

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **THE ROYAL LIBERTY SCHOOL**

Romford

LEA area: London Borough of Havering

Unique reference number: 102343

Headteacher: Mr Mark Morrall

Reporting inspector: Dr David Benstock

20243

Dates of inspection: 22 - 25 April 2002

Inspection number: 190511

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 to 16 years
Gender of students:	Boys
School address:	Upper Brentwood Road Romford Havering
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Garry Woodman
Date of previous inspection:	February 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20243	David Benstock	<i>Registered inspector</i>		What sort of school? Standards; Teaching. Leadership and Management.
9472	John Edmond	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Attitudes, values and personal development; Care for students; Partnership with parents.
3958	Maureen Cawdron	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Literacy.	
3643	Derek Jones	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Numeracy; Information and communication technology.	
22360	Barry Wright	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science.	Learning resources; Accommodation.
1990	Graham Preston	<i>Team inspector</i>	Design and technology; Business studies.	
15372	Patricia Walker	<i>Team inspector</i>	History.	Staffing.
11300	Barry Smith	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography; Special educational needs.	
1240	John King	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art and design.	
31705	John Mason	<i>Team inspector</i>	Music.	
18888	Jan Boulton	<i>Team inspector</i>	Physical education; Sociology; Equal opportunities.	Personal, social, and health education.
2494	Michael Newton	<i>Team inspector</i>	Religious education.	Curriculum; Spiritual, moral, social cultural education.
27666	John Dockrell	<i>Team inspector</i>	Modern languages.	Assessment.
4486	Michael Weller	<i>Team inspector</i>	Drama; Media studies; English as an additional language.	

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
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33 Kingsway  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Royal Liberty School is an 11 to 16 comprehensive school with 573 boys on roll. The numbers are increasing, and the current Year 7 was oversubscribed in 2001. Attainment on entry is broadly average. The school is situated on a pleasant site in Havering and takes students from a wide geographic area incorporating more than 40 feeder primary schools. The main building is listed by English Heritage and dates from 1769. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is close to the national average. The majority of students are white and mainly of UK heritage. There is a small minority representing a mix of ethnic backgrounds. The percentage with English as an additional language is slightly higher than in most schools. One seventh of the students are on the register for special educational needs, which is about average. The percentage with statements is a little above average.

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

This is an effective school. It has moved from a period of decline to one of significant improvement and now offers its students a good standard of education. It has developed many strengths and is well placed to address the areas needing attention. Standards of attainment at age 14 are now close to average. Standards are below average at age 16. The work found in Year 10 is of a higher quality overall than in Year 11. The achievement of students overall has been satisfactory. Teaching and learning are, with isolated exceptions, consistently good and there is evidence of very good or excellent provision. The headteacher is a very good leader and his leadership team is effective in managing the school. The governing body is committed to securing improvement. The school has incurred a large deficit in its budget and is taking steps with the local education authority to re-establish financial stability. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- It provides good teaching that leads to good learning.
- It develops good relationships between students and teachers that result in good behaviour.
- Improved standards of attainment are achieved at age 14.
- Provision for students with special educational needs is good.
- It fosters good links with parents.
- It monitors and supports students' personal development well.
- It provides a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- There is very good leadership.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Standards of attainment, especially at age 16, by:
  - \* improving the monitoring, evaluation and support for teaching in all subject areas so that good practice is shared;
  - \* developing consistency of use of assessment data within departments;
  - \* ensuring resources are at least adequate.
- The use of information and communication technology across all subjects of the curriculum to comply fully with statutory requirements.
- Provision for spiritual development; the school should make adequate provision for a daily act of collective worship.
- Provision for art and design at ages 11 to 14.
- Quality and use of the accommodation, including cleanliness, standards of hygiene and site safety.
- The continuing budget deficit.
- Below average attendance rates, and punctuality.

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was inspected in 1996 and deemed to require special measures. It was re-inspected in 2000 by Her Majesty's Inspectors and whilst no longer needing special measures still had serious weaknesses. Since that time, there have been considerable further improvements and the inspection team considers that the school no longer has serious weaknesses. Standards of attainment in national tests at age 14 have risen and were close to the national average in 2001. These are reflected in the work seen in Year 9. Standards in the GCSE examinations have been static and were still well below average in 2001 but there is evidence of improvement in current work seen, particularly in Year 10. Learning has improved and is now good as a result of the consistently good, and often very good, teaching. Students' attitudes and behaviour have greatly improved. Attendance rates that were well below average are now increasing, approaching a level close to average in the first two terms of this academic year. The strength of management is now more secure across the school due to the very good leadership of the headteacher and the good management skills of the leadership team. The governing body continues to develop an increasingly proactive role in supporting and shaping the direction of the school. A long-term plan to address the budget deficit, and to secure cost effective levels of staffing and curriculum has been agreed with the local education authority.

## STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards achieved by 16 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	E	E	E	E

**Key**

*well above average*    A

*above average*        B

*average*                    C

*below average*         D

*well below average*    E



Results in the GCSE examinations are well below the national average when comparing the students' average point scores or the proportion of students gaining five or more grades A\* to C. The average attainment in 2001 was well below that in schools having a similar number of students eligible for free school meals. It was very low compared to schools with students having similar prior attainment at age 14. The achievement of students from age 14 to 16 was for this group unsatisfactory. However, inspection of the work in Year 11 reveals improvement. In English and mathematics, standards are still below those expected for average grades at age 16. In science and many foundation subjects, standards are in line with expectation. Targets set for 2002 may not be reached, but the capacity to reach and exceed those for 2003 is high.

Attainment at age 14 has risen and in 2001 was in line with the national average in English and mathematics, below average in science and close to average in most other subjects. The performance in English was above the national average for boys. The standards of work seen at age 14 reflect this improved attainment, except in art and design where performance has fallen below expectation. Standards are particularly good in drama and geography. Overall achievement is satisfactory. Students with special educational needs are achieving in line with their peers due to the good level of support they receive. Literacy standards are satisfactory overall, with strengths in listening and reading. The standard of writing is generally below average across the school. The standards in numeracy, particularly use of number, are satisfactory. The use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped in subject areas largely due to lack of access to computers.

## STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Students display positive attitudes to learning. They show interest and a desire to improve their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Students respond to the clear guidelines within lessons. Outside behaviour is mainly civilised, but excessive litter is dropped.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Students are friendly to each other and respectful to staff. They collaborate well together on tasks. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. In the last academic year attendance was below the national average but the school has improved attendance, which has risen during this year. Unauthorised absence has been halved.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. The quality of teaching is very good in mathematics, design and technology, drama, geography and media studies. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are conscientious over lesson planning. Expectations are high. The pace of learning is brisk and emphasises the needs of boys. Good relationships are established so that learning is supported well. Literacy and numeracy provision is satisfactory. Information and communication technology is satisfactory in discrete lessons but is not used well in subjects to enhance learning. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but the use of assessment is not yet sufficiently

rigorous. Marking is regular but does not give enough written feedback on how to improve. Homework is given regularly although the quality is variable. Learning by students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum.	Satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and balanced with opportunities such as drama provided throughout. Extra-curricular provision is good. The school does not, however, fulfil statutory requirements for the delivery of information and communication technology across the curriculum and does not ensure adequate provision for a daily act of collective worship.
Provision for students with special educational needs.	Good. Provision for these students enables them to make good progress. Students are fully integrated into all aspects of the school.
Provision for students with English as an additional language.	Good. Students are well supported with appropriate resources.
Provision for students' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.	Satisfactory. The provision for moral and social development is good. Students take responsibility and respect the views of others. Cultural awareness is adequately promoted. Spiritual development is unsatisfactory as there is no planned provision for it.
How well the school cares for its students.	Good. Procedures to ensure child protection, health and safety are good. Aspects of site safety require attention. Welfare support is good.

The school has established very positive relationships with parents, who are supportive of the efforts and work of the teachers. Information provided by the school is of good quality.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff.	Very good. The headteacher has a very clear vision. There is a strong commitment by key staff to bring about improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities.	The governors are committed to the school and increasingly take a more proactive role in its work than before.
The school's evaluation of its performance.	Governors, the headteacher and senior staff are very clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They review performance data well and have established clear plans for raising attainment.
The strategic use of resources.	The finances are well monitored and controlled. The strategic use of resources is linked to the financial recovery plan currently being implemented. The level of day-to-day resources, including those for ICT in departments, is too low, although the school applies the principles of best value in its provision.

After many changes a year ago, staffing is now more settled. There are still unfilled vacancies, and four teachers are unqualified. Accommodation overall is unsatisfactory and in need of repair and maintenance. Some facilities are unsanitary and in very poor condition.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school expects students to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• The students like school.</li> <li>• The students are making good progress with their work.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable about approaching school with a problem.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality and quantity of homework.</li> <li>• Aspects of behaviour in some classes.</li> <li>• Information about students' progress.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the strengths identified by parents. The areas identified for improvement were investigated further. Homework is set regularly but the quality can be variable. Often, students do not write the details in planners, and sometimes they complete the work quickly in school. Behaviour is good overall, but some pockets of unsatisfactory behaviour occur and the school deals with these effectively. The inclusion unit is used well to allow students who misbehave to undertake individual work under close supervision. Reports to parents are satisfactory and are subject to continual improvement.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. When students enter the school at age 11 their attainment in national tests, in English, mathematics and science, is broadly around the national average. Their verbal, quantitative and non-verbal standardised scores in cognitive abilities tests are also generally close to average, with the exception of the current Year 11 students, whose range of attainment on entry is below that of other year groups.
2. In the National Curriculum tests at age 14, in 2001, the proportion of students gaining the target Level 5, or higher, was close to the national average for all students in English and mathematics, and below average in science. The proportion gaining Level 6 was above average in English, close to average in mathematics and below average in science. Attainment, as measured by the mean point score per student, was in line with the overall national average in English and mathematics, and below in science. In English, it was above the average for boys.
3. Over the past five years, standards at age 14, that had fallen to be well below national average in 1998, have now risen, and have risen significantly since the most recent inspection in 2000. The overall trend has been above the national trend in core subject attainment. All core subjects have shown improvement, but the most significant has been in English.
4. The overall attainment in 2001 was in line with the average in similar schools, defined as those admitting a similar percentage of students eligible for free school meals. The attainment for English was above the average in such similar schools. Attainment was also broadly in line with that in schools where students have a similar range of prior attainment at age 11 in all three core subjects. This indicates that progress was as would be expected from age 11 to 14. A reflection of this satisfactory achievement is in the school's analysis for 2001. This shows the majority of students having progressed by at least one level, with the proportion progressing two levels being about one third in English, one quarter in mathematics and one fifth in science.
5. In the non-core subjects, the 'teacher assessments' for 2001 indicate above average results in geography, art and physical education, and results were broadly in line with average in history, design and technology, music, modern languages and information and communication technology (ICT).
6. Results in the GCSE examinations of 2001 were, overall, well below the national average. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A\* to C was well below average, and the proportion gaining at least one grade A\* to G was very low compared to the national figure. However, the statistics are affected by the high degree of absence that prevailed around that time.
7. Over the period from 1997, just after the last full OFSTED inspection, to 1999, the percentage of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades fell sharply in the aftermath of the school being deemed to require special measures. The fall has been halted, and a little improvement has been realised in the last two years, although the attainment in 2001 was

clearly well under the school's target. The average GCSE point score in 2001 was also well below national average, as it had been for the previous two years. The percentage of students gaining at least five GCSE passes at grades A\* to G has fallen continuously each year, although the rate of fall has decreased.

8. The overall results in 2001 were well below those in similar schools, as indicated by the proportion of students eligible for free school meals. In comparison with students in schools where there is a similar level of prior attainment at age 14, the percentage gaining five or more A\* to C grades was very low, showing that the achievement of these students from age 14 to 16 had been very low by national comparison.

9. Within the overall picture, some subjects performed well. For example, attainment in geography, drama and art and design was above national average. However, all three core subjects were well below average in that year.

