

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WELLING SCHOOL**

Welling, London

LEA area: Bexley

Unique reference number: 101467

Headteacher: Mr B J C Ambrose

Reporting inspector: Mrs H Hutchings  
7541

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> December 2001

Inspection number: 190012

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Secondary Modern
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Elsa Road Welling Kent
Postcode:	DA16 1LB
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Johnson
Date of previous inspection:	30 <sup>th</sup> September 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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9563	Mrs J Reid	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; school's care for pupils; partnership with parents
18447	Mr R Cohen	Team inspector		Results and pupils' achievements; teaching and learning; curriculum
20629	Mr J Bryson	Team inspector	English	
5714	Ms F Thornton	Team inspector	Science	
19278	Mr R Allan	Team inspector	Mathematics	
1990	Mr G Preston	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
31680	Mr P Redican	Team inspector	Art and design	
14522	Mr I Smith	Team inspector	Design and technology	
20247	Mr R Parry	Team inspector	Geography	
30317	Mrs E Barthaud	Team inspector	History; business studies	
22577	Lady M Hart	Team inspector	French; special educational needs	
24887	Mrs Y Salmons	Team inspector	Spanish	
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18888	Ms J Boulton	Team inspector	Physical education; equal opportunities	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Welling School is a secondary modern school for pupils aged 11-18: of these just under 1400 are in Years 7-11 and just under 100 are in the sixth form. There are approximately the same numbers of boys and girls. The school is growing rapidly in size owing to parental choices and a strong demand for school places in the area. About a quarter of the pupils come from Greenwich, the neighbouring Local Education Authority. The school operates within a selective system where a quarter of the more able pupils in the area attend grammar schools. The social and economic background of pupils is broadly average, although a lower than average number come from homes where adults have higher education. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. The overall attainment of pupils on entry to the school at age 11 is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average, but the proportion with statements of such need is in line with the average. About three per cent of pupils come from families of ethnic minority heritage, but none is at an early stage of learning English.

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

Welling School is an effective school. Although the standards achieved by the pupils are generally below the national averages for all schools, they are in line with pupils in similar secondary modern schools. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. Teaching is good in almost two out of five lessons and very good or excellent in a further one in five lessons, although it is less than satisfactory in almost one in ten lessons. The school is well led and governors and the senior team work positively to raise standards. However, there have been serious difficulties in recruiting and retaining appropriately qualified teachers over the last two years. Despite the school's best efforts to redress this situation the shortage of teachers is disrupting learning for a number of pupils and is adversely impacting on the school's capacity to raise standards further. Given its lower than average income and because the strengths outweigh the weaknesses, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Art and design, design and technology, drama and physical education are particular subject strengths.
- Most pupils form good relationships with one another and with their teachers.
- There is much good teaching.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum.
- Pupils' moral and cultural development is promoted well.
- The headteacher, leadership team and governors lead and manage the school well.
- The school evaluates its performance carefully and plans well for development.
- The school manages the limited resources available to it very effectively.
- The school is a friendly and inclusive place.

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

- Standards in most subjects, but particularly in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology across the curriculum.
- The behaviour, attitudes and attendance of a minority of pupils.
- Weaknesses in teaching amongst temporary staff.
- The frequency and consistency with which homework is set.
- Provision for the spiritual development of pupils.
- Levels of resources for learning.
- The unsatisfactory standard of accommodation.
- Compliance with statutory requirements for a daily act of worship for all pupils, physical education for boys in Key Stage 3 and religious education in the sixth form.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in 1996 it has made a number of improvements and addressed nearly all the weaknesses identified at that time. Pupils' attainment at Key Stage 3 has improved at a rate which is above the national trend over the last five years, although the improvement trend in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) is below that nationally. There are now opportunities for pupils to investigate and carry out research and more able pupils are achieving well. There is a clear rationale for the sixth form curriculum, although there is insufficient planning for the development of key skills. The school now has a rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluation and all levels of management have a clear understanding of their roles. The school has shown a sound capacity to improve. It received the national Investors in People status in 2000. There is less unsatisfactory teaching than during the last inspection. Little progress has, however, been made in ensuring that statutory requirements are met for religious education in the sixth form and that a daily act of collective worship is provided for all pupils.

## STANDARDS

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

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

**Key**

well above average      A

above average          B

average                    C

below average          D

well below average     E

Although the school's results in the Year 9 national tests in 2001 were below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science when compared with all schools, in all three subjects they were in line with those achieved in similar secondary modern schools with the same proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals. Standards over the 1997-2001 period have risen above the rate of schools nationally and represent satisfactory achievement by the pupils. By the end of Year 9, standards are below the national expectations in most other subjects. They are above average, however, in physical education and are average in art and design and design and technology. Boys do less well than girls in most subjects. However, this trend is more or less in line with national figures. The majority of pupils make sound progress in their studies between Years 7 and 9. In art and design, design and technology, French, Spanish, physical education and religious education, pupils make good progress.

Results in GCSE were well below the national average in 2001 and have been below average since the last inspection on most of the usual measures. However, the overall standard in 2001 was in line with that achieved in schools of a similar character, again when compared with secondary modern schools with similar free school meals ratings. The progress of the majority of pupils from their Key Stage 3 attainment in 1999 to GCSE in 2001 was, however, very good for the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades A\*-C, because their earlier attainment had also been below average, overall. Boys do noticeably worse than girls nationally: the academic gap between boys and girls in the school has been closing, but this is mainly because the performance of girls has not been improving as rapidly as that of girls nationally. The strongest subjects in GCSE in the school over the last two years have been art and design, design and technology, drama and physical education. Pupils have consistently tended to do significantly worse in science, French, Spanish, history and information and communication technology than in other subjects. Most pupils make a satisfactory rate of progress over Years 10 and 11 and in a number of subjects it is good.



Standards in the sixth form are below national averages. However, the most recent results continue an upward trend. The standard of students' work seen during the inspection confirms that improvement is well established.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The majority of pupils have good attitudes to school, but a significant minority have unsatisfactory or poor attitudes to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Most pupils behave well, are friendly and polite. However, a significant minority have unsatisfactory and sometimes poor behaviour in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships overall are satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy good relationships both with one another and with the staff they have got to know.
Attendance	The attendance of pupils is below the national average.

Most pupils are pleasant and hard-working young people, although a few display unsatisfactory attitudes to their own learning and behaviour. The rate of exclusions is higher than national averages.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Very good

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

Over half of the lessons seen during the inspection were good or very good and a few had excellent teaching. In the sixth form, teaching is very good, overall. In a minority of lessons, teaching was unsatisfactory. These took place predominantly in Years 7 to 9, although there were also many examples of good teaching in these year groups. Pupils' learning followed a similar pattern.

In the core subjects, teaching is unsatisfactory, overall, in English in Years 7 to 11; learning has been disrupted for many pupils because of the high numbers of temporary and supply teachers. In both mathematics and science in Years 7 to 11 it is satisfactory. There is much good teaching in art, design and technology, geography, history, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. There is particularly good teaching in some history lessons. In all other subjects, teaching is satisfactory overall.

In well-taught lessons, pupils make good progress through rigorous and interesting teaching, taught at a fast pace. Unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by low expectations and poor behaviour management. This was often found in situations in which the teachers were insufficiently qualified or experienced and were not permanent staff of the school. The needs of the highest-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are generally met satisfactorily.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall, but is not yet co-ordinated fully across subjects other than English and mathematics.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities and subjects that mostly meet the needs of all pupils. Statutory requirements are not fully met, in that boys in Years 7 to 9 do not experience the full programme of study. The curriculum is enhanced by good extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Sound policies are now in place following a period of limited development and these are having a positive impact on the overall provision.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Moral and cultural education is highly emphasised and there are good multicultural opportunities in art, drama and religious education. However, provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory and the school does not provide a daily act of collective worship.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school makes satisfactory provision for the care of pupils. Pupils are generally well-known by their teachers who provide appropriate support and guidance.

The school is failing to meet statutory requirements to provide a daily act of worship, the full physical education programme of study for boys in Years 7 to 9 and sufficient religious education in Years 12 and 13. Assessment procedures are clear and practice is improving. The personal and social education course is structured well. The curriculum is enhanced by a broad range of extra-curricular activities catering for a wide range of pupils' interests. Links with parents are satisfactory and termly newsletters give good and detailed information about school developments and achievements.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Management at all levels is generally effective and is often good. The headteacher provides good leadership and has retained a clear vision for the future, in spite of considerable management challenges over recent years.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a strong strategic vision for the future of the school, but have not yet found a way to fulfil their statutory responsibilities in some areas.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has strong quality assurance processes in place. Planning for the future is secure and priorities are appropriately costed.
The strategic use of resources	The school is experiencing problems with the recruitment of appropriately qualified and experienced staff. Accommodation is unsatisfactory for many subjects. Learning resources in some areas are inadequate.

The school's management, at all levels, displays a clear commitment to continuous improvement. Many aspects of the school's accommodation are unsatisfactory, but plans are well-advanced to replace sub-standard buildings. Learning resources are inadequate in a number of subjects, although the school makes good use of the financial resources available to it. Financial planning and management are targeted towards identified priorities and account is taken of the principles of best value.

## 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>• Pupils like school</li><li>• The school is approachable</li><li>• The school has high expectations</li><li>• The school helps pupils to become mature and responsible</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pupils' behaviour</li><li>• The recruitment of staff</li><li>• Information about their children's progress</li><li>• Dialogue between home and school</li></ul>

A very small proportion of parents attended the meeting held before the inspection and only 16 per cent of parents returned the questionnaire. Inspectors' views largely support the view of parents apart from the quality of information about children's progress and the dialogue between home and school. Inspection evidence confirms that the school makes every effort to maintain good contacts with pupils' homes and that it provides good and regular information for parents. The difficulty being experienced nationally in recruiting and retaining staff is having a particularly adverse impact on this school and, consequently, is leading to some disruption in pupils' learning. The majority of pupils behave well, although a significant minority display a lack of self-control and inappropriate behaviour both in lessons and around the school site. In a number of instances there are few parental or form tutor comments in pupils' diaries, which should form the basis for regular contact between home and school.

## **ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM**

## **WELLING SCHOOL**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM**

The sixth form has 95 students, with slightly more male students than female. Most students enter the sixth form from Year 11 in the school. There are currently 33 students in Year 13 and 62 in Year 12. The discrepancy in these numbers is made up of two factors. First, there was a dropout rate of about 20 per cent in summer 2001. Secondly, and more significantly, there has been an increase of over 40 per cent in the numbers entering the school's sixth form this year. The sixth form offers students a suitably wide range of courses, including subjects not always found in school sixth forms, such as sociology, government and politics, media and drama and theatre studies. Most subjects lead to accreditation at General Certificate of Education Advanced Supplementary and Advanced Levels (AS and A-levels). The range is augmented by a vocational course, offered at advanced level, in information technology and a very good programme of discrete lessons in personal and social education which adds effectively to other enrichment provision.

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

The sixth form is increasing its successes and is slowly, but steadily, expanding. Although pass rates and grade quality are usually slightly below national averages, these generally reflect students' lower GCSE results. However, some pupils do attain high grades and there is a burgeoning recognition by students and their families of the benefits of higher education, with a growing percentage of Year 13 students continuing their studies at university. Most students here make at least sound progress. Results in many subjects show an improving trend. Teaching is very good. Facilities for the study of the arts are very good, although this highlights the impoverished accommodation in other areas of the curriculum. The sixth form is well managed. It is, however, still small in number and is subsidised by the rest of the school. This subsidy has fallen in the last two years, so that it is now less than one per cent of the total school budget. The school and the governing body are already engaged in detailed discussions about consortia arrangements with similar schools locally with the intention of achieving the economic viability of the sixth forms.

#### **Strengths**

- Students make sound progress in most subjects.
- The majority of students display very mature, thoughtful and committed attitudes to their studies.
- Teaching is very good.
- The school provides a suitably wide range of courses.
- Students' personal development is carefully nurtured.
- Students themselves rate the school very highly on virtually all aspects of its work.

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

- Recruitment and retention to the sixth form.
- Completion of the consortia arrangements.
- More rigorous monitoring and tracking of individual student progress.

*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. The nine listed below are GCE A-level apart from the vocational (AVCE) course in information technology.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	<b>Satisfactory</b> Teaching of fundamental skills and techniques and students' positive attitudes to learning are key strengths. Greater consistency of good teaching is needed in order to raise achievement.
Business studies	<b>Good</b> Standards are in line with the national average. Teaching is very good; lessons are well structured, with a range of activities. Systems for monitoring student progress need to be further developed.
Information technology	<b>Satisfactory</b> The subject achieved good results in the GNVQ Advanced level and the current Year 13 students are making good progress. Students benefit from specialist teaching, although there is a narrow range of teaching and learning strategies used. A shared system of monitoring and assessing student progress has not been established.
Art	<b>Good</b> Teaching and achievement are good. The subject makes a very good contribution to students' cultural development and there is very good use of information and communication technology. There are not enough opportunities for students to work on a large scale and there is no designated area for students to work independently outside their lesson times.
Drama and theatre studies	<b>Good</b> Teaching is good. Effective use is made of professional experience and expertise and students are committed to their learning. Accommodation and resources are of a high standard. Sixth form lessons are not always taught by suitably qualified teachers. Schemes of work require further development to incorporate more explicit reference to key skills, in particular information and communication technology.
Media Studies	<b>Good</b> Teaching and learning are very good. Students are working at levels at or above the national average. The curriculum is very good and promotes rigorous study. Resources are inadequate. Poor access to information communication technology, lack of basic textbooks and resources for video production work are particular weaknesses.
Geography	<b>Good</b> Teaching is very good. There are good private study facilities and access to information and communication technology. Opportunities in discussion and for sharing opinions are restricted by the small number of students.
English	<b>Unsatisfactory</b> There are good features of teaching: good subject knowledge, perceptive and challenging questioning and appropriate and sequential planning. Relationships are good. Students are well supported and enjoy the subject. The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning require further development to become consistent across all sixth form English provision. The use of assessment for curriculum planning and meeting individual students' needs is insufficiently systematic and rigorous.
Spanish	<b>Satisfactory</b> The teachers' expertise in the language encourages very good attitudes by the students learning Spanish. The schemes of work need to be completed and the assessment policy revised, linking it more closely to examination criteria.

Work was sampled in other subjects. Teaching was always at least satisfactory. It was very good in the few lessons seen in French and physical education. In history and in health and social care

students are required to use high levels of research. Personal and social education was well taught overall.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	<b>Good</b> The pastoral ethos of the sixth form is very strong. Students appreciate the considerable time, care and sensitive guidance that staff give to them.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	<b>Good</b> Senior staff have worked hard to create a wide-ranging curriculum, a good quality of teaching, adequate study and social facilities and a caring, but challenging, ethos. The monitoring of students' progress is insufficiently rigorous. The school has had difficulty in ensuring that the sixth form is cost-effective, but this situation is improving.

## 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>• Good facilities especially in the arts block</li> <li>• Good study room facilities</li> <li>• Good relationships with teachers</li> <li>• Good possibilities to develop personal strengths, particularly the ability to study independently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some buildings and facilities are poor</li> <li>• Students are not always well informed about their progress</li> <li>• Students are not always well advised about future options</li> </ul>

Inspectors closely concur with students' positive views about life in the sixth form. The quality of most teaching and the care and help that students receive are good. The arts block facilities are of a very high order, but students rightly highlight the very poor accommodation which remains in some areas of the school. Facilities for independent study are good. Inspectors agree that a more rigorous use of assessment is needed to inform pupils about their individual progress and to help in advising about future options.

## COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The school operates within a selective system where a quarter of pupils in each year group attend grammar schools. Pupils enter the school with standards of attainment on average well below national expectations for pupils of their age. A significant proportion of pupils enter the school with standards in literacy and numeracy that are weak and require additional support. The most recent evidence would indicate that in the last two years the school is taking in more children with standards of attainment below the national average in the core subjects and with a significant number of pupils presenting with special educational needs (SEN).
2. The school's results in the Year 9 national tests in 2001 were below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. However, pupils made satisfactory progress so that the results in all three subjects were in line with those achieved in secondary modern school with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals. Standards, as measured by the school's average points scored, over the 1997-2001 period have risen above the rate of schools nationally. By the end of Year 9 standards in the school are below the national expectations in most other subjects. They are above average, however, in physical education (PE), and are average in art and design. Boys do less well than girls in most subjects. However, this trend is more or less in line with national figures. The majority of pupils make sound progress in their studies between Years 7 and 9. In French, Spanish, PE and art, pupils make good progress. The school's own analysis of pupils' performance from Year 7 to Year 9 also demonstrates that, in comparison to the performance of pupils on entry to the school, it does achieve improvement by Year 9 and that the improvement is significant.
3. In the latest year the proportion of pupils obtaining 5 or more GCSE passes, or General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) equivalent, at grades A\* - C and at grades A\* - G was below the national average, but had been well below the national average for the previous three years for A\* - C. Based on the average total GCSE/GNVQ points score per pupil in the examination cohort, results in 2001 and over the last three years were below the national average. Taken over a five-year period 1996-2001 the trend in the school's average points for all core subjects was below the national trend. Both boys' and girls' results were below the national average overall, with relatively little difference between boys and girls. The academic gap between boys and girls in the school has been closing, but this is mainly because the performance of girls has not been improving as rapidly as that of girls, nationally.
4. The strongest subjects in GCSE in the school over the last two years have been art and design, drama and PE. Pupils have consistently tended to do significantly worse in science, French, Spanish, history and information and communication technology (ICT) than in other subjects. Most pupils make a satisfactory rate of progress over Years 10 and 11.
5. The progress of the majority of pupils from their Key Stage 3 attainment in 1999 to GCSE in 2001 was well above average for the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades A\* - C, because their earlier attainment had also been below average, overall. The most recent results for 2001 indicate that the school has sustained an improvement in the performance of average and below average pupils, many of whom achieve GCSE results that are above their performance predicted on the basis of their National Curriculum tests scores, but that a number of above average pupils are not achieving as well as their performance in these tests would have predicted.
6. In the work seen in Key Stage 4 during the inspection, the overall standards of pupils' attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are below those of pupils of a similar age nationally. This is also true for standards in geography, French, Spanish, ICT, music and religious education. Attainment is above national expectations in art and design and PE.

7. In Years 7 to 9 standards of attainment in most subjects are generally below the national expectation, but, set against pupils' attainment on entry, this represents, for many, satisfactory and, in some instances, good progress. In English, pupils steadily acquire a range of literacy skills and their achievement is satisfactory overall. In mathematics, it has proved stubbornly hard to improve but there is evidence of progress in Year 7, in the early identification of pupils' weaknesses and in sustained support to improve their competence. In science, pupils make satisfactory progress, from a low level, to achieve standards that are still below average at the end of Year 9. In art and design, pupils make good progress from a low base, so that their standards by the time they reach Key Stage 4 are above average. In a number of subjects, it is clear that staff absence and the use of non-specialist staff to cover in some instances have had a significant adverse impact on pupils' achievements in the subject. This is particularly true in English.
8. The general progress pupils make in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, given the basic level of skill with which the pupils enter the school, the level of confidence they have in their own capacity to learn and their concentration and application. Many pupils are impeded in their initial progress in the school by their low levels in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The lowest attaining pupils receive help in literacy through small group teaching and make good progress. Many others, whose basic skills are inadequate to cope with the demands of the curriculum, cannot be offered support and their progress is more often unsatisfactory. There is little or no support for pupils after Year 9, other than that for pupils with statements of special educational need. This can affect success in examinations, motivation and adjustment to school. Despite these weaknesses and the consequent impact on pupils' confidence many pupils make sufficient progress in Years 7 to 9 to achieve a reasonable level of competence to tackle the course requirements of GCSE and GNVQ.
9. In Years 10 and 11 there is some improvement in the progress many pupils make, as a result of a growing confidence and the hard work and effort of staff to prepare their pupils effectively for public examination. There is much good teaching throughout the school, but too often it fails to elicit the learning outcomes expected because of pupils' limited basic skills, lack of confidence in their own capacity to learn, their poor concentration and application and discontinuity in attendance.
10. A whole school literacy policy is being developed and there are examples of good practice in some departments. For example, key words are displayed in many subjects and teachers appropriately emphasise the technical application of these words. Standards of numeracy are well below average when pupils enter the school. A significant number of pupils lack confidence in tackling numerical problems without having to approach others for help and assistance. The opportunities for pupils to improve and reinforce their use of number across the curriculum are, as yet, not co-ordinated. Computers are now sited or about to be sited in each teaching area. However, ICT is not always used well in the areas that already have computing resources.
11. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is broadly satisfactory overall, but varies according to the level of support they receive. Pupils who have a statement of special educational need and additional support generally make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. Pupils at the earlier stages on the Special Needs Register receive support in some lessons and not in others. In lessons where learning support assistants are deployed, pupils make satisfactory and often good progress, as they do where teaching is particularly good and the activities are especially motivating, for example, in art and music. However, in many lessons, and in some whole departments, there is no support and pupils with behaviour or learning difficulties sometimes make unsatisfactory progress and make learning difficult for other pupils. Where individual education plans are used as working documents and inform lesson planning, progress tends to be better.

## **Sixth form**

12. In 2001, results at Advanced Level (A-level) were well below the national average for students entered for two or more A-levels. Numbers entered for A-levels are very small and an individual pupil can represent between four and seven per cent, making statistical comparability unreliable for most subjects. The school uses its own system to carry out a value-added analysis. In recent



years, the average progress of students following courses was below expectations in all subjects as shown by this analysis. However, it shows that there has been an improvement in progress in some subjects for a small number of individual students, but overall progress from GCSE to A-level remains lower than average. Results on vocational courses have generally been at least as good as national results. In 2001, 26 students entered intermediate GNVQ in business, health and social care and leisure and tourism. Eighty four per cent completed and achieved the full qualification. The remainder completed certificated units. Twenty six students entered intermediate GNVQ in business studies and all completed the course satisfactorily.

