairs; it also contributes significantly to the development of their literacy skills. Indeed, a strong feature of the management of this subject is the emphasis that is placed on literacy and numeracy, especially the use of graphs and diagrams. Very good teaching and learning is also taking place even though some aspects of the accommodation are unsatisfactory. The main classroom that is used is adequate, but the lack of blinds, or curtains, makes it difficult to use videos and overhead projection presentations. This puts pressure on the teacher's planning to find alternative methods for covering relevant theory. In this respect the accommodation provided is unsatisfactory as it is constraining teaching.
121. Overall, economics and business is a most successful subject. Very high standards of work are achieved because of the very good teaching provided.

## HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus was on travel and tourism.

### Travel and tourism

Overall, the quality of provision in travel and tourism is **good**.

#### Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good and this leads to good learning.
- Assessment procedures are thorough, are understood by the students and give clear advice about how the students might improve their work.

#### Areas for improvement

- More use should be made in lessons of information and communication technology to enable students to undertake more research work.
- Teachers should ensure that in lessons that the vocational context is fully developed and that relevant business terminology is used as frequently as possible.
- The quality of learning will be further improved if more emphasis is placed on developing the students' analytical skills.
- Accommodation is poor and should be reviewed to ensure that students have adequate access to information and communication technology and other relevant business aids in all lessons.

122. This is a new course so no comparative examination data is available. Previously, students followed an advanced GNVQ course in leisure and tourism. In this course, the school achieved results that were broadly in line with national average results. A strong feature of the course was that completion rates were extremely high. The results gained by students also indicated that they made at least good progress during their course, achieving results above those predicted on the basis of their attainment at GCSE.
123. For present students, attainment is in line with national average expectations, though Year 13 students are doing better than their Year 12 counterparts and are achieving well. This outcome is not surprising as Year 12 students are still familiarising themselves with the demands of the course. All students are developing an understanding of various aspects of the travel and tourism sector of the economy, but there are two key factors that are impeding their attainment. Firstly, in their work they are not emphasising the vocational context sufficiently. They are looking at outcomes, such as a rise in long haul holiday destinations, but they are not giving sufficient economic or business reasons to account for such changes. Their analysis tends to be factual rather than analytical. Secondly, though some use is made of information and communication technology for research, the students are not selective in their use of the information generated. Too frequently Internet generated documents are reproduced in full without any editing or appropriate commentary.



124. The quality of teaching is good and this fosters good learning, however the quality of teaching is constrained by the inappropriate accommodation that is provided for this course. The team of staff delivering this course has continually to improvise in their teaching strategies. For example, one Year 12 lesson was conducted in a physics laboratory. The students undertook role-plays associated with customer complaints. The room was utterly unsuitable, but a good lesson, featuring good learning, ensued because of the skill and experience of the teacher. The positive attitudes of the students also helped. Similar comments can also be made about a Year 13 lesson on the promotion of package holidays. This lesson was taught in a language classroom and there was no access to the Internet, so the students were severely limited in their opportunities to undertake research. The success of the lesson again owed much to the skills and experience of the teacher and the sensible attitudes of the students. A rather traditional, but effective, lesson ensued in which key points were listed on a whiteboard. Though learning did take place in this lesson, much of the learning was based on the students' prior knowledge. Learning via research could not be done and it was difficult for the students to make comparisons between different forms of marketing tactics based on the type of markets being served. The marketing strategies associated with niche markets, for example, could not be adequately explored and developed. In all observed lessons, teachers were handicapped by the accommodation. Good teaching and learning resulted because of the experience of the teachers and because of the mature approach of the students.
125. The management of this vocational course is good, with staff having a clear understanding of course requirements. This is reflected in the very good assessment strategies that have been developed. These are clear and are understood by the students. Good advice is offered on how the students might further improve their work. The main impediment to rising standards is the poor accommodation. Staff are itinerant and have to teach in a variety of classrooms that are not suitable for the delivery of a vocationally orientated course. The lack of ready access to information and communication technology equipment and other office-based technology such as telephones, fax machines and e-mail, severely constrains role play and research opportunities. Both are essential components of the course. This lack of access is affecting standards and means that the students are disadvantaged. Staff are having to improvise continually and standards suffer. This is evidenced by the quality of some of the research work conducted by students. Their skills of editing, selecting and analysing were below expected standards because staff cannot easily assess work as it is being produced. The poor accommodation is also placing an increased burden on staff when they are preparing and planning their lessons.