10. Standards of work seen in lessons and students' written work reflect the significant improvement that is taking place in the school, and is already manifest in the national test results at age 14. For the current Year 9 students, overall levels of achievement are consistent with expectation for their ages. Standards observed in English, mathematics and science are similar to those represented in the previous national tests, being close to average. They are above expectation in geography, drama and physical education, and below in religious education. The quality of work in art lacks range and detail and the current standard is below that to be expected from previous years, but results from the overall unsatisfactory provision for teaching in this subject. The standards found in design and technology are well below those expected.

11. The overall achievement of current students in Year 9 from their entry to the school has been satisfactory, but evidence of work in Year 7 shows a greater rate of progress for these more recent entrants. Lower attaining students are making good progress in most subjects, especially where the programmes of work are carefully devised to match the need. The progress of higher attaining students is often good, as a result of extensive school support, very positive student attitudes to work and high expectations in many subjects.

12. Work seen from current Year 11 students shows improvement in standard compared with the attainment of the previous year group. The overall level of knowledge and understanding in English and mathematics is better than that evident for the previous Year 11, although it is still below average. However, subject knowledge, understanding and investigative skills are overall consistent with average attainment in science. Drama, media studies and geography are strong areas, but business studies and sociology indicate a depth of knowledge well below average, although observation was limited in these two areas. The quality and range of work seen in design and technology and GCSE ICT is insufficient to ensure higher grades, and this is significantly linked to a lack of suitable resources. Weaknesses in students' wider knowledge in religious education and history are evident, but in most other subjects the work is consistent with average performance. Overall achievement from age 14 appears satisfactory for higher and lower attaining students, and overall GCSE targets are closer to being met this year.

13. In the current Year 10, standards overall are significantly higher. The depth of knowledge in the core subjects is almost universally greater, and development of skills is more pronounced. Module tests and rigorous internal assessments support the findings in lesson observation. The rate of progress is significantly better than in Year 11, and in many

subjects, including mathematics and English, the achievement over the first six months of the courses has been very good. Higher attaining students are often making very good progress, due to focussed assessment and challenging teaching. GCSE performance is justifiably predicted to exceed targets set for this year group.

14. Attainment of students on the special educational needs (SEN) register is overall below the national average, and sometimes well below, at the end of Year 9. In 2001, all of the SEN students taking GCSE examinations gained at least one grade at grades A\* to G. Three-quarters gained two passes, and over half of those entered gained three passes at grades A\* to G. No students on the register were excluded from the examinations. In Year 11, current tracking sheets, comparing end of Year 9 levels and mock GCSE results, give targets that show SEN students have the potential to achieve well. Only in art do special needs students fail to make satisfactory progress in lessons. In other subjects, progress is at least satisfactory and in line with that of their peers. In many lessons progress is good. This is equally true of students in Years 10 and 11, as well as Years 7 to 9.

15. Attainment for students with English as an additional language (EAL) is good. They attain as well as other students. Achievement is good. They make good progress; in some cases very good progress. For example, one student, who had no understanding of English when he entered the school two years ago, is expected to attain GCSE grade C for his English coursework. All the students with EAL in the school are highly motivated, with a strong work ethic. They are all placed in sets appropriate to their ability and are often held up as examples to other students. They mix well with other students, and are well supported by the school systems that help them to form friendships. They participate well in group work.

16. Standards of literacy are average overall. Most students have good listening skills, but clarity in speaking, as well as the appropriate use of a formal register, is below average. Reading development is satisfactory, and most students' reading skills are sufficient to cope with the demands of the curriculum. The standard of writing is below average. Whilst many students' writing is satisfactory at a basic level, the quality of extended writing is still limited and spelling is often weak.

17. Standards of numeracy overall across the curriculum are average. Most students handle basic number work satisfactorily, but lower attaining students' levels of numeracy are significantly weaker. Number is used particularly well in geography, and ideas of measurement are acquired early. In science, students use simple formulae well. Spatial awareness is not generally well developed as a concept due to lack of opportunities in contributory subjects such as art or design and technology.

18. The standards demonstrated by students in the use of ICT in subjects across the curriculum are below expectation, as the provision and range of opportunity does not meet National Curriculum requirements. Although average standards are reached in Year 9, in the discrete ICT lessons related to QCA programmes of study, the difficult access to computers makes application in subjects unsatisfactory. In Year 11, skills of basic word processing are sound. The Internet is used, often at home, but the more mature use of software involving data analysis, spreadsheets and 'Powerpoint' is very limited.

## Attitudes, values and personal development

19. Students enjoy coming to school. Attitudes to learning are positive, especially when teachers' expectations and the standard of teaching are consistently high, and where the teacher fully engages the attention of the class. This was seen in most classes across the year groups, notably in the three core subjects and modern foreign languages. Students apply themselves well to their lessons. For example, in one Year 11 modern language class boys showed maturity in their application to work, and high levels of active participation. All year groups display interest and involvement in their lessons, as typified by a Year 7 English lesson, where students concentrated hard, absorbed the story and enjoyed its humour. However, a small number of students display negative attitudes at times, as for example in a design and technology lesson where students were casual and lacked application. Students have a desire to improve their work, and take pride in the outcome. This was evident in many lessons. Students work co-operatively and many examples of students taking responsibility for their own work were seen.

20. The standard of behaviour in class is good overall, with students responding positively to firm management and a fast pace. Behaviour in lessons is unsatisfactory only occasionally, and usually occurs where the teacher fails to plan sufficiently, or to provide challenging tasks. However, high standards of behaviour in class prevail overwhelmingly, with students responding to good teaching with an appropriate sense of urgency. The good behaviour and attitudes make a significant contribution to students' learning.

21. Behaviour round the school is mostly civilised, with students behaving sensibly when arriving at and leaving school, and most wait quite patiently outside their classrooms. They negotiate the narrow staircases between lessons without major incident. Students behave well at break time, and when queuing for and eating lunch. Respect for property is generally satisfactory, although there is far too much litter being dropped. Some graffiti were seen on an outbuilding and in the boys' main washroom, which had also been vandalised. A small delegation of students complained, with reason, to the inspectors about its state.

22. Last year the number of exclusions was high: five permanent, and 68 fixed term, involving 44 students. However, the school is doing everything possible to reduce these levels, including the introduction of an inclusion unit and, shortly, a full time behavioural support teacher. Most exclusions last for no more than five days, and students are re-integrated unobtrusively through the pastoral support programme. The school maintains proper records of exclusions, and follows the local education authority (LEA) reporting system.

23. The school impresses on new students the need to consider others, and most react very positively. There is occasional bullying, but students are confident that, if bullying is reported, the school deals with it fast. Respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs is at least satisfactory, and most students are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others, though some Year 11 boys do not realise how intimidating they can appear to those in Year 7, particularly at break time when playing football.

24. Many students take an active part in the day-to-day life of the school, as seen in the enthusiastic support for the school council, whose advice is welcomed by senior staff. There are many further opportunities throughout the school for students to take responsibility. These include the prefect system and a new Year 8 mediation scheme, where 20 students have been trained to help solve disputes. Students take up the school's popular extra-curricular activities with enthusiasm.

25. Relationships amongst students, and between staff and students, are good. Most students are courteous to each other and friendly to staff. Students relate positively to each other and work well together in lessons, both in pairs and groups. They react politely when addressed, and are friendly and helpful to visitors. Throughout the inspection they co-operated positively with inspectors, and the groups interviewed were cheerful and forthcoming. The school manages to promote an overwhelmingly tolerant and supportive society.

26. At the time of the last inspection school attendance was below the national average, as a result of high levels of unauthorised absence. Attendance had fallen in each of the previous three academic years and in 2000/2001 was well below the national average. In that year authorised absence at 9.6 per cent was well above the national average, and unauthorised absence at 2.2 per cent was double the national average. However, attendance is now improving fast, as students appreciate what is to be gained from being at school. In the first two terms of this year there has been a marked improvement, with attendance increasing by two per cent, overall reaching close to the 90 per cent mark, although it is below this in Year 11. Unauthorised absence has halved in that time. Statutory requirements for recording and reporting attendance are fully met. Most students display a responsible attitude to punctuality, though there is a substantial core that have been late on more than ten occasions so far this year. Students return from breaks punctually. The daily registration and tutor periods start on time, and the time is generally well used.

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

27. The quality of teaching overall is good, and leads, in almost every subject, to good learning. Teaching is very good in mathematics, geography, design and technology, and drama. It is unsatisfactory in art, particularly with the younger age range. Media Studies is taught very well in Years 10 and 11. Religious education teaching and learning are satisfactory, but some aspects within this are weaker, for example where students are not made sufficiently aware of their progress. Information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactorily taught as a discrete subject, but it is not sufficiently established as an integral part of the teaching in subjects, resulting in some loss of opportunity for extended interest and application by students.

28. There have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching over the past five years since the last full inspection of 1996, and since the re-inspection of 2000. In lessons observed during this inspection, 93 percent were at least satisfactory, and two-thirds were good or very good. Just a small number of lessons were unsatisfactory. These were mainly in art, with a newly qualified and inexperienced teacher.

29. Teachers have good subject knowledge themselves, and use this wisely with a variety of techniques. They focus well on the individual needs of students and ensure that all participate. Lesson planning is consistently good in most subjects, and is one of the main factors in the improvement of teaching that has taken place. Taking one example, in mathematics, clear progression is incorporated to enable students to move quickly through areas of increasing complexity. The most effective planning ensures that students are fully challenged according to their capability.

30. Expectations are high, and many teachers use skilful questioning to reinforce learning, extend knowledge and challenge students' thinking. The enthusiasm conveyed by many teachers is infectious and results in a high level of motivation and aspiration. Reluctant participants are drawn into discussion well, as in subjects such as English and history. Expectations are not as high in a minority of subjects, for example, art and to a lesser extent,



religious education. In these cases, the level of challenge is insufficient to enable the acquisition of even basic knowledge, or gain understanding.

31. Teachers use a range of methods that are sensitive to the learning needs of the students. In particular, the learning needs of boys are targeted, by ensuring activities that are varied, of short duration and practical where appropriate. The pace of learning is generally brisk and effective. In most lessons, students' individual strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified early and this leads to good student - teacher relationships. Students respond well to the very good level of support provided in lessons and also after school classes. They are made aware of their standard and what is needed to improve. Good opportunities are taken to encourage collaborative work, for example in drama or in science. A barrier to learning by the older students is the residue of lower expectations of them in their early years at the school.

32. Basic skills of literacy are taught well in English, and those of numeracy in mathematics. The teaching is variable in extent and quality in other subjects of the curriculum. Exercises are commonly given for extended writing and oracy, and this is effective in subjects such as modern languages and history. Good opportunities are taken to develop key elements of numeracy, in accordance with the National Strategy, in geography and science. However, opportunities are missed for literacy development in physical education. Skills related to ICT are not assimilated well, as they are not incorporated sufficiently into lesson planning. Opportunities to develop these skills and enhance understanding are again missed.

33. Teaching of personal and social education by form tutors is at least satisfactory, and occasionally very good. Two very good lessons were seen, where very good relationships led to students' full understanding of relevant social implications of advertising material in the media. Teaching was less focused when teachers had little expertise in the topic and inadequate resources, for example, when teaching telephone technique in preparation for work experience.

34. Assessment is carried out regularly, and teachers maintain careful records. Although under-performing students are identified, assessment data to set targets for individuals and to refine planning is not sufficiently or consistently used. Marking is regular, but does not always give enough written feedback to students on how to improve. There is variation and inconsistency between subjects in the quality of marking. In some subjects, such as design and technology, it is very good, whereas in English there is lack of detail in evaluation. Good practice is found where teachers plan to focus on the assessment of a few students during the lesson.

35. Homework is given regularly but it is not always recorded in student planners. This can lead to misunderstanding by parents, who seek to support the work of their children at home. Homework is satisfactory in quality in general, and in the best examples it reinforces and extends the understanding through problem solving exercises. Some homework, however, just provides opportunities for students to complete work started in class.