13. The teaching of key skills has just been introduced into Year 12 through the Young Enterprise scheme and it is too early to see the effect of this on the standards of students in these key skills.
14. Retention rates into the sixth form from Year 11 are below thirty per cent. However, retention rates between enrolment in Year 12 onto advanced level courses and examination entry in Year 13 have been relatively strong, with a drop-out of around twenty five per cent. Those students remaining on A2 courses in the focus subjects are generally working at a lower level than is normal for advanced level students, although a few individuals are showing high standards in mathematics and art.

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

15. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have declined since the previous inspection. Overall pupils' attitudes to learning now are satisfactory, whereas they were judged very good at the time of the last inspection. Many pupils, especially in Key Stage 3, have good attitudes. This occurs when the teaching is stimulating and challenging and the teacher's expectations in terms of behaviour are high. Then pupils are well motivated, interested and responsive. For example, in a Year 8 history lesson on Henry VIII's divorce and break from Rome, pupils gave perceptive and mature responses to questions; they were all keen to participate in sensible discussion about the roles expected of Tudor women. In a Year 10 science lesson on longitudinal and transverse waves, some quite difficult pupils were managed well, and they listened well and were enthralled during the demonstration.
16. However, the attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils, particularly in Year 9, are poor. These pupils are disrespectful of the teacher, noisy, argumentative and show little inclination to work. Some Year 11 boys also have a cavalier attitude to work. They are easily distracted, unenthusiastic and make little intellectual effort in lessons. The school has on roll a larger proportion of pupils with identified difficult behaviour, than at the previous inspection. In addition, the pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, have become disillusioned with school because of the lack of continuity of teachers. A significant number of pupils increasingly challenge new and non-permanent teachers and doubt their competence.
17. Overall, the behaviour of pupils is satisfactory. Many pupils behave well and are polite and friendly. They are clear about the way they should behave. However, the behaviour of a significant minority of pupils in lessons and around the school is unsatisfactory and sometimes poor. These pupils are ill-mannered and disruptive, showing little regard for the teacher or for the majority of pupils who want to learn. Incidents of loud and unacceptable behaviour were seen around the school during the inspection when pupils were out of the hearing of teachers around the widely dispersed site. Some pupils have little respect for property and leave litter and there is some graffiti. Attempts are made to remove litter and graffiti immediately to retain a more pleasant environment. Some bullying occurs, but pupils say that the school takes it seriously and that it is nearly always dealt with effectively when reported.
18. The school has a high level of fixed term exclusions, when compared with similar schools nationally, for offences such as smoking, disobedience and challenging behaviour. The school analyses these to monitor the effectiveness of the procedures, but has yet to find ways to reduce the numbers. The issue of youth disorder generally in the Welling area is of concern to the police

and local community. The school is working together with local agencies to try to develop strategies to improve the attitudes of these young people.

19. Most pupils who receive support for their special educational needs welcome the additional help and work hard both in classes and in small group lessons. The school welcomes pupils with a range of special needs.
20. Relationships overall are satisfactory. Many pupils enjoy good relationships both with one another and with the staff they have got to know. For example, in a Year 8 personal, social and health education lesson where pupils were reflecting on their progress during this term, boys and girls worked well together, sharing views, and had a very good relationship with the teacher. They listened to his ideas with respect and responded positively to the ideas and feelings of other pupils different from their own. Good social interaction was seen when opportunities were provided for pupils to work together. In a Year 7 physical education lesson, where pupils were developing ball skills, they worked well in pairs and helped one another. This allowed them to get the maximum learning from the lesson. Pupils of different ethnic origins are well-integrated into the school community. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 take on responsibilities in physical education, music and extra-curricular activities, including several residential experiences. However, there are insufficient opportunities for them to exercise their initiative and to take on responsibility. The school council is not yet an effective forum for influencing change in the school.
21. The attendance of pupils is unsatisfactory. It has declined since the last inspection and has remained at nearly the same level of around 90% over the last 4 years. The attendance rate drops with each year group going up the school so that it is 85 per cent at Year 11. Unauthorised absence has increased since the last inspection and is higher than the national average. Reasons for absence are pupils taking holidays in term time and a number of disaffected pupils. The school is strict on the authorisation of absence and on holidays taken in term time above the permitted amount, but has not yet found a way to work successfully with parents to improve the overall levels of attendance. The school has little support from Greenwich for out-of-borough pupils with attendance problems and this has been compounded by low levels of support from the local education authority.

#### **Sixth form**

22. In the sixth form, students have positive attitudes towards school. They have good relationships with staff, their peers and younger pupils. They act responsibly in helping younger pupils as associate tutors and help with early morning reception.
23. The attendance in the sixth form is unsatisfactory at 88.9 per cent. Overall, punctuality is satisfactory.

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

24. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall throughout the school. It is satisfactory or better in nine out of every ten lessons and good or better in over a half of lessons; it is very good and, occasionally excellent, in almost a fifth of lessons. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and the proportion of good and very good teaching has also increased. In 1996, only 80 per cent of the teaching was satisfactory or better and the remainder was judged to be unsatisfactory. However, there is a proportion of unsatisfactory or, on occasion, poor teaching which brings the overall teaching profile down.
25. Teachers generally have good knowledge of their subjects. This gives them confidence in planning lessons, explaining new material to pupils and handling unexpected aspects convincingly. They usually pose appropriate questions to lead pupils on purposefully. Most are well aware of common pitfalls and anticipate them positively. On some occasions, however, teachers' wide knowledge and enthusiasm for their subjects lead them to over-direct lessons, leaving little room for pupils to contribute.

26. Most lessons are planned in suitable detail and are soundly structured. The planning for individual lessons is firmly based on good departmental schemes of work. In most lessons, teachers consistently identified the learning objectives for lessons and made them clear to the pupils. In a Year 8 lesson, designed to show how sounds and repetition could affect a poem's mood and meaning, the teacher made sure that learning objectives were clear and that pupils appreciated the meaning of *onomatopoeia*. This resulted in pupils showing high levels of interest, co-operation and concentration.
27. Most teachers use a satisfactory range of effective teaching methods. Teaching the whole class together is normally good as, for example, when revising previous work or explaining the purpose and direction a new lesson will take. Lessons usually begin with a review of the last lesson or topic. In the best lessons, teachers thoroughly but crisply probe what pupils really know. Most lessons have a suitable variety of activities that successfully stimulate and retain pupils' interest. Sometimes, teachers also use methods which involve the pupils actively in demonstrations. For example, in an art lesson on composition, pupils came to the front of the class and arranged themselves into groups while the teacher and the class discussed the effect. This lively exercise gained very high levels of interest, pupils were keen to learn and very good learning was the result.
28. Teachers have good questioning skills and pose thought-provoking questions. They are adept at following up both reasonable and inadequate answers with supplementary questions that make pupils think deeply, explain their reasoning or consider a range of alternatives. Where available, learning support assistants give good help to individual pupils by suitable questioning and guidance. Group work is generally handled well. Pupils are usually given a clear shape for group tasks. The best work comes as a result of pupils being made absolutely clear about what is expected and being given firm timescales for such activities as brainstorming, discussion and note-taking. In the best cases, penetrating analysis and recording take place. Teachers elicit a wide range of ideas and views, encourage penetrating debate and subtly steer pupils towards positive conclusions. In a minority of lessons, however, inadequate guidance and practice result in discussion that is not specific, slow and inconclusive or in teachers making generalisations too soon.
29. Teachers make very good use of constructive oral comments in lessons to help pupils to improve. The marking of written work is generally supportive and assessment is used constructively to plan the next stages of learning. In most lessons, teachers carefully assess pupils' standards of work and progress, picking up and remedying common mistakes and clarifying misunderstandings. Many teachers remind pupils about the ways in which their work is evaluated, give suitably constructive comments and indicate clearly how work can be improved. Homework is generally set appropriately, although the practice of setting it regularly for all pupils is inconsistent where pupils have temporary and supply teachers.
30. Time is normally used well. The majority of lessons are typified by high expectations of the amount of work to be covered in the time and of standards of learning, behaviour and endeavour. Teachers teach with a brisk pace and sense of urgency in learning, but are not unnecessarily hurried. They instil a sense of purpose, a love of learning and cover much ground in the hour-long lessons. They value oral debate, often ensuring that vital routine information is prepared and distributed, so that sufficient time is left for rigorous discussion.
31. When teaching was less than satisfactory, the major weaknesses were inadequate planning and preparation, poor behaviour management and insufficiently interesting activities to challenge pupils intellectually. In some lessons, an insufficiently strict stand is taken towards a small number of pupils who persistently make silly comments and disrupt the learning of others. In most cases, however, teachers insist on and secure high standards of attention, courtesy and effort. They achieve these high standards by a combination of quiet forcefulness, humour, approachability, standing no nonsense, and particularly by making lessons interesting. A small minority of lessons plod along. In these, too long is allowed for individual tasks, pupils are not pushed on enough and they become restless and inattentive. Sometimes, teachers talk too much, do all the work for pupils or do not give clear guidance to them about how to write up the solutions to problems. Very occasionally work is pitched at too high a level and accompanied by

unawareness on the part of the teacher that pupils are struggling to keep up. In these poorer lessons, questions are often narrow, answers brief and superficial and teachers have to work very hard to draw constructive responses from pupils.

32. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in their studies because they generally receive good quality teaching, experience friendly guidance and encouragement to do their best, find lessons interesting and in most cases try hard. Pupils with special educational needs usually make satisfactory progress overall and this is good where they receive sufficient help. However, in some classes, they receive too little individual guidance and support.
33. The school has good teaching guidance for its teachers, but has not yet produced formal policies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The development of these skills in lessons other than English and mathematics are more regularly emphasised in Key Stage 3 than later on in the school. In many classrooms, key technical or subject-specific words are prominently displayed and are sometimes referred to in lessons. Most teachers generally lay a strong emphasis on the good layout of text, careful handwriting and tidy presentation, sometimes very precisely repeating or reinforcing correct spelling. The result of this effort is that standards of handwriting, presentation and tidiness are good. Only in a few instances do pupils' folders contain many spelling inaccuracies or minimal guidance from teachers about standards of writing. There is insufficient teaching of ICT in most subjects across the school.
34. The school has been unable to recruit appropriately experienced teachers which impacts on the quality of teaching and thus on the quality of pupils' learning. Some areas of the curriculum are affected more than others, with English, ICT and modern foreign languages having higher proportions of temporary teachers. For example, the school's inability to recruit and retain appropriately qualified teachers of English, and its reliance on supply teachers, has disrupted the learning of pupils. Some of the supply teachers employed do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding to be effective teachers.

### **Sixth form**

35. Thirty seven lessons were inspected in the sixth form. The quality of teaching was good or very good in two out of three lessons. The quality of teaching is similar in both Years 12 and 13 and in only one lesson was teaching judged unsatisfactory overall.
36. Amongst the strongest features of sixth-form teaching is the depth of teachers' command of their subjects. This results in students being given a wide-ranging, articulate and up-to-date view of their chosen subjects. Most teachers confidently encourage at least a little debate, maintain a good pace, provide well-chosen resources and convey their personal enthusiasm to students. In-depth marking generally gives students an accurate view of the standard they have reached and wise guidance on how to improve. Staff put in much effort on behalf of students. Most basic skills and techniques are well taught and reinforced, although the overall standard of students' clarity and precision of speech requires greater attention.
37. Equipment is often handled imaginatively. For example, in a personal and social education lesson, dealing with the complexities of "developing arguments and compromise", small whiteboards were used enabling pupils to move between groups, taking with them the synthesis of their last discussions about the Euro. These syntheses then formed the theses of the next debate. All pupils were thus able to engage in all levels of the debate with ease. This led to significant learning.
38. There are, however, weak features in a few lessons. These relate mainly to the depth and pace of learning. Occasionally, lessons move along too slowly, so that insufficient ground is covered. Sometimes the level of expectation of both teachers and pupils is too modest, so that issues are examined fairly superficially. A minority of students are hampered by their low levels of general knowledge or specialist background. The key skills of written communication, numeracy and ICT are not taught as discrete areas, but are subsumed into general teaching. This means that they are generally taught less soundly, as there is no supporting whole-school framework.

39. Teaching is good overall in most subjects. It is very good in media studies and business studies. Overall, sixth form teaching is a strength of the school. As a result of this good teaching and their own efforts, most students make sound progress in their studies in the sixth form.

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

40. The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities that mostly meet the needs of all pupils. It is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities and good quality guidance for further education or future employment.
41. In Years 7 to 9, the breadth and balance of the curriculum are satisfactory overall. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education (RE) are taught. Pupils study either French or Spanish in Year 7 and those with a particular linguistic aptitude have the opportunity to take both languages in Years 8 and 9. All pupils are taught drama and personal, social and health education (PSE) which includes education about sex and the harmful effects of drug-misuse.
42. In Years 10 and 11, a satisfactory range of curricular provision is offered. All pupils study the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, design and technology, a modern foreign language, PE, PSE and a short GCSE course in RE. In addition, pupils choose two subjects from an appropriate range of 11 subjects, including business studies and drama, to study to GCSE level or to study vocational courses, such as those leading to the GNVQ. These include leisure and tourism and health and social care. ICT is offered as a discrete subject at GNVQ. Very few subjects offer an alternative accreditation for those pupils for whom the GCSE examination may not be appropriate.
43. The school meets all statutory curricular requirements, except those for PE in Years 7 to 9, where the school fails to offer a fourth programme of activities for boys. The time provided for subjects is appropriate. There has been an improvement in the schemes of work and the programmes of study specifically allocated in all years to the teaching of ICT across the curriculum, although the amount of time provided for this is limited. The school's teaching time of 25 hours is in line with the minimum recommended by the Department for Education and Skills.
44. The school has no detailed written policy or systematic whole-school strategies to raise standards of literacy as part of the National Literacy Strategy. Some departments have introduced appropriate methods to improve standards, but the individual initiatives are inconsistent and not sufficiently co-ordinated across the school. In order to provide an effective and coherent approach, the school has recently appointed a member of staff as a co-ordinator of this policy. The National Numeracy Strategy to raise standards in numeracy has been implemented soundly in mathematics, but plans to extend its use to other subjects of the curriculum are at an early stage of development.
45. In Key Stage 3, all pupils have the opportunity to study the full range of subjects offered. In Year 7 the cohort is divided into 11 mixed ability groups, except in mathematics and science where pupils are grouped according to their prior attainment. This arrangement is broadly satisfactory when work is matched appropriately to the differing needs of pupils. In Years 8 and 9, French and Spanish are set and English operates a banding system. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in those classes where there are sufficient learning support staff to provide effective help in the large number of mixed-attainment classes.
46. Sound policies are now in place, after some years of limited development, for pupils with special educational needs and these are beginning to have a positive impact on the work of the school. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to gain access to the curriculum through learning support assistants attached to departments, through good teaching methods which aim to ensure the inclusion of all pupils, and through basic skills work in the special needs department. Those pupils who have poor literacy skills, but whose scores are not low enough to entitle them to help, have difficulty coping with the curriculum and, for them, inclusion is not satisfactory.
47. The accredited examination courses available from Year 10 onwards are limited and do not always offer suitable opportunities for pupils with special educational needs. Within subject

departments, work is usually satisfactory and sometimes good. The level of provision depends unduly, however, on the presence of learning support assistants provided for pupils with statements of SEN. There are some good examples of teachers matching work closely to these pupils' needs in mathematics, science and modern languages. Overall, however, the mixed-attainment structure of most subjects and classes means that teachers find it hard to give sufficient specialist attention both to pupils with special educational needs and to those who are talented.

48. A good range of extra-curricular activities was recognised with an Education Extra award; it enhances the curriculum, although sustaining a wide provision is putting considerable pressure on hard pressed permanent staff while the school suffers staffing shortages. Outdoor activity residential trips are provided for Years 7, 8 and 9. In addition, the physical education department provides a wide and varied range of well-organised after-school activities throughout the week. A variety of different bands caters for various musical abilities and interests, as well as a dance club. Several specialist clubs such as astronomy and English are on offer. A cultural evening was given by Years 7, 8, 9 and 10, where pupils performed poetry, music, dance and song. There is an annual musical production. The drama department has links with local theatres. There are annual visits to Paris, Amsterdam, Barcelona and New York for the sixth form. Links with schools in Japan are being forged and the first visit is expected in 2002. Pupils visit the local area to take part in fieldwork and to visit theatres and galleries. Several subjects organise study support, especially for revision, and help with coursework through the school's enrichment programme.
49. Provision for careers education and guidance is of good quality and well coordinated. Careers education is satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and is taught effectively in Key Stage 4 as part of the PSE course. This programme is enhanced by visits to the local careers convention and by participation in schemes such as Young Enterprise. All pupils benefit from two weeks in a well-organised programme of work experience at the end of Year 10. There are appropriate preparations, a strongly developing process for allocating placements and sound support while the pupil is on the placement.
50. Links with the community are satisfactory and there are secure plans in place to develop these further. Those with other schools are good. Good relationships are enjoyed with contributory primary schools; there are regular visits by staff and a successful programme of induction for new pupils. The school's strong association with other local secondary schools is being consolidated as a result of current negotiations for consortium arrangements for some courses. Links with the business community are fostered well through the Bexley Education Business Partnership
51. The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural education is good, but the extent of provision for their spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Religious education provides good opportunities for pupils to explore personal beliefs and consider how belief may be expressed. However, pupils do not extend their spiritual insight by, for example, visits to a mosque and a Sikh temple, nor do ministers from both local and overseas. Christian churches contribute to the school's spiritual provision through talks and discussions with pupils, but there is no school policy for raising provision for pupils' spiritual awareness. As at the last inspection, the school does not meet the legal requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. Inadequate progress has been made over the last few years in putting in place a comprehensive system of collective worship.
52. The school promotes good moral education. High standards of conduct are set by staff, who usually explain in clear terms why admonishments are given. The good examples set by staff also encourage mutual respect. There is a clearly stated and understood system of rewards and sanctions. Over a period of time, the school has established a very orderly regime and a high level of trust that lead pupils to respect property and the rights of others. Clear messages about suitable behaviour are given in assemblies and in form tutorials. Moral issues are presented and discussed sensitively in RE and other lessons: in history, for instance, pupils learn about slavery and appeasement and in PE they develop a sense of fair play through a respect for rules and an understanding of teamwork.

53. Provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory overall and in some aspects is very strong. The residential visit to Mersea Island for pupils in Year 8 and 9 develops friendships and social cohesion well. In each subsequent school year, pupils have extensive opportunities to participate in a wide range of both residential and day visits, including those to the Ardeche adventure area in France, Disneyland, and Barcelona. Within daily lessons, pupils generally work well together, as when, for example, they create group compositions in music, undertake investigations in science and practise speaking and listening in pairs in modern foreign languages. Geography provides good social opportunities through the wide variety of fieldwork visits that are offered. However, some pupils do not respond to the opportunities provided by the school and do not always display appropriate social behaviour.
54. The school's buildings and site have some new and pleasant aspects. The arts block in particular offers a variety of spaces which could be used for more socialisation. However, most indoor accommodation is very cramped. There are no social areas other than the dining room and even there a normal level of conversation is difficult, owing to the dining room's poor, resonating acoustics. Lunchtimes are short and, owing to limited dining space, the serving of meals is organised in two sittings. Limitations of space and time for lunch also lead to a high intensity of use of corridors and a resultant congestion, especially on wet days. The school copes well with this situation, particularly as a result of good staff supervision and pupils' reasonable conduct.
55. Pupils' cultural development is well promoted, especially through educational excursions to a range of theatres and galleries, such as the Geoffrey Whitworth Theatre. Students participate regularly in local cultural pageants such as the Bexleyheath parade. Students contribute to local cultural activities; for example, some display their talents in the areas of dance, at the Danson Festival, and of art, when they exhibit their paintings of Flatford Mill.

### **Sixth form**

56. The quality and range of opportunities for learning provided for students in the sixth form are good. A suitably wide range of AS and A2 level courses is taught and includes subjects which are not offered in all sixth forms, for example, sociology and government and politics. The school also now offers vocational courses for both the GNVQ and the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) in ICT. The majority of courses offered at AS and A2 level build effectively on those that students have already experienced in earlier years.
57. The school is actively planning a consortium arrangement with local schools to extend the range and balance of courses offered. These plans aim to enable students who wish to study currently under-subscribed courses, such as design and technology, music and RE, to undertake some of their studies at another institution, whilst remaining in the sixth form at the school. The recent bid for Arts College Status, based on the good record and facilities in the school in the arts related field is enabling the consortium to discuss a range of possibilities, including those predicated on the theme of "centres of excellence".
58. The school plans the sixth-form curriculum within the framework of a clear, whole-school policy statement and a wide-ranging consultation with parents, governors, staff and students. One recent result of this process was to extend the AVCE course in ICT into Year 13. Subject schemes of work are of good quality for most of the AS and A2 level courses, but those for vocational courses are not customised precisely enough for the school's needs.
59. The school provides a broadly satisfactory programme to extend and enhance the curriculum. A strength of its provision is that virtually all sixth formers are taught general studies and that Year 13 students take the GCE examination in the subject at A2 level standard. The study of RE has been included in the general studies programme and has been insufficient to fulfil statutory requirements. A series of conferences has been planned and the first held this term. There is no specific provision for key skills, with the result that this area of work is weak.