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

126. During the inspection one lesson of health and social care was observed. The very good teaching led to the students achieving very well. The teacher used her strong knowledge and understanding of the subject to guide students through a difficult role-play situation. Results in the 2000 GNVQ examinations were above average.

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

The focus was on art and theatre studies.

### **Art**

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

#### **Strengths**

- Well above average examination results at GCE A-level.
- Very good teaching and learning leading to very good achievement.
- Very good support for students.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Opportunities for students to work with three-dimensional materials and processes need to be extended.
- Opportunities for students to use information and communication technology as a creative tool need to be extended.
- Continue to develop and review systems for monitoring students' performance.

127. Art is offered at GCE A-level and AS-level. A strong feature of the courses was that completion rates were extremely high. The last three years' GCE A-level results have been well above average with an excellent proportion of grades at A to B. Results for 2001 and the work of Year 13 students seen during the inspection are also well above average. At the time of the inspection there were no national figures for comparison with the results in the new AS-level examinations taken in Year 12, but the school's results are encouraging. The work of these students in folders, books and on display, which was seen during the inspection, is of a high standard.

128. Standards overall in Years 12 and 13 are well above average. This represents a very good level of achievement. This is because throughout Year 12, students are taught to build on their learning from GCSE so that they quickly develop a very good understanding of course objectives; they make very good progress in lessons and they consolidate their learning well in Year 13. Discussions with some of these students revealed that they fully understood the importance of first-hand observation work and how to research and develop ideas. Much of the evidence for this understanding appears in their sketchbooks and work-journals. The best of these books show a lively and meaningful exploration of ideas and media appropriate to the intended outcomes as, for example, in that of one Year 13 student who made exciting use of a wide range of drawing techniques, materials and textile processes in her preparation of designs for a screen based on her observations of natural forms. She had also successfully linked her visual research and preparatory work to her historical study of the American artist,

Georgia O'Keefe. This very good use of sketchbooks and work-journals for visual and historical research contributes well to the very good achievement of students and is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

129. Another factor, which contributes to the very good achievement, is the students' ability to produce technically competent and imaginative outcomes of their research in the form of large scale paintings. These are based, for example, on their studies of the human figure, the local environment and the visit to Brighton, which was organised by the teachers in order that the AS-level students could make drawings, and studies of the sea front, the pier and Lanes in preparation for their work on the theme of 'Cities'. Many of these are displayed in the corridors and entrance area to the subject and they provide inspiring examples for students to discuss and to see what is possible in the subject.
130. The quality of teaching in Years 12 and 13 is consistently very good because it provides appropriate levels of challenge and a range of opportunities in a variety of media for all students. There is also very good emphasis on the thorough learning of skills and techniques so that in their paintings, textiles and written work, students are able to confidently meet the demands of A-level study. They are taught to integrate their learning about styles and ideas in art history with their practical work as for example, in the work of one Year 13 student who had researched the work of the artist, Ben Nicholson. As a result of this she had produced some exciting visual studies which were linked to her written analysis of the artist's work. The way in which students are taught to discuss and to write in a critical and analytical way, rather than in a merely descriptive manner, is a strength in the subject; it contributes very well to the well above average standards of attainment at A-level and is another improvement since the previous inspection.
131. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and expertise which they employ effectively when advising students and when demonstrating processes. This was evident, for example, in one teacher's demonstration of how to combine screen-print, stencil and hand-painted designs in a Year 12 assignment based on the study of the artist, Sonia Delaunay. Students responded positively to this teacher's enthusiasm for her subject and were excited by the results in their own screen-printed fabrics. They were also very good at co-operating with each other and in sharing in some of the organisational tasks associated with the subject. This lesson, in which there was an atmosphere of industry and in which the teacher's relationships with students were very good, was an example of how the very good teaching has an impact on the students' learning, attitudes and achievement.
132. Although some students are able to study both the Fine Art and Textile courses, there are currently few opportunities for them to use three-dimensional materials and processes. This is one area of their learning at GCSE which is not developed as well in the sixth form and is an aspect of the subject's work which should be improved so as to provide a broader range of curricular opportunities for the students. The use of information and