36. Learning by students with special educational needs (SEN) is almost entirely in classes in which they are fully integrated with their peers. They receive good in-class support from teachers and the team of experienced learning support assistants. Individual education plans are prepared well. They are clear and contain detailed information and an achievable number of targets. Some confusion in the use of individual education plans remains in departments. A system of link teachers, who represent their department's approach to special educational needs, is effective, as is the process of reviewing targets. All learning support assistants keep very good information on students. Targets that are

specific to subjects, rather than being general, are being increasingly used. Basic learning resources, many of which concentrate on improving literacy skills, are provided for students with special educational needs.

37. The very few students with English as an additional language, (EAL) are supported well through individual teacher input, and make good progress alongside others. The teaching and learning of students with EAL, overall is good. It is very good when there is additional support within a lesson. All students with EAL receive some support from an EAL specialist teacher within lessons. The liaison between the subject teacher and the support teacher is very good. The support teacher also prepares an additional specific plan appropriate to the supported student. Appropriate strategies are employed. For example, in an English lesson on Macbeth, the support teacher used picture prompts, a dual-language dictionary and a story map. In a design and technology lesson literacy support consisted of one to one discussion on the fine distinctions between GCSE grades. In a Year 9 mathematics lesson a helpful visual worksheet was employed.

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

38. The school provides an appropriate range of learning experiences for students of all ages and levels of prior attainment. The curriculum is sufficiently broad and relevant to meet the needs of the students, and all have access to it. In addition to National Curriculum subjects, students in Years 7 to 9 study drama and as part of the option programme in Years 10 and 11 students can study media studies and a GNVQ course in information communication technology (ICT). All students in both key stages study religious education. Higher-attaining students can take a second modern foreign language from Year 8 onwards.

39. The provision for ICT to support learning in subjects across the curriculum is unsatisfactory and does not meet National Curriculum requirements. Time allocations are mostly satisfactory. However, in Years 10 and 11 the amount of time allocated to science is below that recommended, and affects standards. Further, the amount of time allocated to personal, social and health education (PSHE), delivered, as it is, in a one-hour lesson every two weeks, is not enough to cover all aspects in sufficient depth.

40. The planning and coverage of personal and social education is, however, satisfactory overall. The subject is co-ordinated by a newly appointed member of staff and the pastoral teams have developed the programme of lessons. Topics meet requirements and include bullying, cultural awareness, safety, friendships, health and sex education. There is good provision for careers education within this personal, social and health education (PSHE), programme. Part of this careers programme is a two weeks work experience in Year 10, with preparation and follow up in PSHE time; this is accredited by a national organisation. The school is planning to deliver the new citizenship programme through subjects, and the PSHE co-ordinator is presently conducting an audit of both PSHE and citizenship throughout the school. In some subjects, such as science, citizenship lessons are already planned, but this very good practice is not yet found in all departments.

41. There is a very thorough school policy dealing with all aspects of literacy, which provides a clear statement of the school's position. The school has put in place several measures to improve literacy, which vary in their effectiveness. There is good provision for literacy in personal and social development lessons, where oral presentation skills are developed. In many subjects including design and technology and mathematics teachers follow school policy and are usually rigorous for example in the correction of errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, the provision is not consistent for all subjects

across the school. Additional literacy classes, staffed by senior teachers, are provided for Year 7 before school.

42. Strategies for teaching numeracy are satisfactory across departments, and are particularly good in geography, mathematics and science. In other subjects the provision is more limited. Preparations are in hand for a whole school policy, led by the mathematics department.

43. Students with special educational needs are fully integrated into all aspects of school life and have access to the same full curriculum as their peers. Most students with learning difficulties are identified in primary schools, and good links with these feeder schools means that appropriate support is available immediately on entry to the school. Students are not withdrawn from lessons, unless they are attending the inclusion unit, so there is no interruption of the curriculum.

44. Good support for students with English as an additional language (EAL) ensures their full access to the curriculum. Where students have specific needs, they receive additional support outside lessons. For example, students at the initial stages of learning English, and new to the country, attend induction sessions. Students receive extra help in examination preparation when necessary, sometimes on Saturdays. They make full use of this. When appropriate, students are encouraged to take home languages at GCSE Level. Recent examples are Italian and Mandarin. Opportunities are taken to recognise and celebrate home languages. For example, in the learning support area there is a display of 'Hello' and 'Goodbye' in all the students' home languages, but this could be developed further.

45. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, including competitive sport and some challenging outdoor pursuits, is organised by the school, and participation rates are good. This is a strength of the school. Significant extra-curricular opportunities are provided for involvement in drama, dance music and art. Students also can continue their learning of subjects outside the school day, particularly in the upper school where most provide opportunity for further support. Gifted and talented students have opportunities to attend master classes organised by the local education authority (LEA), and to participate in specialist competitions such as the World Class Tests. The school is beginning to identify these students systematically, and plans a more rigorous approach to meeting their needs.

46. The school does not fully comply with the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all students. There is a programme of weekly themes followed in the two main assemblies of the week, and form tutors are expected to encourage reflection on these themes in form time. However, practice is not consistent. The assemblies observed, whilst orderly and worthwhile occasions, did not constitute an act of worship and did not contribute to students' spiritual development.

47. Overall, the school's provision for personal development, involving moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. However, the provision for spiritual development itself is unsatisfactory. There is no planned provision, and as a result opportunities are missed in lessons for reflection on personal belief and meaning. Although planning is inconsistent, there are examples of good practice as seen in subjects such as science, drama and physical education.

48. The school has clear expectations for student behaviour and for mutual respect. The students are clear about these and are taught about the consequences of their actions. In lessons and about the school, adults provide a good example and set a good moral tone. In these ways the school makes it clear that it is an inclusive and caring community. In some subjects, such as science, geography, design and technology and religious education,

ethical aspects of topics are dealt with well as they arise in the course of their work. In the assemblies seen on the theme of leadership, the issue of good and evil outcomes was explored.

49. In most subjects, there are good opportunities for developing social skills through paired and group working. There is good provision through the wide programme of extra-curricular activities, particularly in drama and physical education. The inter-house activities organised by the physical education department involve a significant number of students. Several of the regular clubs, such as the reading and homework club, are a haven for the more vulnerable members of the school, and demonstrate the school's commitment to being an inclusive community. The PSHE, programme provides a sound base for social and moral provision. An interesting lesson was seen where students were being encouraged to empathise with blind people through blindfolded activities.

50. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory overall, although there is room for improvement in multicultural areas. Subjects such as English, drama, and modern foreign languages make good contributions, and music and religious education have some good multicultural aspects. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that promote cultural awareness, and a sound range of visits and visitors into school that provide students with a first hand experience of their own and other cultures.

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

51. Pastoral care is delivered very effectively through a form and year structure, overseen by the deputy headteachers. In order to maintain continuity of student care and to develop positive relationships with parents, tutors move with their tutor groups right up the school, while the deputy heads of school retain their positions. The very good standards of support and guidance to students, and of provision for their welfare, make a very positive contribution to standards and help students to feel happy and secure. Form tutors use the daily tutorial period well. The provision represents good improvement since the time of the last inspection when it was reported that overall provision for their personal development was unco-ordinated.

52. The school has a welcoming and friendly atmosphere. Pastoral staff know their students very well and students confidently turn to them or other members of staff for help. One Year 10 student commented, 'they support you in everything you do'. The high quality of co-operation and liaison between all staff on pastoral matters is an important feature of the school. Parents welcome the school's comprehensive measures for the smooth induction of new students in Year 7. The good arrangements for transfer to further education or for training for employment ensure that students move on with confidence. The school complies fully with child protection guidelines, and liaison arrangements with social services and other external agencies are good.

53. At the time of the last inspection it was reported that there were satisfactory arrangements for students' welfare health and safety. Currently, the school has developed comprehensive measures for dealing with health and safety requirements and for risk assessment, though they are not always effective. There is too much litter, especially round the edges of the site, and parts of the school, notably the sports hall and pavilion, are dirty. The boys' washrooms and lavatories are distinctly unpleasant, both in the main block

and especially in the pavilion. Current arrangements for separating pedestrians and vehicles, particularly on the route across the playing fields during break periods, are unsatisfactory. Provision for medical care and first aid are satisfactory. Regular tests are carried out on equipment. Students know the evacuation procedure in the event of fire.

54. The school operates very effective measures for monitoring and improving attendance, particularly the setting of individual attendance targets for all students, and it has developed a strong working relationship with the education welfare service. However, attendance is still below the national average and not enough action is yet taken to reduce lateness.

55. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are clearly set out in the student planner; they work very well and students consider them fair. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and promote an orderly and cheerful atmosphere throughout the school. These expectations are fully realised by the standards of behaviour observed. Bullying and oppressive behaviour are generally dealt with effectively, but the school has some concerns about occasional racism, and is currently reviewing and strengthening its behaviour management procedures. Parents feel the new inclusion unit is providing positive benefits, and are happy that inappropriate behaviour is dealt with rapidly and effectively.

56. The measures for monitoring and supporting students' personal development are very good, with students being given extensive opportunities for taking responsibility. A very effective feature is the new individual action planning system, which maintains a close eye on personal progress, and which the boys take seriously.

57. There are good procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress. The assessment co-ordinator provides basic data, and ensures that procedures are in place. National Curriculum Levels and GCSE grades are used well for assessment, marking and reports to parents. As a result, students are gaining a good understanding of their current performance and quality of learning. In several subject areas there are displays of National Curriculum Level requirements, and students record their own levels in their exercise books. In drama, there is particularly good practice, where students assess the performance of others to give them insight into the subject-specific requirements of levels. There are inconsistencies, especially where staff have joined the school recently and need some guidance. Target setting is now in place, although targets do not generally include subject-specific needs of the next level, as well as the level itself. There has been continuing good progress on assessment systems since the last inspection.

58. There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring and supporting students' academic progress. All teachers are supplied with tracking sheets to measure performance in their subject against each student's overall attainment. This enables teachers to identify under-achievement. Timetable time is allocated to a well-structured system of individual action plans. This enables students and teachers to discuss and agree targets for improvement. A good feature of the system is the requirement for students to assess for themselves ways to improve in general areas such as attendance, behaviour and participation. This is in addition to target setting in subject areas.

59. The overall use of assessment to guide planning is satisfactory, but there is insufficient depth and rigour in the analysis of performance data, especially within departments, to evaluate achievement in relation to national expectations. Heads of faculty carry out a basic analysis on test and examination results, identifying areas for curriculum improvement. Faculties use the termly assessments to review students' placements in sets.

60. The school meets fully the statutory requirements for provision as outlined in students' statements of special educational needs (SEN). The SEN department has switched very efficiently to the new Code of Practice, and all teachers hold an up to date register. Progress of students is carefully tracked in line with all other students and review of individual education plans (IEPs) and statements are carried out regularly, with dates clearly marked on the register.

61. All students with English as an additional language, at whatever stages of learning English, are regularly assessed; they all have an individual education programme and targets are set and reviewed every half term. This is a strength. Class teachers are aware of these IEPs, and refer to them and include them in their lesson planning.

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

62. Parents are pleased with the overall improvements in the school in recent years. As was expressed by parents in the questionnaire, students indicate that they enjoy coming to school. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents considered that their children are making good progress at school. Most parents think that discipline is much improved and that students' behaviour is now good; this was confirmed by the inspection. They see teaching as good, despite regrets over past high levels of staff turnover. Parents acknowledge that students are expected to work hard and have to undertake a substantial amount of homework, though a minority consider that too little is set or that it is patchy - a view not generally supported by the inspectors.

63. Parents are comfortable about approaching the school, which has increasingly high work expectations of students and which is good at helping them to mature. They welcome the extensive pastoral help and guidance offered to their children and most are of the opinion that they are kept well informed about students' progress. They consider the school works closely with them and they feel welcome in school, though the number playing an active part in its life is not high. The inspectors agree with their view that the school provides an interesting range of extra-curricular activities. The quality of leadership and management is a significant factor in the school's developing success; this is clearly recognised by parents.