60. Some aspects of the sixth form curriculum effectively prepare students for further and higher education or the world of work; for example, the very good use of the local Education Business Partnership to give students a mock interview. Nevertheless, students do not have sufficient opportunity to experience contact with high-level occupations to expand their expectations. This is a significant weakness in the school's provision. Extensive and well-organised guidance, led by the head of sixth form, is provided for those students wishing to enter higher education. The amount of time students have available for private study varies considerably, depending on the courses that the individual student chooses, but increases for most students in Year 13. This time is not sufficiently monitored or co-ordinated. Although the school generally provides good facilities for study, access to the library is limited and is unsatisfactory.
61. Extra-curricular provision is good. An appropriate range of study visits is arranged in a number of subjects. These include field studies for geography and history, several art visits to Paris and Barcelona, and visits to the House of Commons for those studying government and politics. Students arrange social events and are involved in charity work.
62. In the sixth form, provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall. Spiritual development is promoted satisfactorily, an improvement on the situation in 1996. Religious education is taught as a series of conference days. In these sessions students meet speakers from, for example, the Islamic and Jewish faiths and join in debates about issues of belief and tradition as well as those of morality. As yet the programme is insufficiently developed to meet requirements fully. Moral education is very good. Issues are presented frankly and discussed sensitively in tutorials. Students often develop their ideas, both theoretically and practically, beyond lesson time; for example, through their contributions to the school council.
63. Social education is promoted very well. Sixth-form mentors are attached to classes of younger pupils in school, where they help to teach reading to pupils who need special help. They are involved in mentoring and counselling, for which they receive training, and join some of the lower-school residential visits as helpers. Students take on responsibilities in such regular school events as discos, open evenings, school productions, sports days and in local primary schools. The sixth form provides a satisfactory range of cultural activities in modern languages, where students read and discuss articles in foreign newspapers, drama, where they engage in the works of Jean-Paul Sartre and Henrik Ibsen, and in art, where they work in the open air at Flatford Mill to recapture the style of Constable.

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

64. The effectiveness of the school's educational and personal support and guidance programme for raising pupils' achievements is satisfactory. The management structures and roles of staff within the pastoral team are going through a period of change. Senior members are very experienced and know the pupils well. However, the review and development of the system is leading to some ineffective practice at this stage. For example, there is insufficient liaison and understanding of procedures between the pastoral team and heads of departments which leads to inconsistency for some pupils. The personal development of pupils is tracked through academic and conduct profiles. Currently, the school is fine-tuning the targets set for pupils so that they are specific and achievable. However, the quality of the form tutor period at the end of the day is variable and sometimes used for administrative purposes only.
65. Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy good relationships with the staff they have got to know. Pupils say they feel safe and secure and know who to approach if they have a problem. New pupils are well supported when joining the school. The school has effective child protection procedures. A senior member of staff is fully trained and all staff are aware of the procedures and are up-dated regularly. A full-time nurse is available for health issues. The arrangements for health and safety are secure. Risk assessments are carried out on a rolling programme under the advice of the local education authority. There is an appropriate number of trained first-aiders and electrical equipment is checked annually. Recent concerns identified by the Health and Safety Executive have been followed up appropriately, apart from updating the training of the site manager.

66. The procedures for the monitoring and promotion of appropriate behaviour are good. The school has identified that it has a problem with the behaviour of some pupils and has introduced new initiatives to improve the situation. Standards of behaviour have deteriorated since the previous inspection and are closely connected with the school's inability to appoint appropriate teachers and other support staff. Unsatisfactory behaviour is frequently linked to poor management by non-permanent teachers. The behaviour policy and procedures for monitoring positive and negative behaviour are very detailed. Teachers have made good use of the facility to remove pupils from lessons for a period of time under the supervision of senior members of staff. A work ethic and behaviour survey was recently carried out for all pupils to identify concerns. Pupils are targeted and given individual programmes and targets. This has met with some success. Disaffected pupils are given the opportunity to go off site to participate in a 'Reality Bites' scheme, which is proving to be successful. The school recognises the need for the services of a counsellor and an educational psychologist, but the time for these allocated by the local education authority is less than required. There are also very limited levels of support from the Bexley Behaviour Support Unit.
67. The anti-bullying policy is very comprehensive and bullying is no longer covert. Generally, pupils are confident to report incidents. The high turnover of staff makes consistency of approach to bullying less secure when incidents occur. However, pupils say that incidents are nearly always taken seriously and dealt with.
68. The school's systems for the monitoring of attendance and the follow-up of absence are good. However, the school has been unsuccessful in improving attendance overall. Pupils understand the routines to follow if they are absent or late. The systems used for registration quickly pick up any truancy to be dealt with by form tutors. However, with the high turnover of staff, this is not always followed up adequately. There is some full-day truancy of a significant number of pupils. The school checks with home on the first day of absence for a targeted group of pupils but does not have access to resources to follow this up effectively with pupils' parents. The initiative to improve punctuality has been effective, apart from a hard core of pupils. However, the school still needs to pursue additional resourcing and to develop additional strategies if it is to improve attendance to national averages.
69. The school satisfactorily meets legal requirements in identifying special needs and maintaining a register of pupils and their needs. It ensures that the provision on statements of special need is made and that statements are reviewed annually. It writes satisfactory transition plans to help prepare pupils for the next phase of their education. There is effective liaison with other professionals involved with pupils with special needs. However, individual education plans are not always reviewed as regularly as they should be.
70. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is generally good. Teaching programmes are well planned and carefully structured to cover all relevant areas of this work. The quality of teaching of this programme, taught by a discrete group of teachers, is generally satisfactory, although, because not all contributors consider themselves as experts in the field, some lessons are not as satisfactorily managed as the best. Monitoring of this programme is not organised consistently, although the school has some survey procedures in place to gain an understanding of pupils' views.
71. Pupils are provided with effective guidance and personal support throughout their time in school. The school has a comprehensive system to track and record pupils' academic and social development. There are developing systems for pupils to reflect on their own performance and to set their own targets. Further guidance and support are provided by form tutors and are based on the collation of information collected by pupils in their diaries. In many groups this support is valuable and challenging, although it is largely dependent on the skills of individual form tutors. Form periods are not monitored formally and, as a consequence, some pupils are disadvantaged where there are inconsistencies due to the inexperience and lack of confidence of some tutors.

72. The school has a very detailed assessment policy which gives good guidance on the assessment, marking, recording and reporting of pupils' work. Within subject departments, the quality of day-to-day assessment of individual pupils' work is satisfactory and sometimes good. Overall, departments achieve consistent assessments related to pupils' attainment in relation to the National Curriculum levels in Key Stage 3 and to GCSE or other external examination requirements. By the time pupils reach Key Stage 4, they have a good understanding of the level of their work and know what they have to do to improve.
73. There is a very comprehensive system of collection of data on individual pupils' attainment on entry to the school and throughout their time in the school. This data is analysed systematically and progress monitored. It is used effectively to set targets for future performance both with individuals and for departments.

#### **Sixth form**

74. There are some good examples of good procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress. The numbers of students in groups are low and teachers have a good understanding of the progress and achievements of individual students. Generally, however, there is a lack of rigorous monitoring and tracking of individual pupil progress to inform students sufficiently to make choices for the next phase of their education.
75. Although the quality and accessibility of information is very good and students receive good personal advice, a significant minority of students are not always well advised about the academic options open to them.

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

76. Many parents wrote in detail to the inspectors. Of these, the main concerns were the increase in incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour and the lack of continuity of teachers. Other concerns from the meeting and questionnaires were homework, lack of information on their children's progress, and lack of close working with parents.
77. The school has satisfactory links with parents. It contacts them when there are serious concerns and some departments telephone home when pupils have done well. However, a third of parents, when responding to the questionnaire, said there is a lack of dialogue between them and the school. Inspection evidence confirms that the school has a genuine wish to involve parents. For example, the school consulted parents over the change in the school day; had a meeting with parents of Year 8 pupils whose behaviour was causing concern; held a Literacy Evening for parents of children in Year 7 and an Options Evening for parents of pupils in Year 9.
78. Parents receive good information about the progress of their children through the annual report and additional progress reports. The annual reports are very comprehensive. They give details about what their children have learnt in each subject, together with the level their children are working at and personal development details. In the core subjects and, frequently, the foundation subjects, areas of weakness are identified and specific targets given for improvement. A new format, to complement the traditional Parents' Evenings of individual subject consultations, has been introduced this year. An Open Day gives parents the opportunity to meet with the tutor relatively early in the school year for 15 minutes, when detailed information on each subject is available. If the parent wishes to follow this meeting up with the subject teacher, this will be arranged upon a written request.
79. General information is good. The prospectus is well presented and informative. The termly newsletters give good and detailed up-to-date information about school developments and celebrate the achievements of the school. In spite of all these contacts, parents feel there is a lack of dialogue between them and the school. The only omission about information identified by the school is that no consistent information from subject departments is provided routinely for parents about what their child is currently studying.

80. Overall, parents' involvement in the life of the school is satisfactory. Although the home-school diary works well for most parents as a link with school it is not used consistently by parents or by some teachers as the main means of communication between school and home. The attendance of parents at consultation evenings is good in the earlier years in the school, but decreases at Years 10 and 11. Generally, few parents attend formal school meetings, such as the Governors' Annual meeting to open up a dialogue with the school. Attendance at other school functions is variable. The Parent Teachers Association is non-operative due to lack of support.
81. Parents are appropriately involved at all stages of identification and review of special needs at the stages required by law.

## **Sixth form**

82. Parents of sixth form students are positive about the school. Most feel that the school puts considerable time and effort into dealing with the different factors which affect their sons and daughters in the sixth form.

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

83. The school's aims and values are clearly thought out and widely shared by staff, governors and pupils. They focus strongly on the quality of relationships as a prerequisite for successful learning and there is an overall recognition of individual needs. The hard work of staff reflects these aspirations and supports a positive learning environment.
84. The quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher is good, as it was at the time of the last inspection, in spite of the considerable challenges which have faced the school. Since 1996, the school roll has risen by almost a half and support to finance and provide accommodation to achieve this expansion has been limited.
85. The leadership team is a cohesive group with complementary skills and management responsibilities have been allocated to reflect these strengths. The group communicates and consults effectively with other groups of managers to plan for and effect the successful implementation of school policies. There are secure formal arrangements for meetings, consultation and opportunities for staff to contribute to developments through task groups. These are well-managed and documented. However, the strength of the current management arrangements lies in the informal advice and discussions which take place regularly, both within the management team and between senior and middle managers.
86. The senior team sees one of its main functions to be that of enabling other staff to carry out their own responsibilities. In this it is very successful and has a high profile around the school during lessons to give support where there are behaviour difficulties. The senior team is also known by and is accessible to pupils and students because of their presence around the site during lunch and break times. The school has strong quality assurance processes in place so that there is a good awareness of strengths and weaknesses. Formal monitoring systems include a rolling programme of classroom observation by senior managers, to complement that carried out by heads of department. Regular monitoring discussions take place with middle managers and, as a result, their self-reviews and plans for the future are thoughtful and appropriately focused. Departmental management is effective in most departments and good in many.
87. The governing body is a very strong group, strongly committed to the school's improvement and development. It is well established and conducts its business purposefully. The members bring a wide range of skills to the school and are deployed well to support the school in meeting its objectives. The strong leadership of the governing body ensures that governors understand their role in setting the strategic direction of the school's work. Governors generally have a good knowledge of the school's achievements and challenges to fulfil this mandate. However, in a few aspects the governing body is not meeting its statutory obligations. These relate to the gap in the PE curriculum for boys in Key Stage 3 and the provision of daily collective worship.
88. At the time of the last inspection, development planning displayed some weaknesses and required some refinements in relation to the costing of identified priorities. These improvements have been achieved and planning for the future of the whole school and within departments is now secure. In spite of the considerable time that has had to be devoted to staffing issues over the last two years, the leadership of the school has remained focused on achieving long-term objectives.
89. Financial management and planning are generally good and support the school's educational priorities effectively. The governing body is well informed about spending patterns and is closely involved in discussing financial matters and taking account of best value principles. The school has been very stringent in its financial management for many years and has operated within very

severe budget limitations. For the last two years, the school has been forced to agree a deficit budget with the local education authority; the funding for increased numbers of pupils is only made available to the school several months after the pupils arrive in the school and for many years the school has absorbed these additional costs within its own budget. The school has a clear recovery plan to address this situation within five years. Although funding levels are improving considerably, the funding provided by the local education authority has been amongst the lowest nationally. This has had a serious impact on the capacity of the school to adequately resource its identified priorities. The school has attempted to redress this situation by taking advantage of alternative sources of additional income. These include a number of local initiatives, but most importantly funding has been secured through a Public Finance Initiative to replace all unsuitable accommodation. In effect, this means that the majority of the school buildings will have been replaced over a ten-year period.

90. General administration is good. A range of support staff provide an effective service to enable the school to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The overall management information system successfully underpins and facilitates change. Key data about whole school and individual pupil performance are collected and shared widely as part of the school's evaluation of its effectiveness. Middle managers have received training on the use of such data but there still remains a need to analyse the data more selectively for it to become more relevant to the work of individual teachers.
91. The school has a full range of policies relating to equal opportunities, anti-racism, behaviour, bullying and child abuse. Monitoring of these policies is thorough and includes pupil tracking, lesson observations and work sampling. The school has accurately identified problems in its provision for special educational needs and in Spring 2001 commissioned an external review of special needs provision. The resulting action plan seeks to address the findings of the review, which are supported by inspection evidence. However, the resources available to the school both from its own funds and through support from the local education authority are inadequate to meet the needs of all the pupils. The recommendation that learning support assistants be allocated to departments has been implemented and is beginning to develop good expertise in particular subjects.
92. The school recognises the need to restructure and enhance the management of special needs provision and to integrate emotional and behavioural difficulties and special needs under one senior member of staff, but it does not have the financial resources to implement all the recommendations at this time. Currently provision is unsatisfactory overall. The management of the existing resources is satisfactory, although mixed ability teaching in the lower school makes it difficult to target learning support assistants efficiently.
93. The school has inadequate staffing, accommodation and learning resources to meet the needs of the curriculum. The staffing difficulties being experienced by the school are more severe than the national picture. One third of the teaching staff left in the summer and during the inspection there were 19 non-permanent teachers in the school. These cover many subjects, but the most affected are English, ICT and modern foreign languages. Parents and pupils are very concerned about the disruption to learning. The school has taken various initiatives and spent considerable amounts of money to alleviate the problem with very limited success. Generally, the school has insufficient support staff to meet its identified needs.
94. There is a good system of induction and support for teachers. Previous arrangements for newly qualified teachers have been built on and extended to take account of the needs of those teachers from abroad who are new to teaching in Britain and the requirements of the National Curriculum. Since the last inspection most professional development is now linked to the school development plan and teachers' individual performance review. The school was awarded Investors in People status last year. The professional reviews of teachers and other staff are on schedule to meet national requirements. Opportunities for staff training are generally used well, although the school has been unable to address all of the diverse needs of staff new to the school.
95. The accommodation is unsatisfactory overall although the situation has improved since the last inspection for some curriculum areas; a new arts centre was opened last year and provides very

good quality facilities for art, media studies, drama and dance. These should support the school's current application for specialist status in this area. Current accommodation is widely dispersed and much of it is in old, temporary accommodation. Consequently, the school environment overall is drab and in some general classrooms display is not used well to improve the situation. Buildings are spread across a wide area of the school site and, although pupils generally move between lessons with a reasonable sense of purpose, the current arrangements inevitably cause loss of teaching time due to pupil movement. However, plans are now advanced to improve all substandard accommodation. Currently, the accommodation for mathematics, English and PE is poor. There is limited indoor space for PE, so the majority of pupils have to work outside and there is no all-weather surface.

96. There are very few suitable social areas for pupils to meet and dining facilities are poor. Even though the school has adopted two different lunch times for different groups of pupils to deal with this situation, the dining rooms are inadequate to meet the current needs of pupils taking lunches. Lunch times are hurried and noisy times for pupils. The hall is not large enough to accommodate a single year group comfortably for assemblies or other activities. Toilet facilities are inadequate and in poor condition. In spite of recent improvements in the newer buildings wheelchair access to all parts of the school is limited. The school is hopeful that the successful bid for major new buildings over the next few years will solve many of these problems. In the meantime, refurbishment and maintenance of the old buildings are carried out for essential needs only, due to their imminent demolition. The unsatisfactory environment does little to engender pride in the school amongst its pupils. There is litter and some graffiti, although this is generally removed quickly. The day-to-day management of the site is satisfactory, considering its dispersed and difficult nature.
97. The long-term budgetary difficulties have meant that a smaller than normal proportion of the overall school budget has been available for spending on resources. There are insufficient computer suites to provide appropriate access to meet the needs of many subjects, although there are enough for the ICT taught programme. In particular, design and technology has insufficient computers and computer aided design and manufacturing systems to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The department also requires additional specialised equipment to keep opportunities for pupils up-to-date and relevant. There are insufficient textbooks in modern foreign languages, history, geography, religious education and media studies. The library provides a pleasant study and resource area. The school has been unable to recruit a suitable librarian this term and has taken the decision to close this facility to ensure security of resources. This is having an adverse effect on current opportunities for pupils to carry out research beyond the classroom.

### **Sixth form**

98. The sixth form is well led and managed. Senior staff have worked hard to establish many good A and AS level courses with the beginnings of a sound vocational education programme. They have set up a caring but challenging context for students to work in and provide very good quality teaching. The welcoming and secure environment and the strong sense of purpose are noticed and valued by students.
99. Personal support and guidance are very good, as is the rapport between students and their tutors. Pupils appreciate the warmth of the relationships with their teachers. The head of sixth form makes good use of consultative processes that incorporate students' preferences as well as the views of subject leaders and other staff. The quality and accessibility of information, guidance and advice is very good.
100. Expenditure on the sixth form is currently greater than income because class sizes are small in Year 13 and, to a lesser degree, in Year 12. The school is rigorous and imaginative in pursuing cost efficiencies and alternative forms of organisation. It has reduced the annual deficit of sixth form costs so that is now less than one per cent of the total budget.

101. To achieve its own objective of meeting the needs and aspirations of its students, the school needs to conduct a rigorous overhaul of its policies and practices to recruit students to and retain them in the sixth form. The school has this firmly in its development plan and has prepared the ground well for imminent change. The leadership is aware of the challenge set to address the issues of widening the curriculum, with the inclusion of religious education and a broadening range of vocational subjects in a sixth form with relatively low numbers. The school is currently engaged in discussions concerning consortium arrangements for joint teaching of some classes with neighbouring schools.
102. The accommodation in the sixth form is particularly good for additional or private study. However, in individual subjects, the accommodation reflects that of the school as a whole. The new arts block provides excellent facilities, but there are many shortcomings in other areas.
103. Resources overall are adequate. In some areas of the sixth form there are pockets of under-resourcing. For example, in media studies there is a lack of textbooks and resources for video production.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

104. In order to build upon the sound quality of education that pupils already receive, the governors, headteacher and senior management of the school should:

(1) **Improve further pupils' attainments and progress by ensuring that:**

- attainment is improved in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and in information and communication technology in subjects across the curriculum (paragraphs 2, 3, 6, 10, 33);
- additional strategies are introduced to improve the attitudes and behaviour of a minority of pupils (paragraphs 16, 17, 66);
- further measures are taken to improve the attendance of a minority of pupils (paragraph 21);
- the weaknesses in teaching are addressed (paragraphs 24, 28, 31);
- homework is set consistently for all pupils (paragraphs 29, 171);
- planned opportunities are provided for the spiritual development of the pupils (paragraph 51);
- all departments have the necessary learning resources where these are inadequate (paragraph 97).

(2) **Improve the quality of the learning environment by:**

- ensuring that sub-standard accommodation is removed by implementing the planned building programme (paragraphs 54, 95, 96).

(3) **Meet statutory educational requirements by ensuring that:**

- a daily act of collective worship is provided for every pupil (paragraph 51);
- boys in Key Stage 3 receive the full physical education programme of study (paragraphs 43, 220);
- the planned programme for religious education in the sixth form is implemented (paragraph 59).

### **Sixth form**

(4) **Improve the quality of provision and cost-effectiveness of the sixth form by:**

- increasing the numbers in the sixth form so that the overall costs are not a drain on the rest of the school (paragraphs 100, 272);
- developing the proposed consortia arrangements (paragraph 101);
- improve the monitoring and tracking of students' progress so that they feel sufficiently informed to make choices for the next phase of their education (paragraph 74).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	146
	Sixth form	37
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		75

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Years 7 – 11</b>							
Number	6	17	57	51	9	4	2
Percentage	4	12	38	32	6	3	1
<b>Sixth form</b>							
Number	0	12	13	11	1	0	0
Percentage	0	32	36	31	3	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 the sixth form as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.*

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1387	102
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	186	4

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	28	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	172	2

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	81

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	41

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	8.1

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	1.1

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	136	128	264

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	67	74	70
	Girls	77	74	62
	Total	144	148	132
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	55 (60)	56 (54)	50 (50)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	15 (20)	29 (24)	19 (17)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	43	68	58
	Girls	62	73	75
	Total	105	141	133
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	40 (51)	54 (62)	51 (38)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	6 (24)	18 (20)	13 (20)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2001	129	106	235

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	35	115	128
	Girls	36	92	96
	Total	71	207	224
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	30 (33)	88 (89)	95 (93)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	31 (32.8)
	National	39.0 (38.4)

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

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
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	2000	7	17	24

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	7.7	13.3	11.7 (14.5)	3.0	N/A	3.0 (4.0)
National	17.8	18.6	18.2 (17.9)	2.6 (2.7)	2.9 (2.8)	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 pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	9	89
	National		73.2

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0	N/A
	National		80

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	14
Black – African heritage	8
Black – other	13
Indian	43
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	5
White	1283
Any other minority ethnic group	19

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

	Fixed term	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	3	0
Indian	2	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	150	9
Other minority ethnic groups	2	0

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	72.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.7

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

Total number of education support staff	17.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	476

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7– Y11**

Key Stage 3	25.1
Key Stage 4	21.8

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	3518697
Total expenditure	3522233
Expenditure per pupil	2479
Balance brought forward from previous year	10205
Balance carried forward to next year	6669

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	49
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	39

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	24.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	15.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	9.0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	1489
Number of questionnaires returned	241

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	32	55	9	5	0
My child is making good progress in school.	30	54	8	4	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	20	47	15	9	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	57	21	7	0
The teaching is good.	20	55	12	4	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	16	52	22	5	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	37	49	10	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	48	5	2	1
The school works closely with parents.	18	47	25	5	4
The school is well led and managed.	24	51	11	3	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	24	61	7	5	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	52	7	5	7

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Many parents wrote in detail to the inspectors. The main concerns included in these letters related to the numbers of temporary teachers in the school and to an increase in the number of unsatisfactory behaviour. Other concerns were expressed about lack of homework, information on their children's progress and a lack of close working with parents.



## PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

### ENGLISH

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

#### Strengths

- the head of department provides a clear sense of direction
- pupils achieve in line with the standards that are expected, given their attainment on entry to the school

#### Areas for improvement

- the progress of pupils is not always good enough, because the department does not have enough appropriately qualified teachers of English
- improve teaching and the standards attained by pupils
- inadequate accommodation plays a part in pupils' poor motivation and inappropriate behaviour
- information and communication technology (ICT) is not making a contribution to the development of pupils' writing, spelling or understanding

105. Pupils join the school with knowledge, skills and understanding that are well below average, particularly in terms of their basic literacy skills. In the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2001, results were below the national averages, but were in line with those of schools with similar intakes. These results were lower than the previous year, where there had been steady improvement between 1998 and 2000. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 5 is similar to mathematics and slightly higher than the other core subject of science. The performance of girls has been consistently better than that of boys. Overall, pupils' achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory in relation to their attainment at the start of Year 7.
106. Most pupils in Year 11 take both English language and literature examinations at GCSE level. Results have not improved significantly since the last inspection. In 2001, they were below average when compared with the national results. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in relation to their attainment at the end of Key Stage 3. Since the last inspection, the performance of girls has been better than that of boys, but the difference is in line with the national difference in performance of boys and girls.
107. The work seen during the inspection reflected the test and examination results. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. The work in their books in Years 7 to 8 shows that they steadily acquire literacy skills. Many pupils are able to spell monosyllabic words accurately. More able pupils use polysyllabic words and spell them accurately. Many pupils use full stops, capital letters and question marks correctly. More able pupils are organising simple and complex sentences into paragraphs. The work marked by permanent teachers shows that there is a strong emphasis on the need to improve punctuation and spelling. The rate of progress has slowed in Year 9 when the school's inability to recruit and retain appropriately qualified English teachers and its dependence on supply teachers interrupted the learning of pupils.
108. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 are becoming capable speakers and listeners. For example, in a Year 9 lesson about heroes, pupils were able to relate agreed heroic qualities to a variety of people in their immediate community and to celebrities. The handwriting of less able pupils is neither fluent nor joined. There is no evidence of drafting and redrafting electronically. ICT is not making a contribution to the development of pupils' writing, spelling or understanding. Carefully prepared and presented materials ensure that all pupils, including those with special needs, make satisfactory progress during Key Stage 3. For example, pupils of all abilities were drawn into a Year 8 lesson on sounds by a worksheet that created opportunities for everyone. The work of

classes taught by supply teachers shows little evidence of intervention. Marking is merely acknowledgement of work done.

109. The achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is generally satisfactory, although in some classes pupils are not making the progress they could do. The overall standard of work seen during the inspection was slightly higher than indicated by the previous year's results in GCSE. Achievement in speaking and listening is good. The majority of boys and girls listen attentively. Pupils are keen to answer questions. Where pupils are well prepared for discussions, they can make mature contributions and maintain discussion at a high level. In a well-planned lesson in Year 11, for example, pupils were able to identify facts and opinions in two advertisements and explain their planned impact on consumers. Pupils generally use a suitable range of reading approaches when they study texts. A majority of more able pupils can read aloud with confidence, fluency and expression. Lower attaining pupils are encouraged to improve the quality of their reading aloud. A shared reading and discussion of *Poem* and *About this Poem* by a Year 11 class showed that pupils could understand significant ideas and events and analyse a poet's use of language. For example, a girl explained, "*Slash* is chosen rather than *cut*, because *cut* is neutral, but *slash* is violent!"
110. Pupils have satisfactory writing skills. The writing of girls is generally of a higher standard than that of boys. More able pupils write for a suitable range of purposes and they produce an interesting range of extended writing. Good oral work prior to writing often helps pupils to write more extensively. For example, in a Year 11 lesson a group preparing for their GCSE Paper 2 analysed the language, explained the planned impact and created a writing framework for an advertisement. Many pupils are able to improve the fluency and accuracy of their writing with re-drafting. Handwriting is generally satisfactory. Most pupils are able to spell and punctuate accurately. In lessons there is a strong emphasis on the need to improve punctuation and spelling. The coursework folders of classes taught by supply teachers show little evidence of intervention. Marking is merely acknowledgement. There were some home produced pieces of word-processed work in many coursework folders. There is no evidence of drafting and redrafting electronically. ICT is not making a contribution to the development of pupils' writing, spelling or understanding.
111. Overall the teaching of English is unsatisfactory, although it was good or better in over half of the lessons observed. The school's inability to recruit and retain appropriately qualified teachers and its reliance on supply teachers have disrupted the learning of pupils and have restricted progression and continuity. Some of the supply teachers deployed within the department do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding to be effective teachers of English.
112. In the better lessons, teachers have high expectations of their pupils' work and behaviour, and make these very clear. The overall effectiveness of teachers' planning is good, particularly the planning for individual lessons and sequences of lessons. In these successful lessons, teachers consistently identified the learning objectives for lessons and made them clear to the pupils. In a Year 8 lesson designed to show how sounds and repetition could affect a poem's mood and meaning the teacher made sure that learning objectives were clear and that pupils appreciated the meaning of *onomatopoeia*. This resulted in pupils showing high levels of interest, co-operation and concentration. There is very good use of constructive oral comments in lessons to help pupils to improve. The marking of written work is generally supportive. The use of homework is satisfactory in both key stages.
113. When teaching was poor, the major weaknesses were inadequate planning and preparation for individual lessons and poor behaviour management. In these lessons the work did not challenge pupils intellectually and, in some lessons, pupils became bored and behaved poorly.
114. The attitudes to learning of a significant number of boys and girls are poor in each key stage and their behaviour is inappropriate. When teachers' behaviour management skills are poor, pupils challenge their authority. In these lessons too much time is wasted on managing poor behaviour so that the learning of the whole class is poor. Pupils who are well-behaved in other lessons are often poorly motivated in English lessons and do not support each other sufficiently. Many pupils

are discourteous and inconsiderate. However, in lessons where work was well targeted and expectations of learning and behaviour were high, the majority of pupils were motivated and made satisfactory progress. In Key Stage 3, the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and with low prior attainment is satisfactory, but in Key Stage 4 their progress is unsatisfactory.

115. The head of department provides a clear sense of direction for colleagues by his example. For instance, he prepares lessons for the classes taught by supply teachers. He has also written teaching manuals to augment the schemes of work for both key stages. All permanent members of the department share a strong commitment to providing a broad range of opportunities for pupils to improve standards. The schemes of work, which are being redeveloped, cover the National Curriculum and examination syllabuses. However, some issues of management require further development. The quality of teaching has declined since the last inspection, mainly through a lack of specialist teachers. The programme of monitoring the quality of teaching in previous years is not relevant in the current circumstances. Temporary teachers who are experiencing difficulty with behaviour management and their teaching skills have received considerable levels of support from within the school and from external advisers but this has not been entirely satisfactory in improving practice. Currently, the standards of pupils' work are being affected adversely. Poor, inadequately maintained accommodation discourages pupils. For example, an early morning lesson in a dilapidated and unheated temporary classroom could not get underway because the tabletops were wet. Resources for teaching are good.

## **Drama**

116. Standards in drama are high. It is a strong feature of the school's provision. Drama makes a very positive contribution to the overall ethos of the school. GCSE drama results are consistently higher than results in many other subjects. However, in 2001, the proportion of pupils gaining A\* - C grades declined. Girls achieved higher standards than boys.
117. The school's inability to recruit and retain appropriately qualified drama teachers has had an adverse impact on learning. The teachers generally have high expectations of their pupils' work and behaviour and make these very clear. The overall effectiveness of teachers' planning is good, particularly the planning for individual lessons and sequences of lessons. The teachers' excellent subject knowledge and enthusiasm inspire the pupils. As a result the subject makes a significant contribution to the curriculum aims of the school. Accommodation is excellent.

## **Literacy**

118. A whole school literacy policy has been developed, but has not been formalised for implementation in all curriculum areas, with the result that the school does not have an effective strategy for teaching the basic skills of literacy. This has a negative impact on learning. For example, low levels of literacy limit pupils' attainment in many of their subjects. However, there are examples of good practice in some departments. Key words are displayed regularly in mathematics, science, history and physical education. Teachers emphasise the technical application of these words. In history key words were recorded on the board and used frequently. In geography, students focused on key words in examination questions. In modern foreign languages, attention is paid to accurate spelling and use of grammar.
119. Pupils' literacy skills are also developed through opportunities for discussion. For example, in English, history and in their personal and social education lessons pupils are encouraged to discuss, analyse and develop ideas and feelings. In these subjects, pupils are also encouraged to read from a range of texts, use reference books and read aloud.
120. Overall, the level of competence is satisfactory to meet the needs of most curriculum areas.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths

- good teaching in Years 10 and 11
- good subject leadership and management

### Areas for improvement

- consistency of teaching in Years 7 to 9
- teaching of numeracy across the curriculum
- use of information and communication technology (ICT)

122. The standards of attainment of pupils in mathematics on their entry to the school rose in 2001 by comparison with previous years but remain well below average, due to the small proportion of each intake that have reached the higher levels for their age. In 2001, the results of tests at the end of Year 9 were below the national average with few pupils reaching the higher levels but comparable with pupils in similar secondary modern schools. The improvement trend over the last five years is broadly in line with the national trend. In recent years girls' results have matched those of boys closely. Test results correspond well with the standards of work seen in the school and also show that pupils with special educational needs and those from ethnic minorities make satisfactory progress. Taking this and attainment on entry into account, the achievement of pupils after three years in the school is broadly satisfactory and the small numbers of higher attaining pupils make good progress.
123. Standards are below those of English and science on entry to the school but improve through the school so that by the end of Year 11, standards in mathematics have risen to those in the other core subjects.
124. At the end of Year 11, the proportion of pupils achieving A\* - C grades in GCSE examinations was below the national average in 2001. This is very similar to the position at the time of the last inspection. The differences in the national and school results are accounted for by the absence of those more capable pupils who attend selective schools. Consequently, there are very few pupils who attain the higher A\* - C grades. Boys' and girls' results are very similar and, in the light of their attainment at the beginning of Year 10, represent good achievement. All girls and almost all boys entered achieved an A\* - G grade which is better than results nationally. The achievement of pupils who find learning difficult and those with special educational needs is good.
125. During Years 7 to 9, pupils make steady progress in their knowledge of space, shape and measures. They develop algebraic techniques effectively but many rely on memory and practice rather than understanding. Pupils remain hesitant in their application of algebraic skills; for example, in rearranging formulae. However, some of the older pupils who did not benefit from focused numeracy teaching in their earlier years and who find learning difficult are hampered in their learning. This is a result of their poor command of mental strategies and enduring weakness in ready recall of number relationships such as multiplication tables. For example, many pupils successfully learn formal procedures for calculating compound probabilities but are unable to use them confidently due to poor knowledge of elementary fraction operations and tables.
126. Overall, main school teaching is good. It is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. However, the quality is uneven; there is considerable difference between the best teaching and the least effective, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. In their early years in the school, many pupils benefit from well-planned and managed lessons where teachers have high expectations and maintain a brisk pace of work. In one Year 8 lesson, the teacher ensured that pupils had to concentrate carefully by presenting them with questions in a form that could be quickly changed. They had to respond rapidly by adding four directed numbers before the next member in the sequence was generated. As a result, a high proportion of the class made good progress in refining an important skill. This was followed by a written task relying on this skill to investigate the patterns occurring in the

addition and subtraction of negative numbers. By changing both method and task, the teacher sustained pupils' interest and high work rate, resulting in effective learning. Conversely when teaching takes insufficient account of pupils' previous learning and offers insufficient challenge, pupils' interest wanes, they work at an unsatisfactory pace and make little progress. In one Year 9 lesson, pupils were engaged upon work that they had already mastered. Instead of conducting a review before moving on to a higher level, the teacher set repetitive and very basic exercises. This was unproductive as many pupils gave the tasks little thought, completed them slowly, often chatting amongst themselves and making careless mistakes.

127. Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils learnt best when teachers had demanding objectives for pupils' learning and conveyed these clearly. Teachers show good judgement in balancing opportunities for pupils to use their own methods with direct teaching of more systematic techniques. At the start of a Year 10 lesson, the teacher gave pupils some time to find the lowest common multiples of pairs of numbers before explaining clearly how moving in order through factor pairs prevented any factors being missed. Pupils confirmed this in their own work by quickly completing a well-chosen exercise. During the following investigation of relative frequency, the teacher efficiently revised conversions between fractions, decimals and percentages by brisk questioning that required full attention from pupils. Many mathematics teachers give close attention to literacy by emphasising key vocabulary, but do not give sufficient priority to improving reading and comprehension to ensure that all pupils understand written problems.
128. The department is well led and the team members, including classroom support assistants, work well together. Changes introduced by the recently-appointed subject leaders address the key priorities; standards of work are routinely monitored and effective action is laying the foundations for future improvements. The framework of the National Numeracy Strategy is being introduced into the schemes of work and improved practice is evident in the best teaching. Long-term planning does not adequately include those aspects of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study that require the use of ICT. The department handbook provides good guidance. For example, guidance on assessment includes procedures that promote pupils' self-knowledge of their achievement and good examples indicate the expected departmental standards for informative reports to parents. Reference material shows how teachers can promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through their work. However, there is as yet insufficient consistency of practice between teachers for the impact of this policy to be widespread.
129. There has been good overall improvement since the last inspection. The achievement of above average pupils by the end of Year 9, and generally by the end of Year 11, has risen. Girls' attainment is now in line with that of boys. The quality of teaching has improved and the curriculum is now broad and balanced, although the provision for and use of ICT is as yet insufficient. Management has improved and the work of the department is well monitored and evaluated.

## **Numeracy**

130. The teaching of numeracy by specialist teachers is good. Hence pupils are well prepared for the use and application of numeracy in other subjects. By the end of Year 9, the majority of the pupils have improved their level of numeracy sufficiently to allow them to use mathematics effectively in many GCSE subjects. For example, in Years 10 and 11 in geography, pupils can use statistical evidence of population in cities and dormitory towns to show changes over time. In art, they use plans and elevations to produce bags and estimate proportions to make interesting compositions.
131. The development of numeracy across the curriculum is weak. Insufficient attention is given to the teaching of numeracy skills in other subjects, particularly to those pupils who find learning difficult. However, there are suitable plans to implement a whole-school numeracy policy based on training during next term.

## SCIENCE

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

### Strengths

- day-to-day management of staffing shortages
- systems for the assessment of pupil progress by individual teachers

### Areas for improvement

- the quality of teaching to improve standards further
- the leadership and management of science
- provision for ICT
- the proportion of pupils studying double award science.

132. When they join the school at age 11, pupils' standards in science are well below the national average but the progress they make while in the school means that the results they achieve in external examinations improve to below national averages. For the last four years, in the national tests for 14 year-olds, the proportion of pupils who have reached the nationally expected levels has been well below the national averages for all schools but is in line with similar secondary modern schools. Since the last inspection, the results in science have fluctuated but have been on an upward trend for the last two years.
133. Overall, results in GCSE science continue to be below the national picture in the higher grades A\* - C, but more pupils achieve a grade within the A\* - G range than nationally. The proportion of pupils entered for the double award science examination is lower than the national proportion taking this examination. The few pupils who follow this course perform well and in 2001 at the end of Year 11, the proportion of pupils awarded higher grades A\*-C was above the national average. The proportion of pupils awarded grades A\*-G was just below the national picture. The majority of pupils take the single award science examination. In the course, pupils achieved results which were just below the national averages in the higher grades and were also below the average for secondary modern schools, but the overall proportion achieving a grade was above the national average.
134. Overall, throughout Key Stages 3 and 4, most pupils achieve standards in their lessons that could be expected given their attainment on entry to the school and the progress they make in Key Stage 3. Standards in the top sets are in line with the national expectations apart from the top set in Year 10 set where attainment is higher. Work in the other sets is lower. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. In Year 7, more able pupils could define evaporation and condensation. By Year 9 pupils had developed their understanding and could define oxidation, reduction and redox reactions within iron extraction. Pupils improve their practical and investigative skills. In Year 7 pupils know how to make a test fair and had some idea of the meaning of the word 'variable'.
135. By Year 11, most pupils can make predictions and higher attaining pupils can evaluate their investigations using the correct scientific language. Most pupils can plan a series of experiments and accurately record the results in tables and graphs using the line of best fit. Higher attaining pupils can use a number of variables and make suggestions for improvement. More able pupils achieve well, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils in the lower attaining groups are working at the expected level. They improve their literacy in science by concentrating on key words and by Year 11 can use the correct scientific words for reproduction and have some understanding of inheritance.
136. There has been no clear different pattern of attainment between boys and girls in either key stage. However, pupils' attainment and achievement in some classes have been affected by the absence of permanent teachers in the last two years. For example, in a Year 9 class taught by a supply teacher, pupils understood simple ideas about forces, but in this topic pupils had not moved on as far as could be expected given their attainment in Year 8.

137. Overall, in the majority of classes pupils' attitudes are satisfactory. Many pupils enjoy science, particularly the practical work, which interests and motivates them. For example, in a Year 10 class, pupils had good attitudes because they were interested in the teacher's discussion of the work, which helped them to make sense of a series of experiments on power. Pupils worked in pairs and moved around the classroom with self-control and independence. In other lessons teachers' demonstrations or pupils' practical work kept them interested so that they concentrated well and worked hard. For example, in a Year 7 class, the pupils behaved well because the practical demonstration of dissolving helped them to understand the abstract ideas relating to this topic. However, in one class, pupils did not behave well; they had been taught by a series of supply teachers and they had become disenchanted with worksheets. In the topic they were studying, their work was not marked and the lesson was taught in a manner which did not stimulate their learning.
138. There has been a high number of staffing changes and temporary teachers within the department. In spite of all these difficulties, teaching and learning in science are satisfactory overall with some good and very good teaching. Teaching was at least satisfactory in all the lessons taught by permanent teachers present in the school during the week of the inspection. Teaching was unsatisfactory in just one lesson. Almost all lessons have clear objectives and most teachers make sure that pupils remember key ideas from previous lessons. Teachers structure lessons well and finish by establishing what pupils have learnt.
139. Good teaching provides interesting demonstrations or practical sessions, which help pupils learn. For example, in a very good Year 10 lesson, the teacher showed the pupils how transverse waves are formed; she combined the demonstration with very good questioning and repeated the demonstration until the pupils' responses indicated that they had grasped the concept. The pupils expressed wonder, were prepared to think for themselves and to take part in the discussion although many pupils found the idea difficult to understand.
140. Most teachers are confident about teaching science and some teachers are particularly good at providing specific examples to help pupils learn abstract concepts. For example, in a Year 8 lesson, the teacher involved the pupils in a role-play, which helped them to learn how the blood transports vital materials around the body and held their concentration throughout the session. As a result, although their attainment is below the national expectation, pupils learnt effectively.
141. Teaching effectively challenges the highest attaining pupils, which is an improvement since the last inspection. For example, in a Year 9 top set, the teacher motivated the pupils by showing them how the elements of magnesium and sulphur combine. Having gained their interest, pupils were willing to complete a worksheet and to consolidate their understanding of how compounds can be made by direct combination of elements. Many teachers have good skills in managing pupils and good routines, which establish the right conditions for pupils to learn. However, weaknesses in teaching are associated with poor behaviour management skills, which led to some pupils misbehaving and reduced the learning for all pupils in the class. When this is combined with a narrow range of teaching styles, pupils become bored and lack concentration so that less learning takes place.
142. In many lessons teachers paid good attention to the development of literacy skills. They help pupils to learn key words, to discuss, to understand what they are reading and to write about science. Teachers also make appropriate use of numerical skills. Where possible, teachers are starting to use information and communication technology to help pupils to understand difficult ideas in science. However, a shortage of computers makes provision unsatisfactory.
143. The science curriculum is broadly based and balanced and meets the statutory requirements. Procedures for assessment are good. Each teacher has records of how well pupils are achieving and regularly monitors progress. The department follows the school target-setting policy and the Key Stage 3 co-ordinator has developed an effective system of peer self-assessment; after tests, pupils work with a friend to set their targets to improve their work. Pupils have a good understanding of what they know through tests linked to National Curriculum levels at the end of

each module. However, marking is inconsistent. Some, but not all, teachers explain to pupils how they can improve their work, but pupils do not always respond by correcting their work, particularly in Key Stage 3. Due to staffing difficulties, some of the pupils' work is not marked on a regular basis.