communication technology has started to appear in the students' sketchbooks and class work, as for example in the work of a Year 12 student who was learning to scan and manipulate a self portrait drawing in one of his lessons, but currently there are insufficient computers in the subject and too few opportunities for this important aspect of the art and design curriculum. This means that students do not always fully appreciate and understand the possibilities and applications of new technologies in creative work and in the design industries and is another aspect of the provision which the subject should seek to improve.

133. Very strong individual support is provided for students. An example of this was in a Year 13 lesson where the teacher was discussing with a student the progress he had made since the previous lesson. The teacher was very effective at probing the student's answers to questions and in identifying areas of concern so that the student was very clear about what he had achieved so far, what he needed to do to make further progress and the time scale left for him in which to complete his work. The teacher's firm but non-confrontational manner was successful in motivating the student and encouraged him to take a more positive attitude towards his work.
134. This process of formative assessment and target setting is backed up with very well prepared assignment guidance sheets and lesson plans so that students are always clear about what they must do in each lesson and as homework and about the deadlines for each assignment. These are of particular benefit to the new Year 12 students because, as one Year 12 student said, "They help us to manage our time better", with the result that they can work with the good self-discipline and greater independence which is seen in the later work of the Year 13 students. This example of very good planning and support for students is a strength in the teaching and has a very good impact on the positive attitudes of students and on standards in the subject.
135. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Teachers have a shared vision for the development of the subject; this is firmly linked to raising standards and to supporting students. The subject should continue to explore ways of implementing an effective system for the monitoring students' performance in order to ensure that they achieve their full potential in relation to their GCSE results.
136. Excellent opportunities exist for students to visit exhibitions and galleries in both London and Paris. Students also benefit from the opportunity to assist with exchange links to a school in Holland. These opportunities contribute very well to the students' wider cultural education and the high level of interest which students show in participating in them is an indication of their positive attitudes and enthusiasm for the subject.

### **Theatre Studies**

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

#### Strengths

- Students attain well above average results.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The teaching of theatre studies provides a depth and breadth to the curriculum.
- Outstanding relationships between staff and students.
- The subject is very well led and managed. The head of subject has a clear vision, which includes rigorous assessment, mutual staff support and a single-minded commitment to raising the standards of the students.

#### Areas for development

- Further development of student self-learning.

137. Theatre studies is offered at GCE A-level and AS-level. A strong feature of the courses was that completion rates were extremely high. Results in the GCE A-level examination in 2000 were well above the national average and a high percentage of A and B grades were achieved. The local education authority's analysis of its schools' theatre studies results for 2000 has Imberhorne in first place. The results are a continuation of an upward trend. Results of the 2001 tests indicate higher standards with all students achieving grades A and B. At the time of the inspection there were no national figures for comparison with the results in the new AS-level examinations taken in Year 12, but the school's results are encouraging. These results represent very good achievement.
138. Work seen during the inspection is above average and this represents a very good level of achievement. Some students enter the course without having studied drama at GCSE and the progression of all students by the end of year 13 is very good. Students use specialist, technical vocabulary naturally and fluently; they always refer to the text to back up their opinions; they are sensitive to a sense of audience and can understand and put into practice the role of director. Students empathise with character and theme and can portray nuances of voice. At the beginning of the course some students are more hesitant but the strengths of the relationships between teachers and students and students themselves encourages practical exploration and mutual trust. In a Year 12 lesson students combined commitment and hard work to produce well-prepared presentations on the history of the theatre utilising the overhead projector and advanced information technology skills to produce accompanying worksheets. The work of students in Years 13 is well presented and exceptionally well organised developing their research skills and independent learning.
139. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The teaching of theatre studies provides a depth and breadth to the curriculum. It incorporates teaching styles, which clearly develop the learning of the students. Emphasis on varied activities, personal development and collaborative work enhances the enjoyment and motivation of the students. At the same time, requirements for students to develop their own portfolios of work, visit theatres and empathise with others develops their independence. Specialists, who are