64. The school's relationships with parents are strong and its links with parents, which it monitors carefully, are very effective. Though there is some consultation with parents on matters of general interest, the regular and detailed use of questionnaires, for example, is not yet firmly embedded in the school culture. However, the school does hold occasional parents' information sessions on subjects of specific interest, such as helping with GCSE revision, and it actively encourages parents to make informal contact at any time. Parents are invited to a wide range of musical and dramatic productions, sporting events and other activities, at which the turnout is generally good.

65. The school keeps parents well informed, and there is a good student referral system. The school produces lively, interesting and helpful documentation, notably the excellent newsletter, which students help to edit, and the student planner, which contains a wealth of practical detail for students and parents. The quality of the annual governors' report is good, but the prospectus, though informative, is not always easy to read, and its contents do not fully meet statutory requirements. The school runs helpful induction meetings for new parents and their children, but has not yet started to develop an Internet website.

66. The overall quality of written and oral reports to parents on students' progress is good. Students receive an annual report, which meets statutory requirements and makes provision for reporting on effort as well as for parental comment. A particular strength is the

information on the student's contribution to school life outside lessons. Targets are set in each subject, but some are too generalised to give real focus to the student. Though attainment grades are shown, some teachers use the very restricted comment section more to put the grades into words than to set out what the student understands, knows and can do; others are too vague and do not evaluate the student's strengths and weaknesses. These reports are properly reviewed with parents, and parents of those with statements of special educational need or with individual education plans (IEPs) are fully involved in the review of progress.

67. The contribution of parents to children's learning at home and at school is very good. Parents have the opportunity to keep themselves informed of their children's homework and to support day-to-day progress through the excellent student planner. They are encouraged to use it to maintain a dialogue with the school, and tutors check to ensure that they do. Attendance at parents' evenings and the school's social and cultural events is good, though only the occasional parent volunteer supports outings, and none works in the school. However, a hardworking Parents Teachers and Students' Association helps at school functions and arranges a number of well-attended fund-raising events, which bring in substantial sums for their children's benefit.

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

68. The quality of leadership and management of the school is very good. There is a strong commitment to improvement by all senior managers and heads of faculty. The impact of the current headteacher on the recovery and development of the school has been exceptional. Many of the heads of department are new, and bring with them energy and enthusiasm for development that complements the experience of established staff. The shared commitment to improvement by all teaching and non-teaching staff is a major strength of the school.

69. Leadership ensures very clear direction for development. Departments have clearly focussed plans for raising attainment that are integral to the whole school improvement plan. The strong commitment to equal opportunity is stated in the school aims, and is reflected in all areas of work. Delegation of management responsibilities is good, and is exemplified by the broad leadership group that comprises one fifth of the teaching staff. Clear responsibilities focus on the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise attainment.

70. Governors are highly committed to the school and several visit on a weekly basis. The action plan for recovery from a position of requiring special measures has been a high priority in meetings. The committee structure is clear, and members address the key areas of finance, staffing, premises and curriculum with fortitude. The governing body has been stable in its makeup, but its understanding of its role and the degree of proactive contribution expected in shaping the school's direction has increased greatly. The focus has been on the appointment of staff that will realise rapid continued improvement, and selection has not been compromised by cost. Governors are clear now about the school's strengths, and the areas requiring further improvement, although they are not always able to address these due to financial constraints.

71. Governors have ensured that most statutory requirements are fulfilled. However, they have not ensured that, as required by National Curriculum statute, there is sufficient provision for information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum and for the provision of a daily act of collective worship. Minor omissions also occur in the information provided in the prospectus, but all areas are covered in the annual governors' report to parents.

72. The school has carried out monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. Lesson observation is common practice and designated line managers of the leadership group review departments. Monitoring within the majority of departments is generally satisfactory, and in some cases it is good. However, the approach to monitoring is not yet sufficiently rigorous or responsive. In the art department, the leadership has been ineffective in securing adequate quality of teaching, and has failed to provide appropriate staff deployment. Monitoring arrangements are not established securely in the provision for religious education. Use of assessment and performance data is not consistently established in all departments. The severe impact of lack of resources has continued to affect standards of achievement.

73. Under the government initiative for 'Schools Facing Challenging Circumstances', active work is being undertaken in partnership with other local schools to evaluate identified strategies in raising attainment. Other collaborative projects are established, for example on the needs for effective boys' education.

74. The school has very clear priorities for development, and financial planning supports these. However, there is a large accumulated deficit in the budget that must be recovered. The need for an appropriate financial plan linked to the curriculum need was identified in the previous inspection. Teaching staff costs are higher than average partly as a result of the determination by governors to appoint experienced teachers to ensure recovery and improvement in standards. The percentage of available periods taught by teachers overall is well below average, which results in some small class sizes, but incurs a significant cost on the budget. The overall, recorded expenditure per student in the last financial year is significantly higher than for most schools. Building maintenance costs are high due to the nature of the accommodation. However, together with the local education authority (LEA), an agreed plan for steadily reducing the deficit over two to four years has been drawn up by the governors.

75. Specific grants are few but are used appropriately. Procedures for monitoring expenditure are secure, and a full time finance officer reconciles accounts regularly. The school fund has been recently audited and no problems have been identified. The school spends carefully, to ensure that best value is gained. The use of new technology has been limited, and current access for administrative purposes within departments has been unsatisfactory. However, the school has received funding to install a new computer network that will aid the development of ICT in departments and facilitate administration.

76. Whilst greatly improved, the match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum is still unsatisfactory. There are four unqualified teachers, although at least one of these has completed the LEA graduate teacher programme to gain qualification. There are also two vacancies on the staff, which, as a result of recruitment difficulties, are filled by temporary teachers. In one curriculum area, art and design, the head of department also manages the inclusion unit, and the day-to-day running of the art department is effectively left with an inexperienced newly qualified teacher. Whilst some of these arrangements are



working at least satisfactorily, in some cases they are having a detrimental effect on standards. The insufficiency of experienced English teachers commented on in the previous inspection report has been resolved. The number of technical support staff is adequate and they carry out their duties effectively.

77. The school makes good use of the LEAs English as an additional language (EAL) teacher. She officially allocates 9 hours per week for support in the school, although actually spends more time than this. She has led in-service training, and provided clear documentation and written guidance. Through her leadership, and that of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), staff now feel confident to meet the needs of students with EAL.

78. Arrangements for the support and professional development of both newly qualified and newly appointed staff are mainly good. There is a clear programme of induction, which covers both categories of teachers new to the school, and this is followed systematically. Newly qualified teachers are appreciative of the good level of support that this programme provides, and of the effort which colleagues are prepared to put into their support. The school's strategy for the performance management of teaching staff is satisfactory. The first cycle of this process is nearing completion, although no staff, including those who co-ordinate it or who have acted as line managers, have received training in this. The professional development needs, thus identified, are being carefully analysed. There are good arrangements to ensure that teachers who receive in-service training have the opportunity to pass newly acquired expertise on to their colleagues. The school has recently gained accreditation as meeting the requirements of the 'Investors in People' National standard.

79. The school occupies a pleasant green field site with a range of buildings and outdoor areas. The main building dates from 1769 and is listed by English Heritage. Repairs and maintenance costs are high. The school has so far been unsuccessful in its attempts to secure the additional funding needed to address essential building refurbishment. Accommodation is unsatisfactory, and not in sufficiently good condition to support the demands of the subjects of the curriculum. The external fabric of the main building, especially the windows and roof, are in poor condition and require urgent attention. Some ground floor windows cannot be opened safely. This reduces ventilation and makes the rooms very uncomfortable in warm weather. Dampness penetrates throughout the walls of the learning support area, restricting display opportunities, and presenting a depressing environment. The sports hall is shabby; the floor is uneven, broken windows need replacing and the leaking roof needs to be repaired.

80. Outdoor spaces for physical education are well maintained but are inadequate in winter. The changing rooms in the sports pavilion are in poor condition and are dirty, whilst the toilet facilities need to be repaired. Litter mars the appearance of some areas of the school grounds. Corridors and stairs are narrow, but the orderly behaviour of students avoids problems when these areas become congested at lesson changeover times. The dining room is small and well used. Some subjects are in rooms grouped together, providing easy access to resources. Some subjects, however, such as science and history, have teaching in more dispersed bases. Most areas of the school are brightened well by displays showing aspects of school life, but several corridors and rooms are bleak. Redecoration and refurbishment of the buildings and a planned co-ordinated maintenance programme are key priorities.

81. Learning resources are, overall, inadequate. Some subjects have enough equipment and materials, but there is a shortage of appropriate books and other resources in several major curriculum areas, including mathematics. Information and communication technology

(ICT) resources are too limited, and are unsatisfactory. The lack of regular access to computers, and the small number of computers, is a serious issue affecting many subjects. Shortages are found in many areas, and these are creating an obstacle to raising attainment. In mathematics, there is a shortage of electronic calculators, whilst science suffers from a lack of basic essential equipment. Ageing major items of equipment in physical education are in need of replacement. In geography, there are shortages of textbooks, and there is little audio-visual equipment. Resources to support religious education are inadequate. In art there are insufficient books and few artefacts, whilst three-dimensional work is severely restricted.

82. The library, however, is a good, valuable learning resource, providing a place for students to study, and as such it is well used. The librarian has worked hard to organise the books, and make it easier for students to find what they need. The stock is being slowly replenished and includes a good mix of fiction and non-fiction books, as well as books specific to particular topics. An extensive range of videotapes has also been provided.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

83. In order to ensure continued and consistent improvement in the quality of education and raise standards of attainment, the governors, headteacher and senior staff need to take the following action:

- Increase the rate of progress in raising attainment. To achieve this:  
(Paragraphs: 7, 34,59,81)
  - \* monitor, evaluate and support teaching and learning more rigorously in all subject areas so that learning is at least as good as the level of the best, and the very good practice to be found in the school is shared;
  - \* ensure assessment data is used more effectively and consistently within departments to support course planning, identify underachievement and evaluate performance and progress, against national averages and expectations;
  - \* increase the level of basic learning resources in departments.
- Improve the use of information and communication technology (ICT) within subjects so that National Curriculum requirements are fully met, and students have greater opportunities to enhance learning.  
(Paragraphs: 32, 39,81)
- Improve the provision for spiritual development, and ensure there is a daily act of collective worship that complies with statutory requirements.  
(Paragraphs: 47,47)
- Address the unsatisfactory provision for the management and teaching of art and design.  
(Paragraphs: 10,110)
- Improve accommodation:  
(Paragraphs: 53, 79,80)
  - \* endeavour to improve the use, cleanliness and quality of the accommodation and in particular the toilets and changing facilities in the physical education area;
  - \* address the health and safety issue arising from the proximity of vehicle and pedestrian areas of the site, as detailed in the body of the report.
- Implement the agreed financial, curriculum and staffing plan to reduce teaching costs and increase income, to ensure a secure financial balance and the elimination of the high budget deficit that still remains.  
(Paragraph: 74)
- Although attendance has improved, absence rates are still above the national average, and so further action needs to be taken. In addition, not enough action is yet taken to reduce lateness.  
(Paragraph: 54)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	<b>122</b>
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	<b>59</b>

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Number</b>	4	32	47	31	8	0	0
<b>Percentage</b>	3	26	39	25	7	0	0

*This table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories judgements about teaching*

### Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll	Year 7-11
Number of students on the school's roll	<b>573</b>
Number of full-time students eligible for free school meals	<b>88</b>

Special educational needs	Year 7-11
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	<b>24</b>
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	<b>81</b>

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	<b>6</b>

Student mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	<b>35</b>
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	<b>31</b>

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.6
National comparative data	8.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year:	<b>Year</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
	2001	106	0	106

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of students at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	<b>72</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>63</b>
	Girls	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
	Total	<b>72</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>63</b>
Percentage of students at NC Level 5 or above	School	<b>68 (45)</b>	<b>67 (57)</b>	<b>60 (42)</b>
	National	<b>64 (63)</b>	<b>66 (65)</b>	<b>66 (59)</b>
Percentage of students at NC Level 6 or above	School	<b>37 (16)</b>	<b>36 (25)</b>	<b>23 (15)</b>
	National	<b>31 (28)</b>	<b>43 (42)</b>	<b>34 (30)</b>