144. The school faces very trying circumstances in the management of science. In addition to the high number of vacancies covered by temporary teachers in the department, the head and deputy head of department were both absent during the inspection. In a number of classes, this instability is affecting learning although a core of well-established teachers is rotating classes to minimize the disruption to the pupils' education. The recently-appointed Key Stage 3 co-ordinator has made many improvements, including the production of a scheme of work for Key Stage 3 science and, with the support of colleagues, she is managing the instability within the department effectively. Nevertheless, overall, the leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. Key management functions have not been completed consistently in recent years.
145. However, an assistant headteacher is currently helping to improve strategic management; for example, by supporting the development of a science improvement plan and in the day-to-day management of the department by attending department meetings. The allocation of laboratories has been improved to ensure that a new teacher does not teach in a classroom away from the main science area. Teaching groups have been re-organised to ensure that all classes receive some teaching by the more experienced members of the department. However, the head of department has not consistently monitored teaching and pupils' work or analysed pupils' progress, so that the strengths and weaknesses of science have not been properly identified and the appropriate action taken to manage change and improve standards.
146. Resources are just adequate. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 have their own textbook, which is an improvement since the last inspection. However, pupils in Year 9 and in Key Stage 4 do not have their own books. General equipment is sufficient, but there is a shortage of computers. Accommodation is good but is insufficient and a few lessons take place in non-specialist classrooms. Since the last inspection, technician support has been increased but is still limited. The technicians work efficiently and effectively. Teachers pay good attention to safety in lessons. However, fume cupboards are not checked for airflow and there is no ventilation in the chemical storeroom.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- achievement is good in all years
- results in GCSE are consistently the best in the school
- a very good range of materials and processes is available to pupils
- the subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development

### Areas for improvement

- the quality of teaching is inconsistent

147. Pupils join the school with knowledge, skills and understanding which are below national expectations, particularly in their drawing and painting skills. At the end of Year 9 teacher assessments show that pupils are reaching national expectations. The standard attained by pupils at the end of Year 9 is in line with national expectations. Their drawing is competent and their three-dimensional work is well made. Pupils are achieving well in relation to their attainment at the start of Year 7. They make good gains in their skills in drawing, and learn to use chalk pastels effectively; for example, to produce interesting colour portraits informed by the work of Francis Bacon. They learn to work together co-operatively to make bright three-dimensional constructions in wood and tissue paper, based on the study of fish; these are well made and



attractive. Their sketchbook work, however, is less well developed, and they do not contain enough experimentation with materials and ideas.

148. GCSE results in 2001 were above the national average, with almost three-quarters of pupils gaining grades at A\*-C compared to the national average of two-thirds. Both boys and girls did better than either group did nationally. Results at GCSE are consistently better than those in other subjects in the school. In 2001, however, they were not as good as those in previous years. This is because there were staffing changes and the department moved to new accommodation at the same time. These factors disrupted some of the teaching programmes, particularly in graphic design, where the fall in results was marked. The standard attained by pupils currently in Year 11 is above average. Work in ceramics is particularly strong, and portrait heads modelled in clay are well made and show very good attention to detail, with the texture of hair and clothing accurately represented. In addition, still-life paintings informed by the study of the work of Cézanne and Van Gogh are energetic and show a good knowledge of colour and tone. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve well. They make good gains in their abilities to use a very wide variety of materials and processes. These include painting and drawing, printmaking and ceramics, and work in graphic design and textiles. As a result some vigorous and attractive work is seen in all these areas.
149. Teaching and learning are good in all years. In the best lessons teachers show very good subject knowledge, which enables them to respond quickly to questions and make the main points of the lesson very clear. They also use methods which involve the pupils actively in demonstrations. For example, in a lesson on composition, pupils came to the front of the class and arranged themselves into groups while the teacher and the class discussed the effect. This lively exercise gained very high levels of interest; pupils were keen to learn and very good learning resulted. Teachers are also very encouraging and give pupils a strong sense that their work is valued. This maintains high levels of application and learning is good.
150. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, because of the good quality of the teaching; this is particularly because of the good demonstrations given by teachers, which mean that all pupils can see what they need to do to succeed. Gifted and talented pupils achieve well because they show high levels of personal interest in their work and often work in the teaching rooms after school and at lunchtimes. However, in a small proportion of lessons there are weaknesses in behaviour management and the teacher has problems in gaining the attention of the whole class. As a result, pupils do not listen to instructions and do not try as hard as they should. They do not make enough progress and learning is unsatisfactory for them. This means that, although the quality of teaching and learning is good overall, it varies greatly; it is very good in some lessons, but unsatisfactory in others.
151. Art and design is well managed. Monitoring of the quality of teaching is now well established and the reviews of the performance of the department are sharp and focused on improvement. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development, through a well-planned programme of opportunities; these include regular visits to art galleries and other places of interest, such as the aquarium; and the celebration of the work of a wide range of cultures, including Japanese, African and Mexican art. In addition, the displays in the teaching rooms are rich and bright and create a stimulating learning environment.
152. Since the previous inspection achievement in Years 10 and 11 has improved and is now good. The accommodation has improved and is now good overall. The majority of the teaching rooms are located in the new arts centre, which is purpose-built and provides good quality accommodation for the subject, including a bright and airy exhibition gallery. However, one of the teaching rooms is located in a temporary classroom outside the arts centre and at times the noise from adjoining temporary rooms makes it difficult for pupils to concentrate on their work.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- pupils' achievements in the subject
- teaching and class management
- the design process and modelling opportunities
- leadership and management of the subject
- pupils' attitudes to the subject

### Areas for improvement

- information and communication technology (ICT) provision needs developing
- pupils' targets need to be used to support the raising of standards
- basic literacy and numeracy skills are insufficiently developed in the subject

153. Pupils' standards on entering the school are below average for their age but are at the average by the end of Key Stage 3. In the end of Key Stage 3 teacher assessments in 2001, seven out of every ten pupils achieved the level of national expectation. This is in line with the national average. In the GCSE examinations six out of ten pupils gained A\* - C grades across all the design and technology subjects; this is above the national average. The A\* - G pass grades are also above the national average. The subject's average trend and average points score per pupil in examination results over four years have shown variation, but importantly have continued to improve. In examinations pupils consistently do better in design and technology than in many other subjects. This represents high educational value added by design and technology.
154. Within Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress and by Year 9 the majority of pupils' attainment levels in work seen, their finished products, design folders, books and discussions are at the average expectation for their age. They can, when making models to meet a specification, identify the different materials for use in a healthy meal food product or components in an electronic moisture tester and suggest why they have been used. Few, however, distinguish between the quality of their design and manufacture. By Year 11 their improving attainment levels show their acquisition of high quality practical skills, enabling them successfully to make prototype products in resistant and compliant materials. They are developing their abilities as designers for products in differing modern contexts such as electronics and their understanding of how manufacturing methods influence their product ideas.
155. Pupils' achievements in learning are satisfactory across all the years of the school. This includes pupils with special educational needs. From their low Key Stage 2 entry level into the school, through all key stages pupils make good gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. Over this longer term they are beginning to achieve well. In Key Stage 3 teaching is consistently matched to the scheme of work. However, in Key Stage 4 there are several factors adversely affecting pupils' progress. Basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are insufficiently developed to facilitate better rates of progression for many pupils.
156. The attitude to learning of the majority of pupils is good; they are interested in learning technological skills and the designing of products. Most pupils display sustained concentration levels and persevere with both their design ideas and the manufacture of their products. Behaviour is satisfactory for the majority of pupils, with positive relationships and co-operation shown in sharing equipment and working collaboratively when required. A small number of pupils do not show such respect for the feelings and values of adults or other pupils.
157. Teaching is good across both key stages, with half the lessons observed good or very good. The balance of teachers' experience is good and the range of knowledge and understanding is appropriate for the curriculum being taught. In particular, teachers explain and demonstrate skills and techniques well, both in designing and making. They do so in a way that shows their high expectations of pupils' work; for good quality products and finish, safe working practices, products

completed to a design specification and communicating the correct use of technical terminology. In the very best lessons, teaching styles are more varied and expectations of pupils are higher, making pupils more responsible for their work at an earlier age by the use of good assessment strategies throughout and at the end of lessons. Teachers are also, at times, more prudent in the use of their advice, support and evaluative comment, demanding more intellectual and creative effort from pupils. The more mature pupils in the subject respond well to this type of challenge. However, all staff give pupils sufficient time to wrestle with their design or technological problem, but time their interventions well to avoid frustrations and to advance the learning without inhibiting too much creativity. In lessons not reaching the highest standards the management of pupils and standards of discipline are only just satisfactory. The use of time and pace is less effective than in the best lessons.

158. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements, providing equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. The subject reflects the school's aims 'to provide a quality of education enabling all students to achieve their maximum potential and grasp opportunities presented to them in the future' very well. The scheme of work, medium and long term planning, methods and organisational strategies are systematic and well documented. The curriculum generates a range of good opportunities for modelling, prototype products and modern technological skills. Design, as a way of thinking about products, is built in from the start and is beginning to become established across Key Stage 3. The school provides an effective learning environment in the majority of technological contexts; for example, resistant materials, food, graphics, electronics and control technology, which is the department's information and communication technology course. Computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture have been introduced successfully within courses. The curriculum is planned effectively and within the constraints of the carousel course arrangements, provides for continuity and progression through aspects such as design, problem solving, modelling, product analysis and very basic information technology. The effectiveness of the systems for assessing pupils' attainment, targets and progress is sound; where assessment and evaluation are used to inform the improvement of teaching in the future, they are good.
159. The good leadership of the department has a positive impact on the standards achieved in the subject. The style of teamwork, where all members of the department contribute strategically, ensures a fully co-operative and managed approach to change. Curriculum development is becoming a continuous improvement process built into the cycle of development planning, but there is realism about the implementation of planning priorities. Monitoring of the curriculum, teaching and standards takes place on a regular basis. Health and safety are managed well and risk assessments carried out in a systematic way to identify all hazards. Improvements since the last inspection report are very evident and go beyond the requirements of the last report.

## GEOGRAPHY

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

### Strengths

- improving standards by the end of Year 11
- good teaching where specialist teachers challenge pupils with sharp questions so that they provide thoughtful, reasoned answers
- promotion of pupils' independent learning through research projects

### Areas for improvement

- use of assessment data for reviewing the curriculum, schemes of work and teaching and learning
- re-establishment of fieldwork for pupils in Years 8 and 9 to develop further the skills introduced in Year 7
- opportunities for pupils to use their capabilities in ICT to extend learning in appropriate topics

160. When pupils enter the school at age 11 their achievement in geography is below national expectations. In the 2001 teachers' assessments for Year 9 pupils' attainment was well below

national expectations. The school is doubtful about the accuracy of these assessments because continuity in teaching was lost during the year. There was considerable staff change and non-specialist temporary teachers taught five classes for some time. In the previous year 1999-2000, for example, pupils attained in line with national expectations, although the numbers of pupils reaching the higher levels was low. Standards of work seen show pupils currently in Year 9 achieve above recent teacher assessments, but below national expectations overall.

161. Pupils' attainment in GCSE in 2001 improved markedly over the previous two years. By the end of Year 11 almost half of all pupils taking GCSE geography gained an A\* - C grade which, although lower than the national average, includes pupils with special educational needs and is above that for similar schools. This shows improvement since the previous inspection. Girls achieved a greater percentage of higher grades than boys did and close to the average for girls. However all boys gained a grade and this is above average.
162. Compared with their standards on entry pupils achieve satisfactorily. Weak literacy skills slow down the progress of low and average attaining pupils. They are less fluent in writing than speaking so geographical knowledge and understanding are not communicated well in writing. Consequently their books have examples of incomplete work because writing requires considerable effort for them and they write slowly. Pupils develop their skills in map work and the use of evidence to reach conclusions by the time that they are in Year 9. Better quality work is done when pupils work on individual projects over a period of time. More able pupils in Year 9 produce high standards of work; for example, they analyse graphs to show a good understanding of the differences between the population structures of the United Kingdom and Bangladesh. They use home computers to word-process their work, using headings and bullets so that the presentation is clear for readers. Pupils reach their own opinions using information and photographs downloaded from the Internet. However pupils have little access to ICT in school.
163. From lesson observations and work seen the achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Teachers recognise the difficulties that many pupils have with writing at length. Last year they changed to a GCSE course with an element of oral assessment that gives pupils another means of showing what they know and understand. Pupils understand that urban areas attract people and also what causes people to move away from them. They use the term 'counter-urbanisation' correctly to describe this process. A Year 10 class ranked reasons given by parents for moving away from Welling, and they constructed appropriate pie charts to record their results. Another Year 10 class showed its understanding of the problems of rapid growth of cities; they quickly recalled *favellas* as examples of 'spontaneous settlements' on the edge of some South American cities. In Year 11, pupils gather evidence from a range of sources in order to reach conclusions; for example, a class investigated science parks and the factors of their location. They used information from a video on Cambridge Science Park, case study materials, a map, photographs and a textbook and understood terms such as 'green field' and 'brown field' sites. However, some did not appreciate the transport advantages of siting a science park close to a motorway, away from central areas to avoid higher costs.
164. The quality of teaching was good or better in three-quarters of lessons and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of geography are good so they are confident in asking probing questions to assess pupils' understanding. Pupils in a Year 8 class used evidence from damage statistics of the recent El Salvador earthquake. They answered the teachers' questions on the extent to which peoples' lives were destroyed or affected by this disaster. The teacher checked that they understood fully the phrase 'affected by' so that they could supply the evidence. Questions were sharply delivered; for example, "Where is El Salvador? Use your atlas skills to find it. Point to it when you've found it". On occasion, however, teachers are too accepting of short answers and do not encourage pupils to be discursive and try out their ideas with others.
165. Pupils respond well to lively delivery and resources that bring reality to events beyond their experience. They have a social and moral concern for victims of disasters, and are aware of international aid organisations, such as the Red Cross. Lessons are normally well planned. Teachers share learning objectives with the class and write them up on a board before the lesson

begins. At the end teachers provide time to question the level of learning acquired by pupils. Occasionally teachers misjudge time so that a hurried ending results in lost opportunities to consolidate learning. Pupils' behaviour is good because teachers manage classes skilfully. A few pupils occasionally require additional attention that interrupts the flow of the lesson for other pupils.

166. There is insufficient learning support assistance, but in lessons where it is available it is of good quality. The assistant attached to humanities is very familiar with the lesson's content and provides strong support to pupils. This helps pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties to make at least satisfactory progress in meeting their targets. Higher attaining pupils receive additional work that challenges them to think at depth about topics in some lessons, but not in all. Pupils tend to receive the same tasks irrespective of their achievement and understanding, although occasionally some work is graded. Teachers emphasise understanding of key subject words, but this is not reinforced by displays of current topic words or subject glossaries so that pupils build their own reference lists. Occasionally teachers ask pupils to discuss in pairs but do not provide a structure. In one lesson five pupils were excluded from paired discussion because they were sitting alone and the teacher didn't move them together. This prevented these pupils from gaining the opportunity to rehearse what they know and understand in lively discussion and debate so they could grow in self-confidence.
167. Leadership and management are sound. After a period of staffing instability the new humanities co-ordinator is reviewing systems. For example, the procedures for assessment and recording of achievement are now centralised for humanities subjects. However this information is not yet used sufficiently for developing the curriculum and to improve teaching and learning. A number of issues are not documented in the handbook; for example, there is no departmental guidance on teaching literacy to contribute to raising standards through common expectations and approaches. The head of geography post has been unfilled since last Easter, which inhibits teamwork to bring together a physically dispersed subject.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- teaching is good; lessons are thoroughly planned and include a wide range of different activities
- all teachers display a very good knowledge of the subject
- teaching ensures that the learning needs of all pupils represented in the lessons are met
- pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are good

### Areas for improvement

- assessment procedures so that pupils know their current attainment levels and what they need to do to improve
- marking of pupils' written work, including homework, gives too little guidance on how to improve
- provision of opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) to improve the standards which pupils attain

168. When pupils enter the school in Year 7 their standards in history are below national expectations. In the 2001 teacher assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 just over four pupils in ten reached the expected standard. The performance of boys and girls is very similar. Overall, pupils in Years 7 to 9 are achieving well relative to their starting point, even though the standard overall is still below national expectations at the end of Year 9.
169. A relatively low number of pupils choose to continue studying history to GCSE level. The results for 2001 are below the overall average nationally for all schools but in line with the average for similar secondary modern schools. There has been a small decline in the proportions of pupils achieving grades A\* - C grades over the last three years. The work seen during the inspection reflects the teacher assessment and examination results. However, the clear focus on learning

that is now promoted by all teachers in lessons across this department should improve pupils' knowledge and understanding. In relation to their previous attainment, pupils currently in the school, including those who have been identified as having a special educational need, are achieving standards that are at least satisfactory.

170. In Key Stage 3, evidence gained through lesson observations and looking at written work confirms that most pupils are beginning to achieve in line with national expectations in Years 7 and 8. Pupils are very keen to offer responses to questions posed by teachers in lessons and they are orally very confident. Their understanding of some of the key historical concepts, such as cause and effect and empathy, is developing. Across all year groups pupils are now expected to use a wide range of source material to gain a greater understanding of the topic being studied. In one Year 7 class pupils were studying Roman town life; they analysed three different types of source material and used a number of different textbooks to make judgements about the conditions in the towns. They then compared living conditions then with now.
171. Pupils are encouraged to use a wide range of sources of information to produce extended pieces of written work and teachers provide them with effective guidance on how to structure their work. The last inspection report commented upon the lack of opportunities provided for pupils to investigate historical sources and this was judged to be one of the main reasons for pupils' lack of progress. This is no longer the case and the wide range of teaching strategies currently in use in lessons is having a positive impact on pupils' achievements. In lessons pupils enjoy learning about historical events. In one Year 8 class pupils were exploring the roles of women in Tudor times; during the course of the sixty-minute lesson all pupils were intensively involved in a whole-class question and answer session led by the teacher, reading aloud, working in groups to analyse a wide range of evidence to decide which were reliable and which were less so. Finally, some pupils successfully presented their judgements to the class before recording information. The last inspection reported that attainment was being hampered by a lack of confidence in using historical sources as a basis for forming judgements. This is no longer an issue.
172. Teaching throughout the department is good. Lesson planning is very thorough and pupils are set a wide range of different tasks to both maintain their interest and extend their knowledge. In all lessons many opportunities are provided for pupils to work independently, in pairs and in small groups. Homework is not always set regularly by teachers which limits the opportunities some pupils have to extend knowledge gained in class. Pupils who have a special educational needs make good progress in lessons due to the wide range of teaching strategies and resources used by teachers. High standards of work and behaviour are demanded and received by all teachers. The improving standards can be directly attributed to good and often very imaginative teaching.
173. The management and leadership of the department are satisfactory. The difficulty in recruiting experienced and qualified teachers has had a major impact on the range of improvement strategies that can be implemented. Despite these challenges, a number of initiatives have been implemented which are already having a very positive impact on standards and are beginning to address some of the development areas outstanding from the last report.
174. All statutory requirements relating to the subject are in place but there are limited opportunities for pupils to make use of ICT in lessons or contribute significantly to whole-school numeracy initiatives. The new department handbook provides useful guidance for teachers and there is now a centralised and computerised system for recording the assessment results gained by pupils. The faculty improvement plan has a clear focus on pupil learning. The current upward trend in pupils' learning seen in lessons can be attributed to the management skills and expertise of the co-ordinator and the commitment to raising standards engendered within the team. A consistent approach to lesson planning and delivery is evident in lessons.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in the taught courses in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory** but whole-school provision for ICT is **unsatisfactory**.

### Strengths

- improvement in standards in Years 7 to 9 and at GCSE level
- the appointment of course leaders is enabling the school to review and improve provision
- the introduction of GNVQ in Years 10 and 11 is popular with pupils and, by widening access to ICT, is helping the school meet its National Curriculum requirement at Key Stage 4

### Areas for improvement

- recent changes in the National Curriculum are not sufficiently addressed at Key Stage 3
- the shortage of staff is severely limiting the development of a team to teach and assess the GNVQ course
- resources are not adequate to meet current needs
- many subjects do not meet their National Curriculum requirement to use ICT to enhance and support learning

175. Pupils come to the school with below average knowledge and skills and pupils in Year 7 demonstrate wide variation in standards depending on their previous opportunities in primary school and at home. Although standards remain below national expectations by the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve appropriately in the taught programme, despite the lack of opportunities to practise and develop their ICT knowledge and skills in most other subjects.
176. GCSE standards have been severely hit by staffing problems and were very low in the two years up to 2001 when they improved noticeably, although they are still well below national average. In that year, less than a third of pupils gained grades A\* - C compared with over a half nationally. These proportions are also lower than for similar schools. Girls performed better than boys, although both boys and girls tended to do less well in ICT compared with their results in their other GCSE subjects.
177. By Year 9, most pupils have skills in all the major applications including those for control and measurement. They have strengths in communicating information using text and graphics, although many pupils need support to make progress in activities that involve data handling skills. Pupils are often confident users when given specific tasks but the limited open-ended learning activities restrict opportunities to demonstrate their skills independently.
178. In Years 10 and 11 most pupils are beginning to make good progress with the introduction of GNVQ Intermediate in ICT, which is now taken by half the year group. Pupils in Year 10 show high levels of interest and application. The remaining pupils make satisfactory progress through the use of ICT in other GNVQ courses or through a specially organised course for non-GNVQ pupils. Work on GCSE coursework also enables pupils to practise word processing and graphical presentation, much of which is done at home. In Year 11 the standards of work in the GNVQ Intermediate course are below the national average. Pupils have a secure range of practical skills, acquired through the structured learning programme, and the higher attaining pupils demonstrate good understanding of the uses of ICT in business and other contexts in their different assignments. However, in a demanding course, most pupils are working at a pass standard with few sufficiently developing their work to achieve merit or distinction. While the majority of Year 11 pupils are achieving satisfactorily in terms of their standards of ICT, they are not demonstrating this in their GNVQ coursework, much of which has yet to be completed.
179. Teaching in the discrete ICT courses is satisfactory overall with some good features. Teachers are effective in using their specialist knowledge to support pupils' developing understanding of different ICT applications. For example, in a Year 7 lesson the confident and well-informed teaching helped pupils make good progress in desk top publishing a greetings card because the

teacher provided clear guidance and had an ability to anticipate and resolve pupils' problems of understanding. Class management is usually effective in ensuring that pupils concentrate and works best where the teacher has been able to establish a firm but positive relationship with the class. On the odd occasion where this is not the case, the teacher's efforts to manage the group detracts from ensuring that all pupils make sufficient progress in their learning.