committed to the subject teach drama and contribute to the wider education it affords the students. Teaching is well paced and controlled. It concentrates on the achievements of the students and is celebratory. All teaching seen is very good combining verve and enthusiasm of the staff and students and detailed knowledge and understanding aimed at developing students' personal and academic achievement. In one Year 13 lesson students spoke authoritatively, using specialist vocabulary, about directing, staging and acting. The motivation and enthusiasm of the students are excellent. Lessons are well prepared and all students gain the maximum insight into the subject as well as gaining knowledge of a wide range of sophisticated drama skills. In a good lesson, students discussed staging fluently, but were prevented from developing their reflective processes because the teacher answered some questions for them.

140. Standards have improved since the last inspection as has teaching and learning. The curriculum is rich and varied; extra-curricular activities include academic lessons after school in order to improve standards as well as a wealth of dramatic presentations both in school and as part of the local community. The subject is very well led and managed. The head of subject has a clear vision, which includes rigorous assessment, mutual staff support and a single-minded commitment to raising the standards of the students. The subject is working on developing the independent learning of its students.

## **HUMANITIES**

141. The focus was on geography, history, politics and sociology, but psychology was also sampled. Psychology is a relatively new course and many students opt for it. One lesson of AS-level psychology was observed. In this lesson, very effective teaching enabled students to carry out an evaluation and to develop the students' technical vocabulary of the subject. The teacher challenged students' thinking through questioning and discussion as they worked and ensured a good pace of work was maintained throughout. Standards in this lesson were above average.

## Geography

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

### Strengths

- Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have a very good subject knowledge that enables students to learn not only the factual content for the course, but also the interpretation skills necessary for success.
- Students achieve very well and have excellent attitudes to work. All their assignments are of a high standard.
- The assessment and tutorial systems are very good with the result that students know exactly where they are and what they need to do to improve further.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.

### Areas for improvement

- Occasionally in lessons there is an emphasis on teacher and student question and answer sessions. It would benefit students even further if they were given more opportunities to interpret and discuss visual evidence as a group, with teacher support.

142. Geography is offered at GCE A-level and AS-level. A strong feature of the courses was that completion rates were extremely high. Results in the 2000 GCE A-level examination were well above average and provisional results for 2001 show a further improvement. Results at the time of the last inspection were in line with the average and there has clearly been a considerable rise since then. There has been a history of fairly small numbers of students opting for the subject, but this has been reversed, an encouraging number of students are studying for AS level in Year 12.
143. Evidence from the inspection confirms that the standards attained by students on GCE AS and A-level courses are well above average. They are better than at the time of the last inspection. Students start the courses with good levels of GCSE attainment, so these even higher standards represent very good achievement. There are no significant differences in attainment between male and female students or across the different ethnic groups represented in the school.
144. Students show very good knowledge and understanding of the wide range of topics covered in physical, human and economic geography. They work confidently on their own, or in groups, to collect information from a range of sources and to form sound judgements from this evidence. This was clearly seen in a Year 12 lesson where students were identifying rock samples based on information they had been given previously. They were able to use the information to make sensible and accurate predictions about the origins and the types of rocks they were given. Students develop the ability to interpret a range of sources of evidence, such as photographs and maps, and these skills are used well in their written and fieldwork assignments, which are of a very high standard. Students in Year 13, for example, use a range of information to study the effects of sea erosion on the south coast, and to

evaluate the effectiveness of the various methods that have been used to try to contain it. Students make good use of information and communication technology to produce maps and pictures and to edit and refine their written work. However, the use of information and communication technology in school is limited by the lack of regular access to the information and communication technology suite.