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of students at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	59	78	64
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	59	78	64
Percentage of students at NC Level 5 or above	School	56 (46)	74 (61)	61 (44)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	9 (12)	38 (26)	22 (11)
	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)

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:	<b>Year</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
	2001	115	0	115

<b>GCSE results</b>		<b>5 or more grades A* - C</b>	<b>5 or more grades A* - G</b>	<b>1 or more grades A* - G</b>
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	29	96	102
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	29	96	102
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	25 (26)	83 (85)	89 (86)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

<b>GCSE results</b>		<b>GCSE point score</b>
Average point score per student	School	<b>28.2</b>
	National	<b>39.0</b>

### **Ethnic background of students**

	<b>No of students</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	12
Black – other	2
Indian	7
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	540
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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

	<b>Fixed period</b>	<b>Permanent</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	1	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	67	5
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes:**

##### **Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	35.2
Number of students per qualified teacher	16

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff:**

##### **Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	367

#### **Deployment of teachers:**

##### **Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	63.8
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#### **Average teaching group size:**

##### **Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	25.0
Key Stage 4	21.2

### **Financial information**

Financial year	<b>2001/2002</b>
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	<b>£</b>
Total income	2162023.00
Total expenditure	2309947.00
Expenditure per student	4045.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	-147924.00



**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left school during the last two years	25
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	22
Total number of vacant teaching posts	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	2

*FTE means full-time equivalent*



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate :

Number of questionnaires sent out  
Number of questionnaires returned

573
97

### Percentage of responses in each category

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	53	36	7	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	45	6	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	40	14	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	36	21	5	2
The teaching is good.	40	45	5	4	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	28	9	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	28	4	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	32	2	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	44	44	8	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	55	37	2	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	36	4	2	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	33	2	1	3

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

### **ENGLISH**

The provision in English is **good**.

#### **Strengths:**

- Results at the end of Year 9 have shown considerable improvement.
- Good relations in class, positive attitudes and good behaviour constitute a favourable climate for learning.
- Good and sometimes very good teaching ensures that students make sound progress.
- Very good leadership and management of the department have helped to effect improvement.

#### **Areas for improvement:**

- Standards of spoken English.
- Standards of writing, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Attainment at GCSE Level.
- Planned opportunities for the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in English.

84. Results in the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 9 were broadly in line with the national average. This represents a general improvement since 1997 and a considerable improvement over the last two years. Particularly notable was the improvement in the proportion reaching the higher levels, Level 6 and above, where students' results were comfortably above the national average. In terms of the proportion reaching Level 5 and above, students did better in English than in the other core subjects, and their overall results were above the average for similar schools. This favourable situation is partly the result of prior attainment that is higher than in the past, but is also due to effective, thorough teaching and a more stable staffing situation.

85. GCSE results in 2001, in contrast, did not show the same improvement and were below average, both in the case of GCSE English and in GCSE English literature, where results were significantly lower than in the previous year and progress was less than expected. Given the low prior attainment of the students, however, the results in English represent satisfactory progress, and the students' performance was better than that in their other subjects. Results were low at the GCSE. This was partly because the new team of teachers had not been in post long enough to make an impact on the attainment of older students. It was also because the students themselves, disadvantaged by a lack of suitable coursework and discouraged by several years of staffing turbulence, had developed a poor work ethos.

86. Standards in the work seen and in the lessons observed generally reflect this situation. They are in line with national expectations in Years 7 to 9, and in the current Year 10, but below average in Year 11. By the end of Year 9, most students are attentive listeners, showing an ability to listen to each other as well as to their teachers. Many speak with confidence, although not always grammatically and not always using standard English. Most read aloud fluently, although not always with appropriate expression, and most show satisfactory comprehension. There is considerable variation in standards of writing: many

students produce lively narrative writing, with good use of dialogue and competent paragraphing. Higher attaining students are beginning to write perceptively about literature and are becoming proficient in the effective use of textual evidence. There is a minority of weaker students who write very little. Their presentation and handwriting are poor and there are frequently errors in spelling.

87. Standards of listening in Years 10 and 11 are in line with expectations, but there is a need to improve standards of speaking. Students are usually very willing to take part in oral activities, but their speech lacks clarity and fluency and too frequently is over-colloquial. Consequently, many students find it difficult to write with fluency and clarity in an appropriate formal style. Writing standards in Years 10 and 11 are below average; overall they are better in Year 10 than in Year 11. High attaining students in Year 10 are beginning to develop an awareness of the various ways in which language can be used and show they are capable of detailed and perceptive literary analysis. Those in Year 11 can make use of a range of vocabulary, and are beginning to write with greater fluency and depth of thought. Many students across the ability range are still reluctant to write in depth and detail, although classroom discussion shows they do not lack ideas. Weaker students still have too many errors in style, grammar and basic spelling. Reading standards overall are satisfactory, although a significant proportion of students need more practice in the skill of reading aloud. There is little evidence of the use ICT in English, and it is recognised that this is an area for development.

88. Most students make at least satisfactory progress by age 14 and also by age 16 because they respond well to the carefully structured, lively teaching. In Years 7 to 9, students' progress is enhanced by their own perseverance in re-drafting their work, and by the firm classroom management of their teachers, which provides a stable environment for learning. The boys' good attitudes and good behaviour, and the good relations created in classrooms by teachers who have clear expectations and a friendly, humorous approach all produce a climate in which students want to do well and are helped to do so. In Years 10 and 11, students make progress as a result of their teachers' more challenging demands and the higher expectations of examination courses. Learning in most of the lessons seen in all years was usually good. In order for this to have a long term effect on progress, teachers should now consider ways of consolidating work done in lessons and should continue to encourage the habit of writing at length, both in class and for homework. Students with special educational needs (SEN) frequently make good progress. Their needs are clearly understood by teachers, who include them in their planning and lesson delivery and who give them the confidence to improve. Students in the early stages of learning English make good progress due to effective support in class.

89. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and is sometimes very good. There are clear improvements since previous inspections. Teachers' planning and classroom approaches are now more consistent. In all lessons, the learning objectives are explained to students, written on the board, and in some instances written by the students themselves in their books. Students have a clear idea of what they are learning, although sometimes there is not enough time spent reviewing and consolidating what has been achieved. Students benefit from their teachers' good subject knowledge and wide experience: they are now beginning to receive sound preparation for examinations and tests. Teachers ensure that the pace of lessons is brisk and that lessons include a variety of activities to promote learning in different ways. As a result, students respond positively, volunteering with enthusiasm to take part in activities, to read their work aloud, and to answer questions: their interest is maintained and they usually work productively. Most teachers have good questioning skills: they use questions effectively to check for

understanding, but also to make students think more deeply and sometimes to engage a few reluctant participants in the lesson. Teachers' marking is satisfactory, but would be better if it were more detailed in Years 10 and 11, and if teachers made greater use of National Curriculum Levels when they are marking work in Years 7 to 9. Homework is set regularly, usually linked to work in progress.

90. The strong leadership and management of the department have undoubtedly had an impact on standards, especially by the end of Year 9. The task of re-building the department has been tackled energetically over the past two years; there is a clear vision of what should be achieved and a strong commitment to improvement. The ethos of the department is very much in line with that of the school. The sound procedures for monitoring and supporting the work of the department, including the observation of lessons, have led to improvement in the quality of teaching. A great deal has been achieved in a short time, but it is also recognised that still further developments, such as the introduction of target setting, are needed. Schemes of work have been produced, but it is now seen that the objectives of the National Literacy Strategy need to be more firmly embedded in teachers' long and short-term plans. Work in the department has rightly focused on improving attainment and as a result there is only a limited range of extra-curricular provision at present. Revision clubs have been started, but it is now time for the English department to have a greater impact on the cultural life of the school.

91. Since the last inspection two years ago, standards at the end of Year 9 have improved markedly. Personnel changes, including the appointment of a new head of department and second in the department, have resulted in a more stable staffing situation and in improvements in the quality of teaching. With the production of schemes of work, there is now greater consistency in students' learning experiences. Students in class are now more focused on their work and behaviour and attitudes have improved.

### **Literacy across the curriculum**

92. Standards of literacy are satisfactory overall, although there are several weaknesses. Most students have good listening skills, but need to develop greater clarity in speaking, as well as the appropriate use of a formal register. Reading is satisfactory: most students' reading skills are sufficient to cope with the demands of the curriculum, although there are problems in history. The main weaknesses are in writing. Whilst most students' writing is satisfactory at a basic level, opportunities for extended writing are still limited, and spelling is weak.

93. The school has put in place a number of measures to improve literacy, which vary in their effectiveness. Successful training days have generated a great deal of enthusiasm and commitment, resulting in good literacy developments in many, but not all, departments. There is good practice in the promotion of literacy in personal and social development lessons, where oral presentation skills are developed, and in mathematics, in geography, and in design and technology. In most of these subjects teachers are usually rigorous in the correction of errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Students are taught specialist terminology in many subjects, and they are provided with opportunities to write at length in geography and history, for example. More needs to be done by teachers in some other subjects so that the approach is consistent across the school.

94. There is a very thorough school policy dealing with all aspects of literacy, which provides a clear statement of the school's position. Evaluation of its implementation needs to take place. Five members of the Leadership Group, indicating clearly the degree of senior management commitment to the promotion of literacy, provide 'catch-up' classes for

students entering Year 7 with poor literacy. These are provided for three mornings a week before school. However, there are at present no definite arrangements for monitoring the progress of these students and evaluating the effectiveness of the measures that have been introduced.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths:

- The quality of teaching is very good, and responsible for the good progress of students in recent months.
- The quality of leadership and management is very good, producing a dramatic improvement now that staffing difficulties have eased.
- The monitoring of the subject's performance is very good, resulting in detailed objectives and a new scheme of work.
- The attitudes of students are good.

### Areas for improvement:

- The use of computers in the teaching of mathematics.
- Shortages of textbook and other resources.

95. The proportion of students reaching the expected level for their age, at the end of Year 9 in the 2001 national tests, matched the national average, and was above the average for similar schools. The proportion at the higher level 6 matched the national average. Results are similar to those of English but better than science. Results are on a rising trend, above the national trend. In 2001, the proportion of students gaining a GCSE grade A\* to C was below the average of all schools. Performance compared favourably with other subjects in the school.

96. The standard of work seen in the inspection reflects the examination results. Average attaining students in Year 9 know the formulae for area and perimeter of squares, rectangles, triangles and circles. Scatter diagrams are drawn accurately. These students understand the meaning of mean, mode and median and have made good progress since the beginning of the year, when new departmental leadership was put in place. Year 9 students whose attainment is below the national average know the formula for area of rectangles and triangles. They draw neat line graphs and solve simple linear equations accurately. They can explain their methods, for example, in dividing 713 by five, because the teaching is excellent, focusing on their needs well. Progress is good as a result. Low attaining students struggle with basic arithmetic. Overall achievement is as expected by these students, given their overall average levels of attainment entry to the school.

97. A small number of high attaining students are preparing for the higher level of entry to GCSE in Year 11. They have developed good study habits, solving complex questions on percentages, for example, with the minimum of help. Average attaining students in Year 11 have a secure grasp of basic arithmetic, but some of their work in other areas shows insecurity. This is the case in solving equations for example, where the earlier work was not covered sufficiently well. Low attaining students are coping well with basic problems of proportion due to the excellent teaching, which clarifies matters very well for them. Students with special educational need and those who are at an early stage in their learning

in English make good progress through Years 7 to 11 due to the good support they receive in lessons. The teaching is fully inclusive of all students, including those from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good as progress has been significant since the beginning of the year.

98. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Approximately one quarter of the teaching is excellent. The strength of the teaching lies in the quality of the planning, which is very good and is uniform within the department. It stems from the very good subject knowledge of the teachers and the inclusive nature of the lessons, which focus well on the needs of all the students, together with some of the best elements from the National Numeracy Strategy. Very good basic skills teaching is seen in the opening strategy in lessons, focusing on five questions of differing complexity which reinforce earlier learning well. Students are able to speak clearly and well about their solutions, and the teachers use these contributions very well in enhancing the understanding of others.