180. The recent introduction of the GNVQ course for a large proportion of Years 10 and 11 has provided a range of additional learning resources including those downloaded from the Internet. Pupils have greatly appreciated these opportunities and many are able to work with more independence. However, where lessons wholly consist of pupils working individually, the pace of learning slows at the end of lessons, particularly for some of the less committed Year 11 pupils. Where individualised approaches are combined with whole-class and group activities, pupils are well motivated and make better progress in their understanding of ICT.
181. Certain aspects of teaching have been adversely affected by the difficulty the school has experienced in sustaining a permanent team of specialist teachers. The frequent changes in staffing and the use of supply teachers have adversely affected efforts to assess pupil progress against National Curriculum standards in Key Stage 3. The lack of a consistent team to share in the monitoring and assessment of pupils on the GNVQ Intermediate level course is undermining efforts to establish an otherwise successful and popular curriculum initiative.
182. The management of ICT is satisfactory. The recently-appointed key stage co-ordinators are bringing their personal enthusiasm to the task of improving schemes of work and developing monitoring and assessment systems. The taught programme in Years 7 to 9 ensures that the National Curriculum programme of study is covered. At Key Stage 4 provision is mapped to ensure that all pupils have access to an ICT programme. This meets the National Curriculum requirement for Key Stage 4 and addresses a weakness identified in the last report.
183. The school has experienced difficulties in rapidly improving its ICT resources and accommodation and, where these have been expanded, they have been utilised for the growing provision in Years 10 and 11. Currently, the number of computers in school is below the national average and the development of staff ICT competence has been slow in meeting developing needs and has, in part, been frustrated by staff turnover. As a result, while there is some good use of ICT in a few areas such as art and design and modern foreign languages, most subjects have not sufficiently planned and implemented the use of ICT within their schemes of work. The school continues to develop its provision and this is facilitated by a very effective network manager. However, the school has focused its scarce resources on developing the taught courses at the expense of whole-school development. It has yet to establish clearly ways of monitoring and developing the cross-curricular use of ICT and tracking pupils' experiences across the different subject areas.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

### Strengths

- teachers, including temporary teachers, have very good knowledge of French and Spanish, helping the pupils develop good accents
- teachers plan well and use good methods and strategies, which leads to lively and enjoyable lessons
- boys have good attitudes to language learning and their standards are rising
- the written work of the higher achieving pupils is good

### Areas for improvement

- the most recent GCSE results are below the national average and those of similar schools
- difficulty in recruiting permanent teachers leads to a lack of continuity and has a negative effect on standards



- there are not enough books and this limits pupils' ability to study independently and for some pupils to achieve the higher levels
- the language assistants are not always used effectively
- schemes of work and the assessment policy require further development

184. Pupils join the school with no prior knowledge of French or Spanish and many have levels of literacy which are well below average. In 2001 teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in both languages show attainment to be slightly below national expectations.
185. By the end of Key Stage 3 standards are a little below the national expectation in French and Spanish, although pupils' achievement and progress in both languages are good relative to their ability and prior experience of languages. Listening and understanding are satisfactory in both languages and pupils enjoy the challenge of extracting the meaning from spoken or recorded language. In both French and Spanish, pupils can understand the classroom language of the teachers and by the end of Year 9 can understand familiar language when spoken at near normal speed. Pupils' spoken French is often lively but a little inaccurate. Lower achieving pupils are diffident about speaking French and their pronunciation is often anglicised despite the very good language models they hear. Pupils in the highest Year 9 French set respond to questions in the perfect tense with only minor inaccuracies and they can mentally compose a sequence of four or five sentences to deliver orally to the class.
186. In Spanish many pupils speak with good accents and most can use Spanish confidently in well-structured speaking tasks. However, they tend to be heavily dependent on information sheets and text books, and the abler students are not confident in using their Spanish creatively in less predictable situations.
187. Pupils' reading skills in both languages are hampered by the lack of text books for home study and language consolidation, and are low.
188. When writing in Spanish, many Year 9 pupils form sentences using a sound topic-based vocabulary and basic verb forms, mainly with guidance from textbooks and worksheets. Some pupils use language more flexibly to express opinions and write paragraphs and letters in Spanish. In French pupils combine and adapt familiar phrases to form passages of description or narrative. They can write on the board to the teacher's dictation and correct each other's spelling. However, overall, the work in pupils' French books is below expectations, with some poor presentation and unfinished work.
189. Pupils make good progress in both languages from the beginning of their course in Year 7, acquiring and extending their range of basic vocabulary and language structures. They build up knowledge of words and phrases about themselves, school, home, leisure activities, shopping and travel. This is achieved through carefully structured listening, speaking, reading and writing tasks. Some able pupils do not progress as they should to higher levels of achievement. Despite the good management of temporary staff and their good language knowledge and teaching skills, the progress of some pupils has been adversely affected by a lack of continuity during Years 8 and 9. Pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress despite the absence of any special needs support in modern foreign languages lessons.
190. At the end of Year 11 GCSE results in both languages are below average, showing a disappointing drop in 2001. Previously results had been rising steadily. In 2000 results met national averages in French and were just below average in Spanish. Despite the drop in standards this year, lower achieving pupils continue to do well in examinations relative to their ability; additionally, the attainment of boys has continued to improve, if only slightly and the gap between boys' and girls' performance has narrowed in French and closed in Spanish. A major factor in the fall in GCSE results for 2001 has been the crisis in staffing over the past two years. Substantial numbers of pupils have not had continuity of teaching and have lost motivation and confidence.

191. Standards seen during the inspection ranged from very good to, in the case of many pupils, below average. In Spanish standards at Key Stage 4 are below average overall. Standards in French are also a little below average overall, with a wide range of attainment.
192. In French, understanding is often good, with higher achieving pupils understanding questions and dialogues in French spoken at normal speed, and lower achievers getting the general gist of taped or spoken passages. Speaking is satisfactory with higher achievers using good accents and confident delivery, but there is still a reluctance on the part of lower achievers to attempt anything but a very anglicised pronunciation; this is a matter of attitude rather than ability. In Spanish most pupils speak with a good Spanish accent and perform role-plays well, recalling language on a level appropriate to their ability. Boys generally demonstrate confidence and perform well in speaking tasks.
193. As in Key Stage 3, reading in both languages is adversely affected by the fact that many pupils do not have a book to take home, and standards are below average overall.
194. In French some pupils write fluently at an appropriate level of difficulty with only minor inaccuracies. They write in a variety of forms, including letters of job application and descriptions of their work experience. Many, however, have satisfactory vocabulary but are unable to use the appropriate structure and grammar of the language. In Spanish the written work of able pupils is often well above average and sometimes excellent; most can express themselves using a well-developed vocabulary and a range of tenses confidently. In both languages presentation of written course work is variable, with some presented well and sometimes word-processed work, but some poorly presented work with many errors.
195. Achievement and progress in both languages during the key stage are generally good. In Spanish, able pupils achieve very well, developing confidence and maturity, particularly in their extended written Spanish. Throughout Year 10 most other pupils increase their vocabulary and can use writing or speaking frames successfully to express opinions and undertake simple transactions, for example, in a Spanish market or asking the way in a town. In French, pupils increase their ability during Year 10 to scan text for meaning; for example, reading a series of paragraphs and deciding whether lifestyles described are healthy or unhealthy. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because teachers are aware of their needs and try to ensure they understand.
196. Teaching is good overall in both languages throughout the school. In Spanish almost all teaching seen was at least satisfactory and almost half the teaching seen was good or very good with one lesson being excellent. In French there was no unsatisfactory teaching and the great majority of teaching was good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the languages they teach are unusually good and the team benefits from the presence of several bilingual teachers as well as Spanish and French teaching assistants. Lesson planning is very good, with clear objectives which are shared with the pupils. This gives pupils good direction in their language learning and full awareness of their progress. Lessons which involve the modern foreign language assistants do not always make best use of their strengths; sometimes they are too formal, but more often they have not been planned sufficiently carefully in advance and time is wasted.
197. Teachers take account of both pupils with special needs and more able pupils in their planning and work hard to tailor lessons to meet their needs as far as possible. Good methods and strategies are used to make lessons lively and interesting; for example, in "carousel" activities in a Year 10 French class, pairs of pupils moved through a series of linked speaking, listening, reading and writing activities changing tasks every 15 minutes; motivation and active learning were maintained throughout the lesson. In a Year 8 French class, the pupil who was to ask and answer questions was decided by the throwing of a soft toy, resulting in good pace and a sense of fun. In a Spanish lesson about pets, a brisk pace of lesson delivery and clear instructions for the task helped motivate all pupils but particularly the boys.
198. Teachers make clear links with previous learning, building skills and knowledge systematically. Consequently, pupils are motivated and, in the case of low attaining pupils, are usefully reminded

of their current learning. For example, in a good Year 11 lower set lesson in which the pupils practised personal descriptions in Spanish, the teacher motivated the pupils by reminding them of the language learned in the previous lesson, and by constantly reviewing with them the progress towards the lesson objectives written on the board. Good use is made of tape-recorded material. Marking is usually thorough and helpful, although books show less consistent marking where a series of temporary teachers has taken a class. Pupils are encouraged to match their performance against descriptions of what is expected at each level of the National Curriculum in both languages. There is good ongoing informal assessment and in French systems of assessment are good and include assessment of oral work. In Spanish, the formal framework for testing and target setting for improvement requires implementing more fully, and should be clearly linked to schemes of work which are in the process of being completed. Good use has been made in the past of ICT but recently access to the computer suites has been significantly curtailed, making this much more difficult. The modern foreign languages department still, however, maintains a dedicated web site.

199. Attitudes to both French and Spanish are generally good. Pupils work hard and behave well. A few pupils appear to have lost confidence and do not use sufficient effort in their work. This is most evident where classes have suffered multiple changes of teacher. Displays in the classrooms are a source of pride for many pupils and many, but not all, present their written work well.
200. In both French and Spanish lessons the development of pupils' literacy is well supported through careful attention to teaching spelling and grammatical terms and forms. In French opportunities are also taken to promote numeracy; for example, in one class pupils had to count on in threes when answering the register. In the French department there are very good links with other subjects and enrichment of pupils' experience through French films, theatre, cultural evenings and visits to France. This enrichment is still developing in Spanish.
201. The management of French is good overall, while the management of Spanish is satisfactory, but with less clarity of responsibility. The modern foreign languages department has managed the difficult staffing situation very well, supporting temporary teachers with lesson planning, resources and the removal of difficult pupils to other sets. All teachers are strongly committed to raising standards. The quality of teaching is monitored by the subject leaders and there is good support and development of newly qualified teachers.
202. Resources in the modern languages departments, particularly the numbers of books available, are unsatisfactory. Pupils who do not have a book to keep and to take home cannot be expected to attain at the highest levels, and working from black and white photocopied sheets does little to motivate pupils. Current levels of access to ICT are also unsatisfactory. The school's options system is unhelpful for some pupils wishing to choose French or Spanish; depending on the pupils chosen subjects, at least one examination set has to be taught in a mixed ability group. This, coupled with the lack of any special needs support in the department, makes it difficult to meet the very wide range of needs in that group and is almost certainly having a negative effect on standards.
203. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has improved satisfactorily, as have the use of clear learning objectives and the involvement of pupils in their own progress. Assessment has improved in French and now needs to be further developed in Spanish. The school's strategies for improving the performance of boys have been effective. The school still needs to raise standards in modern foreign languages further. Whilst the standards achieved in GCSE examinations in 2001 were lower than in previous years the overall trend has been one of improvement. The fall in results is due in the main to circumstances outside the control of the department, notably the severe recruitment crisis.

## MUSIC

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

#### Strengths

- teaching and learning in most lessons
- relationships with pupils
- extra-curricular music-making

#### Areas for improvement

- inefficient and inflexible use of space available in the department is limiting the nature of some lessons
- under-developed vocal work and listening and appraising of music other than pupils' own music
- information and control technology, especially at Key Stage 3, and access to sequencing software
- the need to refine attainment target levels to link with target-setting

204. Pupils enter the school with very few musical skills. The percentage of pupils attaining the national expectation by the end of Year 9 is well below the national average. GCSE results in music examinations taken over the last three years are below the national average for grades A\* - C, but all pupils attain within the grades A\* - G range, in line with the national average. Few pupils take instrumental lessons and these results reflect the achievements of a group of pupils with very few skilled instrumentalists studying at this level. The progress of pupils is good.
205. Attainment in lessons in both key stages is below the national expectations. Pupils working with staff notation are unable to link the sound with the symbol unless they are instrumentalists. The sense of pulse is weak for most pupils. However, a Year 7 class were working well on a five part classroom orchestra piece using tuned percussion; there was a strong sense of ensemble leading to satisfactory levels of attainment. A Year 8 class were performing raga and tala in pairs and the melodic ideas were good.
206. Extra curricular provision in music provides a significant extension of the curriculum for those pupils who take part. Those involved include many of the school's more able musicians. The Wind Band is so successful that it has made two foreign tours; to Austria and Switzerland. Another is being planned to Italy. Instrumental teaching provision supports many of the pupils involved. The Wind Band and Steel Bands were working at a good standard and were thoroughly enjoying their music making. Pupils with special educational needs progress well. All who wish to be involved in practical music-making are encouraged to do so, with the Steel Bands offering exciting opportunities for those without mainstream musical skills to develop them in a new context.
207. Teaching and learning are good in Key Stage 3 and very good in Key Stage 4. The best teaching is characterised by good planning and preparation, linked to clear target setting where the targets are refined as part of teacher feedback inside lessons. Relationships are good and often very good. Work focuses on individual development and growth. Organisation and class management are good, with potentially difficult pupils being very well managed in the lessons where this is necessary. Pupils respond well to teacher input. In the best lessons teacher enthusiasm leads to a mirror response from pupils. They learn by listening and analysis, experiment, trial and error, selection and rejection, by doing and refinement, and through the harnessing of musical ensemble. This last aspect was particularly seen in a Year 7 class orchestra lesson, where there was a sense of excitement, fun and hard work were linked.
208. Pupils' attitudes in their music lessons are good. In the best lessons pupils are keen and enthusiastic. Group work is effective, showing good negotiation and collaboration. In a few lessons the behaviour of a small group of boys limited the learning of others and there was a constant need to reassure pupils and to build their self-esteem. The sense of bubble and excitement in music-making helps pupils to take full advantage of the musical opportunities provided. A Year 9 class performing blues in three parts derived much satisfaction from their own achievement.

209. The leadership and management in music are very good, building on the enthusiasm and efficiency of the head of department. The curriculum satisfies National Curriculum requirements. Those who have been able to taken advantage of the free provision of instrumental lessons in primary schools now have to pay for lessons, and very few do so, which is having a major adverse impact on potential attainment. The curriculum is over-focused on staff notation, which limits full access for many pupils. ICT is inadequate at Key Stage 3 and appropriate sequencing software is not available. Vocal work is at an early stage of development, and listening to mainstream music and appraising needs to be further developed. The assessment system is good and attainment target levels are in place; these require review to link them to target setting against clear criteria for success. The new accommodation is good, but should be more flexibly used to improve access to all aspects of the curriculum.
210. There were many issues needing attention in music at the last inspection. Some have been resolved; there is now good practice in the pace of music teaching, both boys and girls now play flute, guitar and drum in instrumental work, opportunities for group and practical work and music's image with older pupils. Some have been partly resolved; composing work has improved, pupils now appraise their own work but not music from the mainstream, and some aspects of aural awareness have improved. Some issues still remain to be addressed, in particular, singing and vocal work and the role of staff notation in the music curriculum.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- pupils' attainment in both key stages is above national expectations and individual pupils and teams attain high standards in a variety of sports
- teaching in the department is good overall
- pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and they have good relationships with their teachers
- there is very good provision for extra-curricular activities, including residential visits and dance

### Areas for improvement

- accommodation and staffing to allow statutory requirements to be met at Key Stage 3
- schemes of work at Key Stage 3 to include opportunities for pupils to engage in independent and evaluative tasks
- the promotion of literacy, numeracy and ICT and to link with assessment criteria
- monitoring of pupils' GCSE files, to provide a good learning resource for the future

211. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations in most activities but below in basketball, fitness and trampolining where they have little previous experience. At the end of Year 9, boys and girls attain levels that are above the national expectation in most activities and better than the overall standards seen at the time of the previous inspection.
212. In lessons observed in Key Stage 3, pupils of all abilities, in all years, made good progress. Their achievement is good overall. They are taught in mixed-ability and mixed-gender groupings for almost all activities and this illustrates well the department's commitment to the inclusion of all pupils. Pupils in Year 7 have sound basic hockey skills and pass and receive the ball with control. By the time they reach Year 9, pupils' hockey skills are more accurate and they have an understanding of team play. When trampolining, Year 9 boys develop advanced skills but their movements lack quality and control. Girls have better body tension and are prepared to repeat and refine basic bounces. The majority of boys and girls in Year 9 understand the basic skills of rugby, but lack consistency in their ball handling and passing skills. Pupils are reasonably fit and know the reasons for warming up and stretching. They are given little opportunity to do this independently in practical lessons because activities are frequently led by the teacher. However, the dedicated health studies lesson in Years 7 and 8 is a very good initiative and provides pupils with a broad knowledge of health and fitness.

213. The 2001 A\* - C grades in the GCSE physical education course were in line with the national average. The trend over time has fluctuated with results sometimes being well above the national averages. Girls outperform boys in the theory elements of the course and boys attain better grades in the practical aspects. Over the previous five years girls' results have been more consistent than those of boys. The number of A\* - C grades attained in the dance GCSE has been in line with the national average over the previous two years.
214. Pupils' GCSE physical education projects are of a high standard and are very well presented using ICT. Pupils have a good knowledge of health and fitness and have practical skills that are above the national average, for example, in football. However, a number of pupils are hindered when writing by their low level literacy skills. The notebooks of a few boys are not a good learning resource because they fail to finish work and do not file their previous notes. Teachers' marking of homework and tests is informative and helpful but teachers are not monitoring pupils' notebooks sufficiently.
215. Standards seen during the inspection in the GCSE dance lessons indicate that girls in Year 11 are attaining well practically and have a strong awareness of rhythm and technique but are weaker in the theoretical aspects of the course.
216. In the statutory non-examination lessons, pupils in Years 10 and 11 are attaining at a level above that expected nationally. A majority of boys attain above the expected level in football where they have very good skills and are able to plan tactics and strategies independently. The majority of girls are able to choreograph their own aerobic sequences and work-outs. Overall, pupils do not develop their evaluative skills sufficiently and there is a lack of guidance in promoting this strand of the National Curriculum in the schemes of work. Individual pupils and teams achieve high standards in district and county competitions in football, dance, trampolining and athletics. The attainment of these pupils is well above the national average and they benefit considerably from the extra opportunities provided by their teachers.
217. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good overall with just under half of lessons being very good. Learning is good overall and boys and girls of all abilities make good progress. In the best lessons, pupils benefit in their learning because a wide variety of challenging tasks is set and pupils are guided in their own discovery of skills and techniques. In less successful lessons, teachers focus on pupils' performance skills and managing the activity rather than promoting and guiding pupils' planning and evaluative skills.
218. The department does not focus on literacy, numeracy or ICT skills sufficiently in Years 7 to 9 and teachers do not appreciate their value as the basics for those pupils who later progress to the GCSE course. There is insufficient use of additional sources of reference in the form of prompt sheets or work cards to promote these aspects of the National Curriculum more fully. Objectives are shared with pupils at the start of each lesson and good reviews at the end ensure that learning is well focused. Teachers have good knowledge of their subject and are able to give high quality demonstrations of techniques. This gives pupils a good visual image of the activity and shows them clearly how to improve their skills.
219. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good and pupils' attitudes are good overall. This positive approach helps pupils' learning. Pupils are mostly keen and enthusiastic but a few boys and girls, especially in Years 9, 10 and 11, do not participate regularly in activities. The positive attitudes of the majority of pupils are reflected by the numbers who have opted to take dance and physical education at GCSE level, and in the numbers who attend extra-curricular activities. There were over 50 pupils, mostly girls, attending a dance rehearsal during the inspection week.
220. Teacher assessments in Years 7 to 9 use the new national guidance but procedures have not been fully developed so that pupils and staff are not sufficiently aware of the differing criteria for assessing standards. The current links between the schemes of work, assessment system and the four strands of the National Curriculum mean that pupils do not fully understand their level of success.