145. The quality of teaching and the learning it promotes is very good. The teacher has a wide subject knowledge which ensures that students have all the factual information needed for success. There is also a stress in lessons on students using their knowledge to develop independent learning and research skills. As a result they are skilled at these very important areas of learning towards A-level success. Teachers have a genuine enthusiasm for the subject, which is transmitted to students so that they too begin to appreciate the wonders of nature and the powerful forces associated with it. Lessons are very well planned and have a clear structure so that a range of resources such as information and communication technology, maps, information sheets and text books are used to great effect. Students' work is carefully marked and teachers give very useful hints and advice to help students improve the quality of their work. Occasionally question and answer sessions between teacher and students are used when students could gain greater benefit from discussions among themselves or from describing what they see in the evidence to the rest of the group. Students are attentive in lessons and show a high level of motivation to produce work of genuine quality. Teachers expect high quality work and students respond very well. Students talk with confidence about their work and discuss geographical issues with confidence and maturity. Students work very well in groups and very good relationships between students and with their teacher are a strong feature of the lessons.
146. There are very good assessment procedures in place to track attainment and progress. These are used to set targets both for the subject and for individual students. The very good tutorial system in use ensures that all students have opportunities to discuss their work and that all know what level they are likely to achieve and how to improve further. The handbook and scheme of work for the subject provide a logical and cohesive course, which contributes to both teaching and learning. The leadership and management of the subject are very good and this is a significant factor in the rise in standards and the increase in numbers studying the subject since the last report.

## History

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

### Strengths

- Results in 2000 were well above the national average, with most students showing very good achievement in relation to their previous attainment.
- The teaching of history is very good; it is well planned and reflects strength of subject knowledge and understanding.
- The management of the subject is very good and history is a popular option choice.

### Areas for improvement



- The lack of ready access to textbooks and information and communication technology equipment severely constrains research opportunities.

147. History is offered at GCE A-level and AS-level. A strong feature of the courses was that completion rates were extremely high. Results in the 2000 GCE A-level examinations were well above the national average. The proportion of students attaining grades A or B was above average but below average for the proportion achieving grades A to E. Although the proportion of students achieving the higher grades fell in 2001, the proportion attaining a pass grade increased by 20 per cent. This represents an improvement compared with examination results in history at the time of the last inspection when GCE A-level results were in line with the national average. At the time of the inspection there were no national figures for comparison with the results in the new AS-level examinations taken in Year 12, but the school's results are encouraging.
148. Observation of lessons and a scrutiny of students' work confirm that standards are above average and achievement is very good. Standards are above what might be expected at this early stage in the Year 12 GCE AS-level course with students progressing smoothly from GCSE, where their standards were broadly average, to GCE AS-level. The performance of the current Year 13 GCE A-level group is also above average. Students analyse historical sources critically and evaluate a wide range of evidence effectively to produce well-balanced and convincing arguments. They articulate their views with growing confidence and show a good command of the higher order skills of analysis and synthesis.
149. Students learn very well in their courses in history, and they show very good levels of progress in both thinking and writing. Progression from GCSE to GCE AS-level is smoothly achieved. Students in Year 13 produce good quality written work. The small minority of students for whom English is an additional language achieve well. This very good learning results both from the methodical and experienced teaching in the subject and from the students' own positive attitudes to study.
150. The quality of teaching is very good. There are many significant strengths in the teaching which have a positive impact on both students' attitudes and the quality of their learning. Teachers' confident subject expertise and high expectations of what students can achieve allow them to prepare students well for the demands of the higher order skills in the subject. Effective approaches regularly used include spider grams to effectively analyse sources of historical evidence. Teaching is very clearly linked to the requirements of the examining body. This was evident, for example, in two lessons where students made very effective use of mark schemes in order to better understand how to improve their answers. Teachers are enthusiastic and committed towards raising standards in the subject and in maintaining its popularity as an option choice.
151. The subject is very well managed by an experienced head of subject. She has a clear view of the priorities for the subject, shared by a committed and able team. Although teachers make good use of resources, the lack of ready access to textbooks and information and communication technology

equipment severely constrains research opportunities. There were no issues identified in the last inspection report.

### **Government and politics**

Overall, the quality of provision in government and politics is **good**.

#### Strengths

- Teaching on the new GCE AS and the Year 13 A-level course is good leading to students achieving well.
- Results in GCE A-level government and politics in 2000 were well above the national average. The proportion of students obtaining the higher grades in 2000 was well above average.
- Students' achievement is good, they do not study the subject at GCSE and yet they make rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding throughout Years 12 and 13.

#### Areas for improvement

- The range of textbooks is limited and access to information and communication technology restricts opportunities for research.
- There are insufficient opportunities to meet with specialist staff from other schools.