99. Learning overall is good, but is lower in standard than the teaching, as students have to recover from difficulties caused by staffing problems in earlier years. The acquisition of skills is very good, but other aspects of learning are slower to develop as study habits are not yet fully in place. For example, concentration is easily lost towards the end of lessons, especially by the lower attaining students. Good attitudes and good behaviour contribute to the good ethos for learning seen in the majority of lessons. In those lessons that are satisfactory overall, it is the management of students that restricts the quality of learning to no better than satisfactory, reducing the positive possibilities from the very good lesson planning. In the best practice, paired working is arranged well. Teacher interventions ensure that students do explain their work to each other, and that no time is wasted. Challenges to students in their learning are good, especially in the nature of questions posed in the teaching, which encourages students to speak about what they are doing. The use of assessment to guide planning is good, and homework is used well.

100. The quality of leadership and management is very good. There has been a very marked improvement since the last inspection due to the appointment of three members of staff, one from last September, and two from January, with specific responsibilities in mathematics. Despite the severe shortage of textbooks and a lack of computers, a considerable amount of productive work has produced a new and good scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 together with an effective bank of mathematics questions, appropriately levelled for Years 7 to 9 and graded for Years 10 and 11. The teachers are working very well as a team to bring about improvement and appropriate training is in hand. The overall view of the subject has been enhanced through the support of professional advice and realistic objectives for each teacher. The enthusiasm is reflected in the considerable number of Year 9 students opting for an Easter revision course. Students are entered for a variety of mathematics contests. A personal portable computer is used for short and effective 'reminder' presentations in the teaching and as an innovative tool in place of the traditional mark book. However, teaching and learning would be enhanced further by the development of new technology, the use of which is currently unsatisfactory.

### **Numeracy across the curriculum**

101. Standards of numeracy overall are average. The quality of teaching basic skills in mathematics has improved since the last inspection, and is now very good. This has not yet had time to be reflected in higher standards. Nevertheless, students handle basic number work satisfactorily, apart from the low attaining students whose levels of numeracy are low. Students measure with care in design and technology. Number is used well in geography.

Ideas of measurement are put in place early. There is good use of co-ordinates in map work. Standards are average in science, where students use simple formulae well. Graph work and the interpretation of statistics improve in Years 10 and 11 in geography, where it is good, and in history and science where it is satisfactory overall. However, spatial awareness is not developed well as a result of missed opportunities in art and a lack of equipment in design and technology. Formal drawing is used instead. The mathematics department has no calculators.

102. Strategies for teaching numeracy are satisfactory across departments, particularly in geography, mathematics and science. Preparations are in hand for a whole school strategy, led by the mathematics department. This should enable departments to address numeracy issues more effectively than is currently the case.

## SCIENCE

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

### **Strengths:**

- Teaching and learning are good.
- The commitment of staff to raising standards.
- Good management of students promotes good behaviour.
- Leadership and management of the department.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- Curriculum time in Years 10 and 11.
- Use of Information and communication technology (ICT) in science.
- The extent of use of investigative work in lessons.

103. In 2001, attainment in science, as measured in national tests, was below national average for all schools at age 14. It was close to the average in similar schools in that year. Standards showed an improvement compared to 2000, which was above the increase nationally. At age 16, the percentage of students achieving grades A\* to C in the GCSE examination in 2001 was well below the national average. The percentage gaining grade A\* to G was close to the national average. Standards showed a small improvement over 2000, but were still well below average.

104. At the end of Year 9, standards in work observed during the inspection were consistent with national averages. Students can plan experiments, given a structure to work within, but lack the knowledge and understanding to devise their own investigations. Students' attainments are higher in teacher-led investigations. For example, lower attaining Year 9 students successfully investigated how metallic elements show different reactivity to water and acid. Students' ability to use mathematics to help solve scientific problems is satisfactory. In Year 8, students were able to use distance and time data to calculate speed. Year 7 students have a sound understanding of chemistry. They appreciate the difference between physical and chemical change and understand the factors that affect the rate of dissolving. Students with special educational needs are well supported by learning assistants and attain at appropriate levels. Most students have a satisfactory understanding of key scientific words.

105. Attainment in Year 11 is still below the national average. In work observed during the inspection, some students are able to attain high standards, and examples were seen of good quality coursework folders. Most students, however, do not have the independent

learning skills necessary to produce work of this quality, and require considerable guidance from teachers. In Year 10, students follow the GCSE double award modular science course, a change recently introduced by the department. Staff consider the modular course structure and assessment arrangements are better suited to student needs. Work of Year 10 students observed during the inspection is in line with national averages. Students build on their knowledge from Years 7 to 9 and in particular develop their practical skills. They work safely and competently with apparatus, handling equipment with respect and increasing precision. Theory work is well presented and accurate. In Year 10, lower attaining students compared transpiration rates in celery under different conditions, but were not confident of how to ensure a fair test. A higher attaining Year 11 group showed good understanding of energy transfers whilst observing the Maltese cross tub experiment.

106. Teaching and learning are good in all age groups. Teaching in all lessons seen was at least satisfactory with two-thirds good or better. Students' attitudes to learning and behaviour are good. They enjoy science, show interest and enthusiasm and listen attentively, sustaining concentration throughout teacher-led work and demonstrations. They are aware of health and safety issues and respond positively to questions. Teaching is brisk and well planned. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and high expectations of work and behaviour. A range of teaching styles is used to maintain student interest, though some work is strongly led by the teachers.

107. The most effective lessons are characterised by pace and challenge and an enthusiasm by the teacher for the topic studied. For example, when teaching the topic of static electricity to lower attaining Year 9 students, the teacher sustained their interest by using good quality resources and making effective use of video. Teachers help higher attaining students to learn well by providing additional challenging work. They encourage those with special educational needs (SEN) to discuss their ideas or use a range of questions and statements to extend their knowledge. Marking of student work is thorough and consistent. Helpful comments tell them what they need to do to improve. Homework is regularly set and supports work undertaken during lessons.

108. The department is well managed. The recently appointed head of department leads a motivated and hard-working team of teachers and technical staff who work well together. The department has made good progress in dealing with issues raised in the last inspection. Planning is good and departmental priorities integrate with whole-school aims. Monitoring of teaching and learning is established. Arrangements for assessing and recording meet statutory requirements. The department maintains good assessment records, and the end-of-module test results are used to inform students of their progress. This assessment data also informs curriculum and lesson planning. Schemes of work are newly revised in Year 10, reflecting the recent move to GCSE double-award modular science. They have also been reviewed in Years 7, 8 and 9, though opportunities for exploring spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues are not yet fully integrated. Current time allocation is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, but inadequate in Years 10 and 11, and needs to be increased. The science accommodation is adequate but widely dispersed around the main teaching block. The limited resources are used effectively, but the lack of computers and data logging equipment, and shortages of some basic equipment restrict learning opportunities. This has a negative impact upon learning and standards.



## ART AND DESIGN

Overall provision is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Strengths:**

- GCSE results have consistently been above the national average and represent sound achievement for these students.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- Below average standards, and achievement that is low in Years 7 to 10.
- Unsatisfactory teaching in Years 7 to 10: expectations are too low, a limited range of strategies is used, plenary is ineffective and behaviour management is weak: these factors give rise to unsatisfactory learning.
- Insufficient opportunities in the curriculum for investigating, particularly through the use of sketchbooks, and learning about art, design and craft.
- The deployment of teaching staff.
- Ineffective management of the subject.

109. GCSE results were above the national average for boys in 2000 and 2001. This is similar to the standards reported in the previous inspection. For students of this ability this represents satisfactory value added and sound achievement. National Curriculum teacher assessments in 2001 were very high, and bear little resemblance to standards observed during the inspection, indicating marking was too generous.

110. Achievement observed during inspection for Years 7 to 10 is low. Insufficient use is made of sketchbooks to explore or develop ideas either at school or home. Students do not therefore come well prepared to lessons, and are too dependent on the teacher for ideas; consequently their work shows little evidence of personal expression. A very limited range of mainly two-dimensional media is used. Knowledge and understanding of art, design and craft is very weak. Insufficient links have been made with professional practice, and as a result students know little about art or its history. Few students, for example, can name an artist or express a reasoned preference for a type of art. Students with special educational needs (SEN) underachieve because inadequate provision is made for their needs.

111. Standards are much higher in Year 11; they are broadly average and represent sound achievement. Students have produced a substantial quantity of imaginative work in a wide range of mainly two dimensional media. Highest achieving students respond to, rather than copy, artists' work and use this as a springboard for personal expression. For example, in linking the work of Max Ernst and Georgia O'Keefe, a student was able to create the landscape in a dream. The imagery used in the best work is either based on direct observation or photographs students have taken themselves. Lower achievement is characterised by a tendency to compile images from copied or traced photographs, or illustrations.

112. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 10; it is good in Year 11. Where teaching is good, objectives are challenging and care is taken to ensure students understand what is expected of them. Well-established routines and a calm atmosphere enable students to concentrate and work productively. Year 11 students are highly motivated and industrious, they research and develop their ideas independently and, as a result, their work shows personal expression and imagination. This is because teaching has made clear the GCSE criteria and students know what they need to do to succeed.

113. Where teaching is less than satisfactory, expectations are too low. For example, Years 7 and 9 copied or traced images from photocopied worksheets, and Year 10 drew a section of a wine bottle provided by the teacher; they were not expected to undertake any research for themselves or to exercise their initiative. Students are not taught how to use sketchbooks to research or develop their own ideas and so come to lessons unprepared. A very limited range of teaching strategies is used.

114. Unsatisfactory lessons usually start with a very brief introduction followed by practical work, during which help is provided for individual students. Objectives are not made sufficiently clear at the outset, and inappropriate examples are used. For example, in designing a geometric image for a printing block, students were shown, from the front of the room, three postcard illustrations of paintings by Paul Klee and some pages in a modern architecture book. These examples had no direct relevance, and most students could not see the images clearly from where they were sitting. It was only after much confusion that students grasped what they were expected to do. In such lessons, students soon lose interest, talk about unrelated matters, the noise level rises and incidents of misbehaviour occur. Teacher intervention is belated and sometimes excessive. These incidents have an adverse effect on relationships and reduce the time available for productive work. Because class control is precarious, students are rarely called upon to speak about their own or others' work, and they are not provided with opportunities to modify their work in the light of discussion; these are both key requirements of the National Curriculum. Lessons are usually summarised by the teacher, with insufficient opportunities for the students to discuss what they have learnt or to write about art, design or craft. Lesson content is not adapted to meet the learning needs of students with special educational needs, or gifted or talented students; they underachieve.

115. Though the department is part of a vigorous expressive arts faculty, it does not benefit from full-time internal leadership because the head of art is also head of the inclusion unit, where most of his time is spent. Leadership and management have been ineffective in securing an adequate quality of teaching and learning. A newly qualified teacher teaches all Year 7 to 10 classes and is also a form tutor. This is an inappropriate deployment of teaching staff.

116. The 11-14 curriculum has important shortcomings: it fails to provide sufficient opportunities for students to develop their skills of investigation and knowledge and understanding of art and design, or to use Information and communication technology (ICT). With the exception of Year 11, assessment is weak. Year 7 to 10 students receive insufficient spoken or written feedback about their strengths or weaknesses. Units of work are not levelled in line with National Curriculum Levels of attainment, and the assessment pro forma used require a level to be placed against each attainment target rather than a level to be assigned to a unit of work. This is cumbersome and inappropriate. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is unsatisfactory; insufficient opportunities are taken to visit art galleries and museums, or for students to work with artists, craftspeople or designers. Sufficient materials and equipment are available for two dimensional work, but not for three dimensional work or work using ICT.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### **Strengths:**

- Most students have made significant recent improvement and are currently achieving well, given their limited earlier experiences.
- Teaching is very good, and, on occasion excellent, in the majority of the lessons.
- Procedures for monitoring and assessing students' progress are very good.
- Subject leadership is having a significantly positive impact on standards and procedures.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- Information and communication technology (ICT) resources, including those for computer aided design and manufacture, limits standards and results in insufficient coverage of the National Curriculum in Years 7 to 9.
- Standards in food technology that are hampered by the lack of a specialist teacher.