221. The head of department provides good leadership for the department. He leads by very good example with his teaching and supports the newest members of staff well. The planning of the curriculum is very difficult because of the restraints imposed by the poor accommodation. At present boys do not participate in four programmes of study at Key Stage 3 which means their curriculum does not meet statutory requirements. The girls are able to experience a unit of dance in Year 9 which provides a good base for the GCSE course and meets the statutory requirement.
222. The playing fields are muddy and in poor condition because of over-use. At the time of the inspection the sports hall was out of use because the floor surface is in need of repair. This meant that many pupils did not receive their planned activity. The other indoor area is an old school hall which is also used for assemblies and does not meet the full needs of the curriculum. Teachers have to sweep the floor before commencing a lesson and finish early to enable chairs to be put out. There is no all-weather surface and the courts have to be adapted for numerous games activities; for example, basketball, hockey, and netball. There is a dedicated theory room for teaching health studies and the GCSE course. It is old and tired but helpful as an additional indoor space. The new dance studio is a very good facility but is fully booked with Year 9, GCSE and A level teaching leaving no appropriate clean indoor space for teaching dance and gymnastics to Years 7 and 8.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- the positive encouragement given to pupils with the use of merits and links with home
- the recent coverage of world religions
- the increased amount of time given to applying issues to everyday life

### Areas for improvement

- revision of schemes of work to pay particular attention to continuity and progression
- clarify the confusion over effort and standards in marking and give comments that show the pupil clearly what needs to be done to raise the work to the next level or grade
- develop teaching styles further to make a greater use of pupils' contributions

223. On entry to the school in Year 7 pupils have knowledge and skills that are well below the level expected by the Bexley Agreed Syllabus for RE that the school uses. This is partly due to low literacy skills and also due to the fact that pupils in earlier years have followed a variety of syllabuses and do not have a common body of knowledge on which to build. There are no national data to compare standards but by the end of Year 9 standards are below the expected level. By the end of the key stage pupils are beginning to relate topics studied to their own experience and are beginning to form their own views on religious issues. They have a good range of ideas and understanding of principles of festivals and understand symbolism in a variety of religious traditions. Since January 2001 the pupils have studied a much wider range of world religions. The weaker aspects of their work are low levels of literacy and the long-term recall of topics. The pupils' work is of a higher quantity and quality in Year 9, showing good progress through Years 7 to 9. There is no significant difference in the standards achieved by girls or boys.
224. In Years 10 and 11 all pupils follow a course in religious education. A short GCSE course has been introduced since the last inspection and approximately a third of the pupils take that short course examination. In 2001 almost half of the pupils entered gained grades A\* - C, which is just below the national average. Half the pupils take a certificate of achievement examination and virtually all who sat the examination achieved a pass or better. However, there was a high number of absentees. Generally more girls than boys take examinations but the standards achieved show no consistent pattern.
225. By the end of Year 11 pupils have a solid understanding of Christianity and apply the beliefs to a range of moral issues such as euthanasia, abortion, the environment and divorce. They also have a historical and modern day perspective of either Judaism or Islam. The depth at which the pupils study topics, except divorce, is relatively shallow. The work on world religions is currently inhibited by a lack of groundwork in Years 7 to 9 and coursework reflects a lack of variety of source materials. Satisfactory progress is made in Years 10 and 11.
226. The teaching of religious education is satisfactory. It is slightly better in Years 7 to 9 where more good teaching is seen. The strengths within teaching are the teacher-pupil relationships which encourage participation and set an atmosphere in which sharing can take place, the various positive methods of encouragement that are used including merits, letter and phone calls home, the good subject knowledge that is used to add detail and interest to the lessons and the modification of work and worksheets to meet individual needs. Weaker aspects within teaching are the teacher domination of the lesson as seen when the teacher asks questions and fills in the answer rather than developing the answers from the pupils. There are relatively few opportunities for pupils to work in groups either for brainstorming ideas or in discussion.
227. The work of pupils shows that they have opportunities to empathise in situations but they use short answers too frequently with few opportunities given for extended writing. Teachers mark work carefully, with comments that encourage and are designed to stimulate further thought. However, there is some confusion about the mark awarded in relation to the effort and the



standard of the work; the comments do not enable the pupil to know what they need to do to improve the work to the next level or grade. At GCSE level, marking using grades relative to the examination is rare.

228. The curriculum has been revised so that now it conforms to the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. This revision still needs to pay particular consideration to continuity and progression so that the work studied builds on the previous work and also consolidates learning. The accommodation for religious education is unsatisfactory; the poor décor is compensated for by good display using a range of commercially produced posters and pupil work, but the size of the rooms prevents the arrangement of furniture to suit the topic and limits the activities that can be undertaken.
229. The management and leadership of the department are satisfactory and many improvements have been introduced. Although it is too soon to see the impact of these the department is moving in the right direction. Progress made since the last inspection has been inhibited by staffing difficulties; however, recent developments mean that satisfactory progress has been made overall.

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

In the inspection, nine 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, the latest year for which national comparisons are available.

### *GCE A level and AVCE courses*

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	6	83	96	17	45	3.3	6.4
English literature	11	91	96	18	36	3.8	5.9
Geography	2	100	92	50	37	7.0	5.7
History	6	100	89	17	34	4.3	5.4
Mathematics	4	50	89	0	45	1.5	6.0
Music	2	50	93	0	35	1.0	5.72
Science	1	100	n/a	0	n/a	2.0	n/a
Spanish	1	100	90	0	40	4.0	5.8
Government and politics	1	100	n/a	0	n/a	4.0	n/a
Sociology	4	100	88	100	37	8.5	5.5
Drama and theatre studies	8	100	99	50	36	7.8	6.5
Business studies	2	100	91	0	30	5.0	5.3
Media studies	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Design and technology	3	100	92	33	29	6.7	5.4

### *Intermediate vocational qualifications*

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business studies	6	100	n/a	33.3	n/a	16.6	n/a
Health and social care	2	100	n/a	50.0	n/a	0	n/a

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

### MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The inspection focused exclusively on mathematics. None of the science subjects offered by the school have been taken up by students currently in the sixth form. Mathematics is offered at both AS and A2

levels. Pure mathematics and statistics are offered as options effectively to support the other A-level work. In 2001 the results of A-level examinations were below the national average.

## Mathematics

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

### Strengths

- teaching of fundamental skills and techniques
- students' positive attitudes to learning

### Areas for improvement

- recruitment of higher attaining students
- greater consistency of good teaching in order to raise achievement
- cost-effectiveness of provision

230. In 2001 the results of A-level examinations were below the national average, as has been the case in recent years with no students attaining the highest grades. The school has only a small number of students who attain the high standards at GCSE typical of A-level students nationally. However, students work hard to achieve the standards of which they are capable. Consequently, both boys and girls regularly achieve well. Students who re-sit the GCSE examination improve their grades.
231. During the inspection, from work in lessons, in written assignments and during discussion with students it is evident that they are achieving good standards of work in relation to those which might be expected in view of their previous results. Basic algebraic techniques are learned thoroughly in pure mathematics in Year 12 but for most students, enduring difficulties with algebra hinder their progress in trigonometry and calculus. Skills are applied confidently, such as those for finding areas under curves or volumes of revolution, but analysis of compound functions depending on recognition of algebraic structures is weak. Currently only one pupil is continuing to study in Year 13.
232. Much of the early work consists of routine algebra. Students speak well of this and recognise its value. They work diligently, for example, when learning to make rudimentary applications of the Factor and Remainder Theorems. Whilst students become competent in handling techniques in isolation, such as algebraic division by a linear factor, they do not readily recognise when application is called for, such as when factorising cubic expressions. Students complete three modules in Year 12, two of pure mathematics and one of statistics, but many find this demanding and withdraw from the course.
233. Overall, teaching is satisfactory and in some lessons it is good. Where teaching is good, teachers plan work carefully. They engage students in purposeful discussions that promote achievement by concentrating on basic techniques. For example, Year 12 students' limited experience of formal proof required the teacher to lead them by small steps through examples of inferential logic applied to algebraic propositions. Consequently, students learned to appreciate the distinction between necessary and sufficient conditions. In some instances, the pace of teaching is not sufficiently demanding. For example, a teacher worked too slowly through some straightforward applications of integral calculus. Generally, students' progress is hampered by their weak understanding of underlying principles. Although they learn techniques thoroughly, in the absence of insight, they find the links between areas of application difficult to establish; for example, between integral and differential calculus.
234. The subject manager analyses results carefully and monitors standards effectively. Recruiting only a small number of students with a low rate of retention into Year 13, the sixth form mathematics programme is not cost-effective. The school has a priority to consider alternative patterns of provision, including partnership with other institutions to ensure that courses become viable.

## ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

The school does not offer any of the subjects of this category.

## BUSINESS

### Business studies

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

#### Strengths

- standards are in line with the national average across all subjects offered within this area
- results in public examinations taken within this subject show a year on year improvement
- teaching is very good; lessons are well structured with a range of activities, which effectively help students to build upon their knowledge for each unit of work
- students are expected and encouraged to work both collaboratively and independently
- students are expected to analyse information and produce convincing arguments to support the judgements they make
- students have access to the schemes of work and assessment requirement relating to this subject

#### Areas for improvement

- further development of systems for monitoring student progress. The use of the results from the end of Key Stage 4 as a basis for projecting and monitoring final outcomes for each student individually and to focus attention on raising attainment
- ensuring the range of staff expertise currently represented within the department is used to give students the greatest access to all aspects of business education
- the accommodation available for use by the department is inflexible and dated. This does not promote a positive business-style environment within which students can work
- to develop positive marketing strategies to recruit pupils from Key Stage 4 into the sixth form and to improve retention rates from Year 12 into Year 13

235. The standards attained by students at the end their courses are in line with the national expectations for all courses offered within this curriculum area. All students completing a two-year A level course in 2001 achieved a pass within the C - E range. All students who completed the new one-year AS course achieved passes within the D - E range. This represents good achievement for these students. Nine students completed a GNVQ Intermediate course with all but two achieving the full award. In addition to this, four students achieved a pass on the Young Enterprise course. Advanced level results for 2001 were an improvement on the previous year. By contrast, the GNVQ advanced results were not as good as in previous years. This can be attributed to the school being unable to attract a permanent head of department during the spring and summer terms.

236. Students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment at the start of the course. This is particularly noteworthy given that the majority of students have not followed a business studies course before entering the sixth form. Students who have been identified as having a special educational need achieve well in this subject. The standard of work currently produced by students in Year 12 is in line with national expectation. For example, students in Year 12 were set their first business assignment within the second week of term, for completion by mid-October. Their work folders, containing the notes recorded and research undertaken to support the development of this assignment, contain clear evidence of gains in knowledge over that period of time. There is also clear evidence of analytical thinking as opposed to simply recording facts. Currently only one Year 13 student is following an advanced business course. The evidence base is therefore too limited to make any reliable judgements about current standards.

237. Teaching within the department is very good. Both teachers have a very good knowledge of their subjects. They both teach in a lively and interactive way, which captures the interest of the students. All lessons are thoroughly planned and incorporate a wide range of teaching methods to ensure that all students can and do achieve. In one of the lessons observed students were asked to consider what constitutes unethical business practice. From this, they then considered the differences between unethical and illegal practice. They were expected to use a wide range of sources, including data gathered from video clips, case studies and journal articles, to gather sufficient information on which to make reliable judgements. Students in this lesson were making very good progress as a direct result of effective teaching. In another lesson, students were investigating the effects of changing interest rates on the business environment. In addition to written text and points raised in general class discussion, students had to consider a range of numerical data. The teacher demanded analytical oral responses to questions. Over the course of the lesson the responses given by students became more focused and they effectively recorded information, using a writing frame produced by the teacher to ensure that only the outcomes of the lesson were noted. The lesson structure and the range of activities clearly focused their learning. All students present were able to recall knowledge gained from previous study and apply it to a new context.
238. Students are skilled in using various elements of ICT as part of their studies and have easy access to computers in lessons. A great deal is demanded of the students who follow a business course. They are expected to thoroughly research areas relating to the activities undertaken by a range of companies and report on their findings using a business framework. The role of the teacher in this situation is that of a facilitator who successfully guides students' learning through each unit of work.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The school offers both the GNVQ Advanced level course for both years and the Advanced Vocational course in ICT. Both were inspected in full.

All of the students who followed the GNVQ Advanced level course for both years were successful, gaining passes in the double award with most achieving distinctions and merits in 2001.

### Information and communication technology

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

#### Strengths

- good results in the GNVQ Advanced level course and the current Year 13 students are making good progress
- students benefit from specialist teaching

#### Areas for improvement

- a shared system of monitoring and assessing student progress has not been established
- there is a narrower than average range of teaching and learning strategies, including the use of vocational and realistic contexts

239. All the students who followed the GNVQ Advanced level course for both years were successful, gaining passes in the double award, with most achieving distinctions and merits in 2001. Those results were at least in line with the national average and the students made good progress in relation to their prior GCSE attainment.
240. In lessons and work seen, standards in the Advanced Vocational course in ICT are below national average. In Year 13 the students have secure investigative skills, evident in their work on the Internet where they demonstrate different search strategies and are able to assemble information and ideas coherently in their reports. In their coursework they apply themselves and use the

relevant applications confidently, although their system design skills are less strong. This was seen in students' efforts to develop a workable relational database system.

241. In Year 12 the students have sound practical skills evident in their preparatory work for the January examinations. The higher attaining students, in particular, have a wider range of understanding and skills evident in a business documents activity involving the design of a business logo. In the lesson those students produced more sophisticated outcomes using downloaded graphical images that they confidently manipulated; they were able to evaluate the possible alternatives before settling on the chosen design. However, many of the Year 12 students have modest GCSE results with a number not having reached a good standard in their GCSE ICT. This is reflected in less developed literacy skills and in their limited knowledge about the impact of ICT. The latter was illustrated in a lesson where the students were less aware of the different applications involved in a management information system.
242. Retention rates have been low in the last few years, although the students who have completed the two year course make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. This is true of those students in Year 13 who have noticeably improved their grades in external tests and demonstrate high levels of interest and commitment; this is reflected in the additional amount of time they spend on the subject outside of lessons. The Year 12 students share an interest in the subject, although are more mixed in terms of their level of commitment and subsequent progress.
243. Teaching is satisfactory, with some good features. The teachers are all specialists who are keen to further develop their own competence and are able to support the students at the appropriate level. There is a sufficient focus on practical activity and students make good progress in developing a wide repertoire of skills. There is a strong emphasis on teacher- supported individual learning; in the best practice the teacher circulates regularly and extends students' understanding through effective questioning, as well as sharing common learning points with the whole group. On occasion, the pace of learning slows when there is less variety and students work individually for long periods. Given that it is vocational course there is little use of industrial and commercial contexts, including visits and visitors, that would help students develop their understanding and motivate the minority of less committed students.
244. Teachers are helpful in ensuring that students understand the requirements for assessment, although the students are less clear about their progress. This is largely because teachers have yet to indicate target grades and current attainment through a shared system of monitoring and assessment.
245. The recently appointed co-ordinator for both Key Stage 4 and sixth form courses is effectively managing provision for these courses and is in the process of establishing shared teaching and assessment procedures. Resources and accommodation are organised appropriately to support learning, although wider links have yet to be developed.

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

No subject areas were inspected in detail but the Community Sports Leaders Award (CSLA) was sampled.

One lesson of the CSLA course was observed. Students were keen and enthusiastic and their standards were high. A 100% pass record has been achieved since the course began. Their attainment levels are high and they gain much social, cultural and moral awareness and independent responsibility from the challenging tasks set. Rigorous teaching promoted much learning and very good organisation of the course results in students gaining practical experience when assisting with a Year 7 health studies lesson. The subject broadens the sixth form curriculum and gives students the opportunity to take responsibility and initiative.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The inspection concentrated in depth on art and design, drama and medias studies. However, inspectors also sampled classes in dance and music.

One lesson of dance was observed. Over the last two years low numbers of students have been entered for dance. Standards are in line with the national average and students achieve outcomes in line with their previous experiences and attainment because of the good specialist teaching. Students in Year 12 take accurate notes, discuss thoroughly with one another but are still reliant on their teachers' practical expertise and ideas. However, their individual dance technique and practical performance are of a high standard. High expectations encourage students to give of their best with a constant emphasis on improvement through individual practice and experience of choreographing dances performed by younger pupils.

In music, AS and A level music are offered, but numbers have been consistently small and higher grades have not been attained.

### Art and design

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

#### Strengths

- teaching and achievement are good
- standards in the work in the school are above average
- the subject makes a very good contribution to students' cultural development
- there is very good use of ICT

#### Areas for improvement

- there are not enough opportunities to work on a large scale
- there is no designated area for students to work independently outside their lesson times

246. Results in the GCE A-level examination in 2001 were below the national average, with one-fifth of students gaining higher grades at A or B against the average of almost one half. Numbers taking the examination were too small to reliably compare the attainment of male and female students. Over the last two years, results have been lower than in previous years, although they show some improvement in 2001. In the externally set examination at the end of Year 12, on the AVCE course, students did worse than expected, because this is a new course and there were problems in understanding the questions that were set.

247. The standard attained by students currently in the school at the end of Year 12 is above average. Their drawing and painting are good, and some vigorous work in charcoal and paint is produced as a result. They make three-dimensional pieces in a wide range of materials, including wire, plaster and wax. They carve blocks of building material with confidence and produce some strong sculptures, informed by the work of Henry Moore, which show a good understanding of form and space. Their work in graphics shows a good standard of finish and understanding of the design process. Students are achieving well in relation to their attainment at the start of their course. They make good gains in their skills in handling materials and processes, and in their knowledge and understanding of a wide range of art activity. This includes the art of the Renaissance, the work of the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists and more recent developments in conceptual art and contemporary sculpture.

248. The standard attained by students in Year 13 is above average. The work in the school shows a significant improvement over recent results. This is because the school has analysed its results well and now has a better knowledge of the requirements of the new AVCE course, which is running in the current Year 13. In addition, students currently show very good levels of interest and commitment to their studies, and are frequently seen working on their art after school and outside their lesson times. Students are achieving well in relation to their attainment at the start of

the course. Their work in ceramics is very strong and they produce very well made pots, which show a very good understanding of the qualities of clay and a good grasp of the principles of form and shape. Textiles are also richly textured and often brightly coloured. For example, a large hanging in red and black felt is based on the study of the paintings of Bridget Riley. This is bold and striking in effect and shows a good understanding of the principles of Op art. However, there are limited opportunities for students to work on a large scale and, consequently, their broader handling skills are not as well developed as they could be.

249. Teaching and learning in art and design are good in Years 12 and 13. There are very good teacher-student relationships, which create a positive and confident learning atmosphere in the best lessons. In a lesson on textiles this atmosphere meant that when the teacher made clear suggestions for improvement in the work, such as re-arranging shapes to improve a composition; the students were very attentive and responded very well. As a result, learning was very good. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and they often give good demonstrations, which mean that students know exactly what they need to do to succeed.
250. Students use ICT very well to inform and extend their work, by researching and investigating ideas. For example, in one lesson a digital camera was used to explore the effects of lighting from different directions on the human face. This created good levels of interest and involvement and students made good gains in understanding how to produce strong modelling effects. At times, however, the pace of lessons begins to slow a little and this restricts learning to a good, rather than a very good level.
251. Art and design is well managed. Results are carefully analysed and the department's knowledge of the new AVCE course has improved. The subject makes a very good contribution to students' cultural development, with a programme that includes opportunities to visit Paris, and to work in the open air at Flatford Mill, where Constable created some of his best-known paintings.
252. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Results at A-level showed some improvement in 2001, although they were still below those achieved in 1998 and 1999, but the work in the school shows further improvement and is now above average. The accommodation has also improved since the previous inspection. The teaching rooms are located in a very good arts centre, which includes a light and airy gallery. However, the lack of a designated studio space means that students have to keep putting their work away or moving it from room to room. This makes it difficult for them to work for extended periods of time on the same piece and restricts the opportunities to work on a larger scale.

## Drama and theatre studies

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

### Strengths

- teaching is good; effective use is made of professional experience and expertise
- relationships are good; teaching is supportive and offers constant encouragement; students are committed to their learning
- the range and opportunity offered by extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum
- accommodation and resources are of a high standard

### Areas for improvement

- all lessons to be staffed by suitably qualified teachers
- the number of students embarking upon the AS/A2 course to increase
- the further development of schemes of work to incorporate more explicit reference to key skills, in particular, information and communication technology (ICT)

253. Standards in drama and theatre studies are above average. All students in the GCE A level examinations in 2000 achieved A - C grades, and half achieved the higher A/B grades. Students' achievements were significantly above the national average at the time of the last inspection and



have, in the previous two years, shown further improvement. No students were entered for examination at GCE A Level in 2001. In the AS examinations in 2001, all the students achieved the higher grades A/B. However, the number of students undertaking the course is relatively small. At the time of the inspection, lesson observation was limited to Year 13, although work scrutinised covered Year 12. The standard observed in lessons, and from students' written work, was above average, as was students' achievement. All students commit themselves to their work.