152. Government and politics is offered at A-level and AS-level. A strong feature of the courses was that completion rates were extremely high. Results in the 2000 GCE A-level examinations in government and politics were well above the national average. The proportion of students obtaining grades A or B was well above average. In 2001 the proportion of students obtaining the higher grades fell, although a higher percentage obtained a pass grade. At the time of the inspection there were no national figures for comparison with the results in the new AS-level examinations taken in Year 12, but the school's results are encouraging.

153. The standards reached by current students, as seen in lessons and in their written work, are above average, and their achievement is good. Students develop a sound understanding of the basic concepts of the subject. They relate these concepts to contemporary events in Britain and the United States. They show a good grasp of the differences between a parliamentary system and a presidential one. Students have good skills in independent research and show high levels of political maturity and awareness. Year 12 students on the new GCE AS-level course are well motivated and are achieving well. They have not studied the subject previously and yet they make clear and rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding. Students' files are well organised and provide evidence of a good build-up of knowledge. Lower-attaining students, however, would benefit from being given more help with different ways of organising their material. They show a good understanding of some key political concepts and structures, for example the British electoral system. Students show interest in relevant topical issues, enhanced by classroom display of newspaper articles and other materials.

154. The quality of the teaching on the GCE AS and A-level course is good with some very good features and leads to good learning. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives which are shared effectively with students. The teaching makes good use of question and answer technique to check that students understand what is being taught. The teaching is methodical but enthusiastic and provides students of all abilities with challenge and rigour. For example, in a Year 13 lesson on pressure groups in the United States, the teacher made sure that the students made good notes and that key words were defined. Students react to the teaching with enthusiasm and very good levels of concentration and perseverance. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and examination course and use this effectively to guide students on how to answer written questions so that maximum marks can be gained. Teachers make very good use of humour. For example, in a Year 12 lesson the teacher engaged students' interest by discussing the rise and fall of members of Parliament. Politics is a popular subject in the school and students regularly go on to study the subject at university. Learning is enhanced through attendance at revision conferences held by the examination board and through visits by, for example, the local Member of Parliament. The lack of ready access to information and communication technology equipment severely constrains research opportunities.
155. The quality of leadership and management is good. Although there is scope to share good practice with teachers of other sixth form humanities subjects in the school, there would be benefits from contact with politics staff from other schools. Resources are well used, although limited, with students needing to purchase some of their textbooks. The range of textbooks is limited and access to information and communication technology restricts opportunities for research. The introduction of the new GCE AS and A-level scheme has been well managed. The head of subject has a clear view of the priorities for the subject and is committed to the maintenance and further improvement of the high standards already established.

### **Sociology**

The overall quality of provision in sociology is **good**.

#### Strengths

- Standards are good: examination results are consistently well above average and achievement is good.
- Teaching is good: lessons are effectively focused and enable students to learn effectively.
- Management of the subject is good and sociology is a popular choice in the sixth form.

#### Areas for improvement

- Textbook resources are limited.
- Students would benefit from the provision of more opportunities to develop their speaking and presentation skills.

156. Sociology is offered at GCE A-level and AS-level. A strong feature of the courses was that completion rates were extremely high. Results in the 2000 GCE A-level examinations were well above the national average. The proportions of students attaining grades A or B and A to E were well above the national average. Although results fell in 2001, standards were still above average. At the time of the inspection there were no national figures for comparison with the results in the new AS-level examinations taken in Year 12, but the school's results are encouraging.
157. The standards observed during the inspection were above average. The work of Year 13 students is at a level above the standards expected, while that of the Year 12 students also represents above average attainment for the stage of the course they have reached. This represents a good level of achievement.
158. Year 12 students have made a good start to their course. They are beginning to develop an understanding of different theoretical traditions and can define and illustrate key concepts by reference to the family in contemporary society. Their achievement is good, they have not previously studied this subject and they have already made clear and rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding. Year 13 students build well on what they learnt in Year 12. Coursework planning is thorough and students show a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the methodologies they are planning to use. Their skills in collecting data, analysing findings and reaching conclusions are competent.
159. The teaching of sociology is good. Teachers use their expertise as coursework moderators to good effect, providing effective support and clear guidance to students. Teachers provide clear explanations of concepts, theories and principles, although there are sometimes missed opportunities for students to develop and improve their speaking and presentational skills. The support that teachers provide for individual students is very good. For example, in a Year 13 lesson on coursework requirements, the teacher gave clarification, checked drafts and spent considerable time with one student who was struggling with the conceptual understanding of the chosen topic. In this way the student was encouraged and motivated and worked hard to complete the task. Lessons are challenging and well planned. Marking of students' work is thorough with clear written comments on what they have done well and what they need to do in order to improve. The teaching is enthusiastic and good humoured: students react positively and show good levels of concentration and perseverance.
160. As a result of this good teaching, the students show enthusiasm for their learning. They read around the subject and show skill in relating concepts to relevant modern examples. This was evident, for example, in a lesson on abuse in the family. Students are given opportunities in lessons to research topics using information and communication technology.