117. Students come to the school with very limited experience in design and technology, and until recently made only slow progress in developing their knowledge and skills. The very good teaching has helped students in Years 7 to 9 make good progress in recent months, and many students are now beginning to achieve well in relation to their earlier work standards. This improvement in standards is particularly noticeable in students' growing appreciation of a design process, a firmer understanding of different structures and material properties and the development of their graphical and other presentation skills. Overall though, standards are well below the national average at present because of weaknesses in practical making skills. These are particularly in food technology, where there is a lack of specialist teaching, and in computer aided design and manufacture because of a lack of any access to information and communication technology (ICT) facilities.

118. Staffing problems adversely affected student achievement in the 2001 GCSE examinations, and standards were low. Just two thirds of students made sufficient progress to be entered for the examination, and barely more than one in ten students gained grades A\* to C. However, in the last year the new subject leadership has brought about a substantially better provision, and this is leading to a significant improvement in academic standards as well as students' attitudes and behaviour. In Years 10 to 11, the improved provision has substantially increased the proportion of students successfully completing their major project work, leading to well over four fifths being entered for the GCSE examination. Overall design and technology standards are below those for similar schools, though they have improved, with most students making good progress.

119. Students taking the graphic products option make very good progress in both years as a result of the very strong specialist teaching. In Year 10, students develop a secure range of graphical skills, and though there is limited computer aided design, ICT is well used to develop research and presentation skills. In Year 11, students have retrieved much lost ground to achieve standards close to the national average in much of their project work.

120. Most students taking courses in food technology and resistant materials have also steadily improved in spite of relatively less strong and non-specialist teaching. In resistant materials the higher attaining students demonstrate sound product design ideas in, for example, a Year 10 furniture project, and make more effective use of ICT to present their ideas. However, the Year 11 work is less strong in the quality of practical outcomes and supporting folder work. In food technology, students demonstrate a sound understanding of

different foods, though there is less effective application of a design and make process. Overall standards in these two courses are now higher, though still well below those nationally.

121. Across all years, students with special educational needs (SEN) and those for whom English is an additional language (EAL), generally make good progress, often through the effective development of literacy skills. This was evident in a Year 11 lesson where students were developing a wider technical vocabulary through a product evaluation activity. In that lesson, two students for whom EAL used the activity well with a specialist support teacher.

122. The overall standard of teaching is very good, with some excellent practice. Specialist staff plan most lessons very well. They prepare clear learning outcomes that enable students to develop their knowledge and skills effectively. A feature of much of the best practice is the very effective use of questioning to involve students in their learning and confirm and consolidate their understanding. Teaching is rarely less than good. Where practice is less strong, it is largely the result of lack of specialist teaching in food technology and to less effective, and on occasion, unsatisfactory class management in some resistant materials lessons. Marking and assessment practice is very good across all years. Homework setting and marking of coursework is done regularly, with clear indications of how students can improve their work. Spelling is corrected, and students are encouraged to improve their technical vocabulary.

123. Students are very interested in the subject, and increasingly endeavour to do their best. This is a result of the varied and challenging learning activities devised by most teachers who have high expectations and sustain very good lesson pace. Year 8 students, for example, worked collaboratively and learnt quickly about the different aspects of packing design in a lesson where the teacher used humour and timed targets well.

124. The relatively new subject management team has been very effective in improving documentation and procedures. These include developing schemes of work and establishing excellent systems of monitoring student progress including baseline assessment and target setting. This work is further assisted by the very good technician support. The quality of teaching is now much better, and there is a promising teacher appraisal procedure that should enable standards to improve further.

125. However, the development of the subject is still constrained by a lack of a specialist in food technology and deficiencies in resources and accommodation. The lack of any facilities for computer aided design and manufacture or access to (ICT) for students in Years 7 to 9 make it impossible to fully meet the National Curriculum requirements. Furthermore, despite the very good efforts to create a positive learning environment through effective displays, the state of the furniture and accommodation detracts from the learning experience. Despite these limitations there has been good progress in design and technology provision.

## GEOGRAPHY

Overall the provision for geography is **very good**.

### **Strengths:**

- Teaching and student/teacher relationships.
- Achievement at Years 9 and 11.
- Provision for and progress of students with special educational needs.
- Leadership of the subject, and the capacity to succeed.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- Extension of fieldwork to all year groups.
- Provision of departmental information and communication technology (ICT) resources.

126. At the end of Year 9, standards of work are above the national average and students are achieving well. Teachers' assessments showing the numbers of students at Level 5 or greater confirm the progress of students from an average level of attainment on entry. Work seen in lessons and exercise books also support the picture of good achievement from age 11 to 14. In Years 10 and 11, standards are variable, with the current Year 11 starting from a lower attainment level on entry and reaching satisfactory standards in lessons and work seen. Year 10 students' standards are higher and above average. Overall, achievement is good and above the national average. In 2001, the proportion of students gaining the higher GCSE A\* to C grades was well above the national average. The proportion gaining the highest grade was twice the national average, and all students entered for geography gained a pass. Results for the last three years have been above the average, but those for 2001 are more meaningful as a result of the much-enlarged entry. Students' point score at the GCSE is only exceeded in Drama, and taking national data into consideration, it is clear that boys taking geography, are doing better than in all other subjects, except for drama, by a considerable margin.

127. Students in Years 7 to 9 gain a good knowledge of basic geography and number skills. They can measure line and angle, use co-ordinates and use mapping techniques. Written skills improve from Year 7 in a number of styles, and there are good examples of extended, imaginative writing, such as letters from China describing life while on a business trip, and investigations into Bangladesh and Kenya. Students use a good vocabulary and read well, with fluency and comprehension. From the beginning, students learn research techniques and build up knowledge of case studies. They become familiar with examination skills required to answer GCSE questions, and hone these skills in fieldwork, unfortunately not available to all year groups.

128. Continuity between Year 9 and 10 is good and students develop their abilities without interruption. In Years 10 and 11 students are able to hypothesise, gather and analyse data and reach good conclusions in coursework on Residential Environments. From Year 7 onwards students rapidly improve their understanding and use of ICT, and by Year 11 are confidently doing research on the Internet and using many forms of ICT in presenting their work. Students' retention of knowledge is good, and combined with their high skills levels is responsible for the good levels of achievement. Students on the SEN register make good progress, with the provision of suitable learning materials and very good support by learning support assistants.

129. Lessons are enjoyable and instructive with good relationships evident. The methods and skills of the teachers ensure high levels of concentration, and the students' positive attitudes and good behaviour help them to stay on task and work at a good pace. Much of the department's success is due to the high levels of expectation of both students' behaviour and learning. Teachers constantly reinforce students' knowledge, and check progress through good and regular assessment.

130. Since the last inspection, improvement has been good. Recruitment has improved and above average GCSE results are now based on a much larger entry. Documentation is much improved, with good, up to date schemes of work and a very useful handbook. The use of ICT in lessons and the use of National Curriculum Levels are steadily improving from an already high level. Well-qualified teachers form a dynamic, experienced team, clear in its direction and very well led and managed. The department's progress is well monitored and the future is clearly mapped. The department offers good value and has a capacity to improve further, especially with better audiovisual resources.

## HISTORY

Overall, the provision for history is **good**.

### Strengths:

- Attainment at the end of Year 9 has risen.
- Achievement throughout the school is good.
- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school.
- The management of the subject promotes the raising of attainment.

### Areas for improvement:

- To make more use of long-term assessment information.
- To ensure that marking consistently offers advice on improvement.

131. In 2001, attainment in history at the end of Year 9, based on assessments carried out by teachers, was in line with the national average and also in line with the average for boys. The percentage of students attaining the higher levels was below the national average. This represents good progress since the previous year when the percentage of students attaining the level expected of students of this age was considerably below the national average.

132. A full range of evidence seen during the course of the inspection indicates that the attainment of students currently in Year 9 is very similar to what is seen nationally. When the group of students who completed Year 9 in 2001 entered the school, their attainment in English, which requires literacy skills very similar to those used in history, was close to the national average, whilst their experience of the study of history was very varied. Their achievement during Years 7 to 9 was good across the attainment range, especially in their acquisition of an appropriate range of knowledge and understanding and in the development of key historical skills such as the understanding of the causes and effects of events and situations.

133. Students currently in Years 7 to 9, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language (EAL), are achieving well, both in individual lessons and over longer periods of time. The attainment of students in Year 7, when they started at the school in September, was generally considerably below national expectations, especially in the use of key skills, and they have made good progress in this vital area. Year 9 students are very aware of their own progress towards national expectations, and what

they need to do in order to meet them. For example, a group of students studying the German invasion of the Soviet Union during the Second World War made good progress in using original source material to make inferences about the reasons for its failure.

134. In 2001 the percentage of students at the end of Year 11 who attained grades A\* to C at the GCSE was below the national average and also below the national average for boys. The percentage that attained grades A\* to G was also significantly below the national average and below the average for boys. Over recent years there have been considerable fluctuations in both the attainment and the size of the group taking the subject; in some instances the group size has been too small to make valid comparisons with the national picture.

135. A full range of evidence seen during the course of the inspection indicates that attainment of students in Year 11 is below what is seen nationally, but is much closer to the national picture than it was a year ago. The school has made predictions of students' attainment in their GCSE in 2002 based on firm evidence of their current attainment, and this indicates a considerable improvement over the previous year.

136. When they started the course the attainment of students who took their GCSE in 2001 was below the national average, and they made satisfactory progress during Years 10 and 11. Students currently in Years 10 and 11, including those with special educational needs (SEN) and those for whom EAL, are achieving well, both in individual lessons and over the longer term. They make good progress in the way in which they record their knowledge and understanding in order to provide useful revision material, in their recall of their learning and especially in their use of historical source material. However, the extremely limited vocabulary of many students across the attainment range is a serious impediment when it comes to understanding examination questions or, in particular, the interpretation of sources, the language of which is sometimes archaic and impenetrable. For example, some students were unable to approach a practice examination question with confidence because of an inability to understand 'sympathetic'.

137. The quality of teaching history throughout the school is consistently good. At the start of lessons learning objectives are made very clear to students, who know what to expect and what is expected of them. A particular strength is the detailed lesson planning, which shows good understanding of the way in which boys learn best and also of the needs of individual students. Teachers plan a good range of activities for each lesson and maintain a brisk pace. Students respond to this by showing enthusiasm and maintaining their concentration. Teachers plan carefully to support students who are identified as being particularly in need of this, and make good use of small group work to offer students the opportunity to support each other. Students respond very positively to opportunities to participate in discussion by exchanging ideas with other members of the group, and make good progress on these occasions. Although the marking of work is carried out regularly, the quality of this is inconsistent between teachers, and some work is annotated with little more than a tick. On other occasions, students are given clear advice in the marking on what they need to do to improve. All students are set regular targets for improvement and consequently show a high level of awareness of, and responsibility for, their own progress.

138. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The fairly recently appointed head of department has made the raising of attainment, especially in the GCSE, a clear priority and has taken very appropriate measures to achieve this. Some of these measures are already proving to be successful. Good use is made of assessment procedures to carry out regular assessments of the attainment of all students, and the results of these are recorded in a way which makes the areas of strengths and weakness immediately clear for each student. One very positive result of this is the high level of awareness of their

attainment amongst the students themselves. However, insufficient use is made of all assessment information to predict potential or possible under-achievement or to measure long-term progress. Good use has been made of the analysis of attainment at the GCSE to make modifications to the areas of the syllabus that are followed, offering a syllabus which is more accessible to most students. Strong additional support is offered to students who are experiencing difficulty or who are identified as likely to under-achieve in their GCSE, and the majority of students take advantage of this on a regular basis. There is a good programme of visits out of school and visitors into school for all year groups, which considerably enriches the curriculum.

## **INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

The quality of provision in information technology is **satisfactory**.