254. Students act with imaginative, creative and sensitive voice and movement, evident in the presentation of their devised performances. Performance is consonant with the dramatic intentions and the theatrical styles being explored. In the devised performance of "Nursery Crimes", students showed good control of voice skills, using pause, pace, inflection and projection. Similarly, movement skills were appropriate to the roles undertaken. Students, at ease with the role, demonstrated their ability to use gesture, poise and stillness appropriately to enhance the group's interpretation. There was good spatial awareness. Higher attaining students are more physically at ease with the roles they are developing and are more consistent in the projection of their voices. All students show an awareness of each other's work in the group's devised performances. They actively contribute to the creation of an integrated interpretation and are able to communicate with an audience. They have an understanding of the relationship between the performer and an audience. In their analysis of performance they recognise how they are able to modify their performance in response to the audience.
255. In their written work, students can analyse and evaluate plays in terms of plot, structure, direction and characterisation. Their work shows evidence of research and use of the Internet, for information about the playwright and the social context of the play. In their study of Sartre's "In Camera", and Ibsen's 'Hedda Gabler', students exhibit understanding of the use and effect of language, and the implication for mood on stage. They can recognise symbolism and explain how it contributes to the mood or atmosphere of the play. Lower attaining students are less confident about social context and its influence or impact upon an audience. They are also less certain about form and structure of the plays studied. In both written and oral work, students use technical language appropriately.
256. The quality of the teaching observed was good. The teacher has good subject knowledge and understanding of the subject and is effective in conveying this to the students. Planning is responsive to both the needs of the curriculum and of the students. It is sequential and the objectives are clear. The teacher is active in her support and encouragement. Consequently, students are confident and familiar with the nature of their work. Her questioning of students is sensitive, perceptive and inclusive. The students are clear about the quality of their performance skills, their interpretation in devised performance and how they might improve.
257. Students show good progress in their sixth form drama and theatre studies course, both in performance skills and in their analysis and evaluation of theatre. This results from the quality of teaching, the good relationships and their own commitment to their work. Students' practical work has pace and energy, with a consequent development of creation and performance. They are encouraged to reflect on and evaluate their own and other's work, which they do with increasing confidence. The inclusiveness of the teaching ensures that all students progress well. In the observed lessons, students remained focused and worked hard, with obvious enjoyment and enthusiasm. On-going assessment is thorough, being responsive to students' needs and influencing curriculum planning. The subject, through its content and a focus on contemporary issues in devised performance, contributes significantly to students' personal development.
258. The department is well led. There are clear aims and well considered plans for future development, although these need more detailed costing and evaluation strategies. Schemes of work are clear, although lack explicit reference to key skills. The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and enriched by opportunities made available to students, through theatre visits, workshops and productions. The curriculum meets examination requirements. Equality of opportunity and access are strong features. The accommodation has been developed since the last inspection. The current facilities are excellent and suitably resourced, both for teaching and

for performance. However, recent changes in staffing within the department have meant that not all the current teachers are suitably qualified. In consequence, although the head of department is teaching the majority of the sixth form lessons, where this is not possible, the students are at a disadvantage.

## Media studies

Overall, the quality of provision for media studies is **good**.

### Strengths

- teaching and learning are very good
- students are working at levels above the national average
- the curriculum is very good and promotes rigorous study

### Areas for improvement

- resources are inadequate; access to ICT, lack of textbooks and resources for video production work are particular weaknesses
- the lack of a rolling programme for upgrade and maintenance of existing equipment
- provision of technical assistance is unsatisfactory
- provision of extra-curricular activities is unsatisfactory

259. The GCSE A-level results in 2001 were below the national average for all maintained schools but close to the average for secondary modern schools. The results for this year were lower than in the previous year when they reached the national average for all maintained schools and comfortably exceeded that of secondary modern schools in terms of grades A - B achieved by students and points scored by them. There had been an improvement in results for two years in succession. In the last three years, all students achieved a pass grade. The performance of male and female students is not significantly different. Very few students have dropped out of the course in the last three years.

260. No student has yet taken AS level in media studies. Year 13 students will take it in January after a period of intensive, well-planned teaching which has promoted consistently good learning. This has served to remedy the adverse effects of previous staffing difficulties which are now resolved. Students' current work suggests that results will be well above the national average for AS level. In Year 12, students are currently working at or slightly below the national average for AS level. A level results look set to rise significantly this year.

261. In their study of newspapers, Year 12 students show good understanding of Alberoni's theory of the powerful and the powerless élite and can apply this theory effectively to given tabloid texts. They understand 'powerful' in terms of political, economic, institutional and religious power. They reliably identify the "idols", "champions" and "divas" of the powerless élite. Working effectively in groups, they confidently analyse news stories in these terms and come to the conclusion that tabloid newspapers give much more coverage to the powerless élite than to powerful people. These students empathise with people who have their privacy invaded by the press. They have read and understood the key points of the code of practice of the Press Complaints Commission. They study photographs which have formed the basis of previous complaints and, working effectively in pairs or small groups, prepare and present their case as to a tribunal.

262. In their practical work, Year 12 students collaborate on the opening sequences of a video film in the thriller genre. They plan it step by step, sometimes needing considerable guidance, as they detail the technical codes which are required. Scrutiny of previous work shows that students have developed a good knowledge of the genre and the capacity to invoke real terror. Technical competence is a strong feature of this attainment. Students in Years 12 and 13 write detailed and original scripts, and routinely write camera directions on others' scripts as a highly effective part of the learning process. They establish valuable dialogue with their teacher in their process of self-evaluation which further helps them to consolidate their learning.

263. In their study of the moving image in Year 13, students study a variety of television game shows in terms of camera angles, types of shot and mise-en-scene. They identify a wide range of audio techniques using correct technical terms and an extensive knowledge of their application. They comment on the quality and style of editing, showing good analytical skills. Students write game shows, showing competent use of ICT. The application of media codes and conventions in this work are key strengths.
264. Students are very well taught. Teachers are competent and knowledgeable. Expectation of students is high. Lesson planning is excellent and reflects both the very good scheme of work and the requirements of the examinations. Explanation is clear and well timed. Questioning is skilful and elicits confident oral responses from students. Teaching and assessment objectives are specific and shared with the class, so students know precisely what they have to learn and, by the end of the lesson, the extent to which they have achieved it. There are planned opportunities for recapitulation and plenary sessions in every lesson which reinforce what has been learned. Key skills are very well taught. In the lesson on the code of practice of the press complaints commission, for example, students were taught the key skills of skim reading. Their reading of J Langer's book on Alberoni's theory was fully supported by the teacher, so that students were able to get through the material and fully understand it. They were then given good, fully supported opportunities to analyse the tabloid text, so that they were able to apply the theory effectively. This significantly improved both their analytical skills and their confidence.
265. Teachers gave good feedback on students' findings in lessons, and so deepened their learning. All learning activities were further supported by well-produced notes, worksheets and additional materials which focused students' attention and helped them to reflect on what they had learned. There are good opportunities for group work which improve students' collaborative skills. The lessons are demanding, but students are interested and prepared to listen carefully and work hard. News stories are up to the minute, and this immediacy of provision is well appreciated by the students who are prepared to concentrate from first to last.
266. Co-ordination of the subject is very good. The teachers work hard and effectively to develop learning materials of high quality, which minimise the adverse effects of inadequate resources; there is insufficient technical assistance. The curriculum is very good. The sequence of tasks in the scheme of work allows skills and knowledge to build up sequentially. Curricular provision is well integrated. Effective management of teaching and learning, and the challenge and interest provided in the lessons have motivated students to continue their course and catch up on missed work. Coursework has been chosen specifically to appeal to students' interests. This has led to self-motivated learning and deadlines that are met. Assessment is a strength and leaves students in no doubt as to what they must do to improve. Teaching and learning are formally monitored and this has served to raise standards.
267. Sixth form media studies were not inspected separately at the last inspection

## HUMANITIES

The main focus was on geography, although history was also sampled. Students in the sixth form have not been following a course in religious education and so the school is not fulfilling statutory requirements. A series of conferences has been planned and the first held this term. In history, a sampling of students' work indicates a high level of proficiency in research skills.

### Geography

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

#### Strengths

- teaching is very good
- students attain in line with the national average at AS level
- GCE A-level attainment was above average in the previous two years

- students have good access to information and communication technology (ICT) and have good private study facilities

Areas for improvement

- increase the numbers of students studying geography so that discussion benefits from a greater variety of views

268. In 2001 no students took A-level geography, but seven students in Year 12 took the new GCE AS examination. The average points score per student was in line with the national average. In 2000 and 1999 there were only two candidates in each year. Attainment in both years was above average for grades A - E, and for the higher grades A - B. The numbers of students choosing geography in the sixth form fluctuate. At the time of the previous inspection about 15 took the subject. Currently there are eight students in Year 12 and four students in Year 13 although seven started the course in Year 12.
269. Students' achievement is satisfactory. Their attainment in geography when they start the sixth form is in line with the national average, and this is being maintained. Students in Year 12 further develop their investigative skills and their ability to reach conclusions based on analysis of data. They are required to undertake an environmental investigation and write a report of up to 2,500 words as part of their assessment for AS-level. Students collect evidence during a field studies week at a specialist centre in Surrey. For example, they collect samples of sediment from the River Tillingbourne at two metre intervals and measure the size of the particles. This is part of the evidence they use to test the hypothesis "that there is a relationship between predicted bank full discharge and sediment size". They also investigate the impact of coastal erosion on the Sussex coast and sea defence schemes, such as that at Seaford. They give class presentations based on their researches into rural change; for example, in the village of Ashwell in Hertfordshire.
270. Year 13 students consider issues of growth in world population, demands on world energy supplies and world climatic change related to use of fossil fuels. For example, they study the outcomes of the Kyoto summit meeting. They acquire their knowledge and understanding by using case-study evidence; for example, they study the effect of HIV/AIDS on the rise of death rates in Malawi. They analyse population pyramid graphs to see the changes in death rates for different age groups. Using information on Australia they find a number of advantages of a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society, for example, tourists wishing to visit Aboriginal settlements. They note, however, that European migration and colonisation interfered with Aboriginal economic, social and religious life and their numbers decreased by the early twentieth century.
271. Teaching is mostly very good. Teachers prepare very thoroughly so that time is fully used, and students have the resources they need to learn well; for example, for a Year 13 lesson looking at the key features of temperate grasslands, the teacher provided overhead projector transparencies so that students could follow the detailed exposition. Students also received a photocopy of this material so that they could refer to it later for revision. Teachers have high expectations that students will follow arguments by concentrating hard and giving their opinions and they are not disappointed. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and the ability to convey this in a meaningful way to students; for example, referring to the capacity of grass to regenerate after drought, the teacher illustrated effectively in a Year 13 lesson the "structural toughness" of prairie grass to grazing pressure and trampling.
272. Students' learning is very effective because they take a keen interest in the topics and show willingness and confidence in giving their opinions. Teachers encourage participation and independence through very thoughtful methods that stimulate discussion. For example, a teacher provided Year 12 students with samples of anonymous students' environmental investigations provided by an examination board and students were then required to assess the quality of the work and grade the answers. After each had provided an evaluation the teacher shared the examiner's views with the class. This provided students with very good insight into their own learning, together with greater awareness of the expected standards for their own answers. Using such techniques as this and sharp questions, teachers stimulate much thinking about the

subject matter and how to answer questions fully. Often students use spider diagrams to expand their thought processes into new directions.

273. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Well-qualified specialist teachers, who keep up-to-date with changes in course specifications and examination structure, teach sixth form geography. At the time of the previous inspection textbooks were urgently needed. This situation was remedied but since then new specifications have been introduced and appropriate textbooks were not available. These have been ordered now. Meanwhile, good use is made of photocopied extracts. Students enjoy the geography courses and their fieldwork. They feel well informed about their targets and progress, and have good access to ICT and private study facilities. However, numbers choosing the subject fluctuate and consistently larger classes would help the continuity of teaching and learning.

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus was on English Literature

### English

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

#### Strengths

- there are good features of teaching: good subject knowledge, perceptive and challenging questioning and appropriate and sequential planning
- relationships are good
- students are well-supported and enjoy the subject

#### Areas for improvement

- ensuring that the level of student performance in GCE A level examination is raised and the proportion of the higher grades A/B increased
- the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning, to become consistent across all sixth form English provision
- the use of assessment for curriculum planning and meeting individual students' needs is insufficiently systematic and rigorous

274. Overall, standards of attainment are unsatisfactory. In 2001 only a third of students who entered for the examination achieved within the grades A – E range and no student achieved the higher grades A/B. This is significantly below the national average. Not all of the students who start the A-level course complete it. In the AS examinations in 2001, the achievement of a majority of students did not satisfactorily match their attainment at GCSE. At the time of the last inspection A-level achievement was below national averages, but was improving. This improvement has not been maintained.
275. Observation in lessons and a scrutiny of samples of students' work confirm that, overall, standards are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory. However, amongst the students on the courses there is a wide range of attainment. In their study of literature, Year 12 students are developing a critical awareness and are beginning to evaluate the text with some sensitivity, particularly to the development of themes and of character. However, too much of their critical analysis is superficial. In their study of "Hamlet", students were over-reliant upon textual notes and commentary and did not recognise the nuances in the language of the play that contribute to the development of the characters and the themes. The levels of reading and understanding of the soliloquies reflected facile assumptions about major passages within the play. Independent thinking and response are limited, although the previous attainment of students suggests they should be capable of higher achievement. Students studying "Othello" in Year 13 are generally not confident in their knowledge and understanding of the play. However, higher attaining students are able to demonstrate critical insight into the text and discuss the views of critical essayists with some assurance.
276. Although students are introduced to a range of literature and show evidence in their written work of independent study, there is little evidence of wider reading amongst the majority of students. In their extended writing, students demonstrate an increasing maturity. They are using a wider vocabulary and show some mastery of structured argument. The writing of lower attaining students is more about events, rather than their effect upon character or subsequent action, and the quality of extended writing is weak. The writing of higher attaining students is both perceptive and sensitive and demonstrates a personal response with critical insight. This was particularly evident in students' writing about Huxley's "Brave New World". When students use ICT for word-processing their work, there is an improvement in the accuracy of their writing.
277. Students show progress in their sixth form English course, both in thinking and writing skills, where teaching is regular and satisfactory. It is particularly evident where the teachers'

expectations are high, where teaching is challenging, and where students are committed and prepared to work independently. In a Year 13 lesson the teacher provided a challenging extract from an essay by William Hazlitt on the nature of poetry. With prompting by the teacher, students were able to recognise the contextual links with an earlier study of John Keats' poetry. However, the effectiveness of the discussion was constrained by their limited understanding of the genre. Progress was more evident in a lesson where Year 12 students recognised the symbolism in contemporary photographs to more ably place First World War poetry in context.

278. Overall, the teaching of A-level English is satisfactory. In the majority of lessons observed it was satisfactory or good. Where teaching is good, the teacher has a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and is able to convey this to students. Lessons are suitably planned and progress sequentially. The questioning of students is both perceptive and inclusive, drawing an increased understanding from them and further challenging them to think for themselves. However, the objectives of the lessons are not always sufficiently clear to students and there is little evaluation of the learning outcomes. Students' written work is marked regularly and thoroughly, and the teachers' comments enable the students to know how they are progressing and how they might improve further. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, planning is sketchy and the activities chosen are not always suitable for their purpose. Students are insufficiently challenged and time is not used effectively. Students' progress is, consequently, less satisfactory.
279. The relationship between the students and their regular teachers is good, being relaxed, yet respectful. The teachers offer praise and encouragement and the students appreciate the support that is offered to them. Students remain focused where teaching is effective, but become distracted when it is not and they do not respond intellectually or productively. The majority of students enjoy the subject and work with some enthusiasm. In discussion, students listen to each other's views and respond in a positive manner. The department has established procedures for the assessment of students' work and progress. Prior attainment is recorded, but these procedures need to be more systematically and rigorously developed, to influence more thoroughly curriculum planning, to inform of students' needs and to raise attainment.
280. The department is led by an experienced teacher, who works hard to ensure commitment to good relationships. There are clear aims for the direction of the subject. Planning reflects the ethos of the school, although costing is insufficiently detailed and the plans lack evaluation strategies. The schemes of work are developing in line with examination requirements, but need to develop further to identify key skills. The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced, and provides equality of access and opportunity for all students. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are regularly undertaken, although not always formally recorded. The department has experienced considerable recruitment difficulties and, at the time of the inspection, not all sixth form teaching was by regular or experienced teachers. The head of department has endeavoured through his support of teachers, by regular meetings and the preparation of lessons, to co-ordinate the work of the department and ensure the progression of examination courses. However, the current staffing situation disadvantages students. Accommodation, although sufficient for the delivery of the curriculum, is of poor quality and inappropriate for sixth form groups. The department has adequate textual and audio-visual resources, but has yet to develop the use of information and communication technology in teaching and learning.

## **Modern foreign languages**

The focus was on Spanish but French was also sampled. In French, one Year 12 and one Year 13 lessons were seen. Standards in French in the sixth form are below average. AS level examination results in 2001 were well below average and lower than expected in relation to the students' GCSE results, and the standards seen during the inspection were a little below average but in line with expectations. Pupils have gaps in their knowledge of both grammar and vocabulary which make it difficult for them to speak or write to the standards expected nationally. Their understanding of both written and spoken French is satisfactory. Students' progress and achievement are satisfactory. Teaching is good. Teachers' knowledge of French is very good indeed but the French language assistant is not always effectively used. Teaching methods are limited by the very small groups size,

but include interesting ways of presenting vocabulary, such as the “graffiti wall” in a Year 12 class and up-to-date French newspaper text in a Year 13 class.

In Spanish, one Year 12 tutorial was seen, and a combined Year 12 and Year 13 lesson and the files of most students were scrutinised. Discussions were held with the students in Year 12 and Year 13, with all the teachers and with the Spanish assistant.

## Spanish

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

### Strengths

- the students’ very good reading skills
- very good attitudes of the students to learning Spanish
- the excellent contribution of the Spanish assistant to students’ understanding of the Spanish language and culture
- teachers’ expertise in the Spanish language

### Areas for improvement

- the attainment of all students in A-level and AS examinations
- revision and completion of the schemes of work, linking them clearly to examination requirements
- improvement in the standards of students’ listening skills
- revision of the assessment policy, linking it closely to examination criteria
- increasing the teachers’ use of Spanish in lessons

281. In 2001 there was only one candidate for each of the AS and A-level examinations, which makes comparison with national averages unreliable. Student numbers in the current Year 12 show an increase on the average numbers since the last inspection, which have been low.
282. Current standards in Spanish are average overall in Year 12. Scrutiny of students’ files showed that standards in reading are very good; most students gain good marks in comprehension and, with minimal guidance, can understand authentic texts containing high register vocabulary and complex sentence structures.
283. In listening, most students attain below average standards; although most understand the spoken language of the Spanish assistant during tutorials, they lack confidence in formal listening exercises. Standards in speaking are average overall. Most students reach above average standards in speaking when they prepare the lesson content in advance; for example, in a Year 12 individual tutorial with the Spanish assistant one student could express her opinions on terrorism clearly, using extended sentences under very good guidance from the assistant and referring to the preparation sheets for this topic. Some students in Year 12 speak hesitantly when in unprepared discussion and are unable to form extended sentences without support from the teacher or text book.
284. Standards of writing are average overall; in some cases they are above average. Scrutiny of students’ files showed that many students are developing a sound topic-based vocabulary in Year 12, for example, related to leisure and tourism and the environment, but some continue to make errors in basic verb forms and spelling. The high attaining students write confidently and accurately.
285. Achievement and progress are satisfactory. All the students have progressed well in reading and writing skills from the basic language required for GCSE. They are gaining confidence in understanding and are using the more sophisticated structure and idiomatic expressions required for AS level. Listening and speaking skills are developing more slowly. One half of the Year 12 students are boys and their achievement and confidence are good. In the current Year 13, achievement is good in relation to the students’ results at AS level.



286. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The students benefit from the very good subject knowledge of the teachers, which develops students' awareness of the Spanish language and the Hispanic cultures. In a joint Year 12 and Year 13 lesson in which Mexican traditions were studied within a listening task, the teacher explained some cultural differences between Spain and Mexico. This lesson also highlighted the fact that, in spite of their very good subject knowledge, teachers do not consistently use Spanish to deliver lessons. Consequently, students do not develop their listening and speaking skills rapidly enough in Year 12; however, the contribution of the Spanish assistant is excellent. Students are provided with a wide range of authentic reading texts from the Internet as a preparation for tutorials, enabling students to develop reading, speaking and listening with the Spanish assistant and time is used efficiently. For example, in a Year 12 tutorial the student's good preparation of an article about current terrorism enabled her to understand and reuse the appropriate vocabulary and expressions confidently.
287. In routine lessons, time is sometimes used less well through lack of clear focus on examination objectives, and by using class time for tasks which can be completed by the students as home study. In the Year 12 and 13 joint lesson, the students used much of the lesson for preparing a listening task and copying information from the board, when home preparation with tapes would have been more appropriate. The draft scheme of work does not currently give a framework for lesson planning, with detailed and purposeful progression towards examination requirements.
288. The academic and personal guidance given to students is satisfactory. In Year 12 teachers support students well with frequent marking of assignments, many of which are graded according to general examination outcomes; however, this does not result in teachers setting targets according to students' individual language needs. Teachers correct individual language points very clearly giving full information on specific points of grammar; for example, in the formation of compound tenses. However, students rarely correct sections of their marked assignments and therefore do not always fully eliminate errors in basic language. Teachers need to analyse examination results in detail and take action in teaching and assessment methods in order to improve performance in subsequent years. One student nearly gave up the course in the past, because she did not fully understand why she had gained low marks in a previous examination.
289. Discussion with the students and lesson observations show that the students enjoy learning Spanish and are prepared to work hard; the attitudes of both boys and girls to learning the language are very good. The students have very good relationships with their teachers.
290. The teaching of key skills is satisfactory overall; students develop communication skills very well; they are encouraged to communicate clearly in writing and to listen carefully; many students use the Internet and word processing well in preparing and presenting their assignments. However, opportunities should be increased for students to support their language learning through independent study.
291. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Although the teachers have a very strong commitment to the achievement of the students, the department does not yet have a clear overall framework for this to be accomplished. The scheme of work needs to link clearly with examination requirements and form a good basis for lesson planning; the policy on assessment should be comprehensively revised; and the teachers' use of Spanish in lessons should be increased.