161. The head of subject is managing the subject well. Although she updates her own knowledge through membership of a professional subject association and through the relevant examining body, the subject would benefit from additional in-service training and the sharing of good practice with other teachers of sociology from other schools. Resources are used to good effect, although there is a shortage of relevant textbooks. The subject has created effective links with the local public library which provides boxes of relevant books to support units of study and students' coursework.

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

162. The focus was on English literature and French but German was also sampled. Results in the 2000 GCE A-level examinations in German were close to the national average. The proportion of students attaining grades A and B were well below the national average although all students attained a grade at A to E. In a GCE AS-level German lesson, the teaching was satisfactory. The teacher demonstrated good subject knowledge.

### English literature

Overall, the quality of provision in English literature is **very good**

#### Strengths

- In the very good and outstanding lessons there is a brisk pace, students are clearly motivated and a large amount of work is completed.
- High expectations created an under-graduate atmosphere and an intellectual response from the students.
- The very good leadership of the subject provides a clear vision for staff and students that reflect the school's aims.

#### Areas for development

- Assessment which supports and develops students' learning.
- Further development of students' independent learning skills.

163. English literature is offered at GCE A-level and AS-level. A strong feature of the courses was that completion rates were extremely high. Results in the 2000 GCE A-level English literature examination were well above the national average and include a high percentage of students achieving grades A and B. Results in 2001 reflect this attainment and continue an upward trend. At the time of the inspection there were no national figures for comparison with the results in the new AS-level examinations taken in Year 12, but the school's results are encouraging.

164. In the work seen during the inspection students' attainment is well above average overall and represents a very good level of achievement. All students have a good knowledge and understanding of their work and clearly relish the subject. Their oral skills are good in classroom discussion and occasionally falter when speaking in situations requiring reflection. Students make valid and cogent observation and use technical vocabulary in their writing. Extended writing is a strong feature of the students' work and their independent research skills are well developed. They read widely and choose challenging texts. Students make sophisticated inferences from texts and sustain detailed textual analysis. Whilst many students use information and

communication technology to aid the presentation of their work this is largely dependent on having access to a computer at home. Some students do not have this facility and as access to the school's computers is problematic they are prevented from using this resource.

165. The study of historical and multi-cultural texts deepens students' understanding of literature and life. Sensitive lesson planning ensures that all students are given the opportunity to air their views in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Very good relationships are evident in lessons and students respond positively to their teacher and each other.
166. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. In the very good and outstanding lessons there is a brisk pace, students are clearly motivated and a large amount of work is completed. Students enjoy their work with each other and their teacher in an atmosphere of achievement and respect. In a Year 13 lesson analysing the historical context of Chaucer's poetry, the teacher used works of art from the time to deepen students' awareness and interest. This was just one aspect of a lesson that combined vigorous and rigorous teaching to further the learning of the students. A very good Year 13 lesson on 'The Tempest' was very well prepared using a methodical approach to ensure that students covered all aspects of form and structure to shape meanings. High expectations created an under-graduate atmosphere and an intellectual response from the students. In a good lesson, students learnt marginally less because the lesson had slightly less pace with less skilful probing of students' knowledge. Related extra-curricular activities celebrate students' achievement and increase their involvement and participation. Students' work is marked regularly and generally informs students' progress. This is not consistent and in a small minority of students' work teacher's comments are bland. The subject makes good use of assessment data for curricular planning.
167. The very good leadership of the subject provides a clear vision for staff and students that reflect the school's aims. Teachers are mutually supportive and respect each other and the students. Teachers share the preparation of schemes of work, which encourages equality for the students, and the development of staff. A mutual observation of lessons is developing teaching and learning styles, classroom management and maximising the learning of students.
168. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Teaching has improved and opportunities for discussion have been extended. The gap is narrowing between the performance of boys and girls and the teachers selects texts and plans lessons in order to improve boys' results. There is still insufficient information on how students may improve and develop their independent learning and the subject recognises this as a priority.

## Modern languages

### French

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

#### Strengths

- The teachers have good subject knowledge.
- The quality of spoken French, both by teachers and students in Year 13.
- Good use of information and communication technology especially for gathering authentic material from France.

#### Areas for improvement

- The numbers of students who opt for languages in the sixth form.
- Examination results at A-level.
- The quality of students' written work, particularly in the basics of grammar at this level.
- The leadership of the subject.

169. French is offered at GCE A-level and AS-level. Take up for the French courses is relatively low. The school offers a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in French to students whose A-level commitments would not otherwise allow them to study modern foreign languages. This is a useful course and much appreciated by the students studying it. A strong feature of the courses was that completion rates were extremely high. Results in the 2000 GCE A-level examinations were well above the national average.

170. Evidence seen in lessons and in students' files suggests that standards in Years 12 and 13 are broadly in line with those expected for the course. Male and female students and those from minority ethnic backgrounds do equally well, and achievement overall is satisfactory. Students understand the gist of authentic spoken and written French and select important details from it. In Year 12, the quality of spoken French is below that which could be expected and spoken responses are rather brief for work at this level. However, spoken French shows an improvement between Years 12 and 13. Students in Year 13 are both competent and confident speakers. They hold conversations about what they have done over the weekend and about their career hopes with a range of language and with good pronunciation. Students discuss issues about society in France with some confidence. They do, for example, talk about the system of allowing young people in France to ride mopeds at age 14 and the advantages and disadvantages of such regulations. The quality of students' written work is variable. A minority of high attaining students writes accurately and at length about such topics as the state and the individual, health issues and schools in France and in England, but this is a minority and students' work in general shows basic grammatical and spelling errors.

171. The quality of teaching, and the learning it promotes is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge particularly of preparation for examinations and students are given plenty

of helpful prompts to aid their preparation. Teachers' spoken French is good and this is clearly evident in the improvement in students' spoken language, which takes place between Years 12 and 13. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to access relevant and up to date information and this adds to the authenticity of the work provided. Students' work is regularly marked and corrected, but the use of marking to give students help on how to improve their work is inconsistent. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, the pace of the work is not sufficiently rigorous to make students work really hard and maximise learning. Lessons also tend to lack variety. In the satisfactory lessons observed a lesson consists of some spoken French and some reading and associated writing activities and this does not provide a wide variety to make students really think about their language use. Where teaching provides greater variety, students need to vary their responses to fit different situations. This was seen, for example, in a Year 13 lesson where the teacher carefully planned a range of unexpected questions about the advantages of public and private transport, which made students vary their answers to fit unexpected situations.

172. Students of French are attentive and show interest in the subject. Students are keen to take part in discussions and can sustain and develop their views well. They develop good individual work and research skills. Students work hard and show sensible and mature attitudes to the subject.
173. Substantial staff changes over the last four years have created difficulties in ensuring appropriate continuity throughout the school. These staffing issues have been addressed. The management of the subject is satisfactory. There are clear policies in place in the subject handbook and the scheme of work provides a progressive programme across the two years of the sixth form. Students have good opportunities for work experience abroad that broaden both their language skills and their knowledge of the country in which they work. The French NVQ courses provide a good opportunity to students, which they might not otherwise have had, to study languages in the sixth form. Take up for the French courses is relatively low and results are not improving. Subject and school managers must overcome these unsatisfactory leadership issues in order to appropriately address Language College targets.