### **Strengths:**

- Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and students work well as a result.
- The monitoring of the subject's performance.
- The attitudes of students to their work are good.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- The time set aside for teaching the subject in Years 10 and 11.
- Cross-curricular aspects of information technology in some subjects
- The number of computers in school.

139. The standard of work seen in the inspection at the end of Year 9 is in line with that expected. The equipment is used with confidence and is treated with respect by the students. Good teaching promotes discussion well, leading students to express clearly and accurately the difference between a spreadsheet and a database, for example. Achievement is satisfactory. The standard of work seen in the inspection in Years 10 and 11 is below that expected, due in part to the shortage of teaching time. The higher attaining students are achieving well, so the school expects its first GNVQ successes this summer. Examination data from the first unit for Year 11 students indicates 21 students will be in the pass range and three in the merit class. Year 10 results are similar this year. Internet searching is satisfactory but knowledge and use of PowerPoint is very modest for this stage. Overall achievement is unsatisfactory as some students will not complete the course and a minority have unsatisfactory attitudes, which adversely affects their learning. Attendance for further learning in early evening sessions is expected, and a majority of students take advantage of these opportunities.

140. The standard of teaching and learning is good in Years 7 to 9. The teachers have a good knowledge of their subject, seen in the use of the demonstration computer by the teacher for teaching the basic routines. This is why students' basic skills are good. The worksheets used in lessons show good planning, gradually increasing in complexity and providing students with opportunities to use their initiative. However, outcomes from their initiative need to be more carefully thought out if learning is to be very effective, as in a Year 7 lesson on databases. There is good support for students with special educational need who make good progress as a result. The lesson time is used well, with good management of students ensuring that all are on task and able to proceed with their work. Assessment is continuous and often immediate. This keeps productive learning at satisfactory levels.



141. The standards of teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are satisfactory. The support for students with special educational needs (SEN) is good because subject knowledge and understanding is good, enabling positive interactions with these students so that they make good progress. Question and answer techniques are used appropriately but sometimes result in little discussion, limiting the quality of learning to satisfactory overall. Good subject knowledge of the teachers and their good planning of lessons means that students know what they have to do and how to go about it. Management of students is satisfactory. Not all students remain on task in lessons and the lesson time is not always used satisfactorily as a result. Learning by some low attaining students is sometimes upset when their work on the computer screens is lost and they have to start again; they lose interest and concentration. Higher attaining students have no such problems and they achieve well.

142. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory, but the range of learning opportunities across the curriculum is restricted by the shortage of computers. It is good in geography, as access to the machines is possible, but it is poor in science and mathematics as there is no access at all. The curriculum does not satisfy the demands of the National Curriculum. Monitoring in the department is good, as appropriate records are kept and used to inform planning. The top group is doing the full award (equivalent to four GCSEs), Groups 2 and 3 are doing Part 1 again (equivalent to two GCSEs) and the other group will not be accredited. It is not surprising that in attempting this with one period per week and some sessions after school, some students are not achieving the outcomes of the course. It is commendable that some students are successful. The leadership of the department gives a good and clear educational direction to its work. The teachers work well as a team, with good support from the network manager keeping what equipment there is in working order.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French and German**

The provision for modern languages is **satisfactory**.

#### **Strengths:**

- Leadership and management of the subject.
- Systems for assessing students' standards.
- The teaching of the permanent staff.

#### **Areas for improvement:**

- The integration of schemes of work and the department's courses and resources.
- The handbook as a working document for teachers.
- The range of strategies to raise the level of students' oral skills.
- Monitoring of the department's work.
- The contribution of information and communication technology (ICT) to the subject.

143. In the 2001, GCSE examination in French, the percentage at grades A\* to C was below the national average. Almost all students entered gained a grade, A\* to G, and results overall show satisfactory progress from students' prior attainment at the end of Year

9. Results were a slight improvement on the previous year. A small sub-group was also entered for the GCSE in German. All gained grades, mostly at the higher-level A\* to C. Another small group was entered for Spanish. One in three gained a grade A\* to C.

144. Standards of French seen during the inspection are at the levels expected nationally of students aged 14. Lack of consistent specialist teachers has impacted on the standards reached by a few groups in the age range from 11 to 14. As a result, in one group of higher attaining students their oral work is less assured and they do not have the easy recall of previous work; the current more stable staffing situation is beginning to compensate. The written work of average attaining students shows a good coverage of topics and they can write short passages of self-description and about past events. Generally, students of all abilities are confident in speaking in structured exercises, although pronunciation is literal. Students show little instinctive use of French in classroom situations, such as apologising for lateness, or asking for help. Lower attaining students and students with special educational needs (SEN) respond well to work appropriately adapted for them. The written work of higher attaining students in Year 8, who have started German as a second foreign language, in addition to French, shows a level that is moving them towards the levels expected of first language learners.

145. By the end of Year 11, the standards of work seen in French, and that seen in German by the small group of students studying both languages, are at expected levels. Higher attaining students in French show good recall of language, and use the range of tenses and the complex sentences that attract the higher grades. Students in Year 10 are confident in speaking, and manage some difficult sentence constructions. Lower attaining students and students with SEN respond well to teacher encouragement, and are able to answer simple questions about their holidays.

146. Overall teaching is good. A current staffing vacancy necessitates teaching by a non-specialist, which is satisfactory. However, having a series of temporary teachers has disadvantaged some groups. This has depressed standards and created negative attitudes to language study. A strong feature of all the teaching is the good relationships formed with students. Teachers offer support, and praise effort and accuracy equally. As a result, students have good attitudes to language learning. The work done in groups with lower attaining students, students with SEN and some who have English as an additional language (EAL) is far better than is often found. Behaviour is good. Students are prepared to try, are willing to ask questions and ask for help. Teaching raises standards by challenging students to use phrases beyond those offered by the course book, and by insistence on full sentences rather than short replies.

147. Teachers have good personal language skills and teach largely in the foreign language. As a result, students become accustomed to the speed of the foreign language and can pick out key information from authentic tape recordings. Lesson planning takes account of the attainments in the group. This enables students of all abilities to succeed. Oral work is a regular feature of teaching, but teachers do not use a wide enough range of strategies to make it the language of the classroom. Teachers' experience of examination preparation gives students good guidance towards optimum results. Teachers regularly assess students' work, keep good records and set targets. Work is marked with supportive comments, but there is inconsistent use of National Curriculum Levels or GCSE grades. As a result the opportunity to discuss specific language learning targets is missed.

148. The quality of the teaching and the positive attitudes created result in good progress by students of all abilities in all age groups. A recent permanent teaching appointment is beginning to compensate for the limited progress of some groups who had instability of staffing. Problems of staffing explain the discrepancy between the standards seen in this

inspection and the below average performance in GCSE results. The head of faculty shows good leadership through her own commitment, and, by example, in her teaching. She has implemented school policies for raising attainment. The monitoring of teaching has helped teachers improve their performance, and this has contributed to the good progress since the last inspection. However, some progress has been hindered by the instability of staffing. The development of the draft scheme of work, and of a faculty handbook, would support teachers in their work. The permanent members of the department share the commitment of the head of department to raise standards. The department has the capacity to address the issues brought to its attention, and to raise the contribution of modern languages to the school.

## MUSIC

The quality of provision in music is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths:

- Teaching is good and recognises the individual strengths and weaknesses of the students.
- Students have a positive approach to the subject and are eager to learn.
- Most students acquire the basic skills needed to read music.
- Extra-curricular activities and tuition give opportunities for students to extend their performing skills.

### Areas for improvement:

- The level of attainment in music across the school.
- GCSE music as a regular and successful option.
- Resources available to the department, especially in information and communication technology (ICT).
- The repertoire of teaching strategies employed to improve further the learning opportunities.

149. Because the school entered only two students for the GCSE in music in 2001, and only one in 2000, it is not possible to make reliable comparison with national averages. Eight students commenced the course terminating in 2000, indicating a high dropout rate in that year. This is contrasted by the commitment and observed standards of the nine students of the current Year 10 group. The teachers' assessments reported for 14 year olds in 2001, were close to with the national average. As there are no results available for 14 year olds in music in 2000 in the school, it is also not possible to assess any trends in results.

150. Standards seen in Year 9 during the inspection are below average. However, as most students entered in Year 7 with below average musical attainment and a balanced music curriculum has only been on offer for them for one year, their achievement has been satisfactory. There is currently no music course in Year 11, but in Year 10, the standards of work seen during the inspection are good; students achieve well.

151. All students acquire a good grasp of basic notation and an ability to relate this to musical experience. There is lively discussion of musical concepts. In Years 7 to 9 the students' musical creativity is limited, relying closely on models to develop stylistic and technical understanding. For example, in work creating an accompaniment to a learned melody in Years 8 and 9, many students convincingly supplied the supporting chords, but very few adapted these to their own rhythmic patterns to enhance the performance. When reading printed music, many students, especially in Years 7 to 9, rely excessively on the

alphabetic names and, therefore, when playing lose the contour of the melody. Year 9 students evaluate music on a simple level aurally. For example, most students recognised the entries of the sitar in a recording of Norwegian Wood, but few were able to articulate well nuances in the chords used. In Year 10, students are bolder at improvising melodic material in particular. Several freely transpose chord patterns into different keys to suit their creative needs. About three quarters learn instruments out of class. Some of these students perform and compose with certainty and confidence. They are on course for high results. Although students research areas of study using the Internet, they do not use ICT to develop musical compositions. Whilst no singing was heard in class during the inspection, a small and enthusiastic extra-curricular choir meets regularly.

152. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good; it is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good at GCSE Level. Activities are well timed to keep the students' interest and to reduce the restlessness, which is prone to develop when the entire class is being addressed during teaching, because of the easy access of keyboards on the desks. Individual students' needs are carefully identified, which produces a good working climate and good teacher-student relations. Question and answer strategies seek to identify and resolve issues of potential difficulty in practical work at the keyboard, and to develop independent thinking. However, inappropriate finger techniques go unchecked, and this constrains the pace of progress. In particular in Year 10, students' concentration and pace of work is good, enhanced by supportive individual help from the teacher. Students have therefore the expectation that they can succeed. Homework, often of a research nature, is regularly set, but instructions are sometimes unclear as to how the research will be presented.

153. Opportunities for integrating listening appraisal are occasionally overlooked. For example, when students perform individually or in groups before the class, the lack of focused guidance for the rest of the class on how to listen and what to listen for sometimes resulted in distracting, though not malicious, behaviour. Although, in general, students collaborate well together and show respect for each other's achievements, addressing such issues would heighten their identification with the subject and its potentialities. Assessment of students' work lacks full rigour. For example, termly target goals have not been regularly monitored. Weaknesses in assessment mean that planning for higher ability students to undertake appropriate extension activities are also insufficiently developed. Whilst emphasis is primarily on practical work, issues of literacy are addressed, albeit on a modest scale, with opportunities for students to write freely, use writing frames, and develop essential musical vocabulary. Correction of spellings in written work is, however, occasionally overlooked.

154. The schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 are good, with appropriate breadth, especially with regard to the music of different cultures. However, due to lack of adequate resources for integrating ICT equipment, students are unable to meet the statutory requirement of using ICT to create, manipulate and refine sounds. This situation also needs addressing in the preparations for GCSE music. Quality microphones are needed to be able to record practical coursework for presentation, and the lack of Internet audio resources either in the department or in the library limit the quality of research that can be undertaken in the prescribed areas of study. Headphones function erratically, and, if not addressed, can lead to distracting noise levels building up in class. Lack of instruments other than keyboards limits the students' direct musical experience.

155. Forty students benefit from the five visiting instrumental teachers from the Havering Music services. Whilst still modest in numbers, there are regular extra-curricular activities, including a choir, a brass band, GCSE supplementary classes and contributions to successful arts productions. These do much to enhance the social and cultural life of the school.

156. Overall, the subject has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The current teacher in charge of music has been in position since Easter 2001. Through the appointment of a young teacher with energy and clear vision for raising standards, there is potential to improve steadily in future years. In order to improve further, the school needs to address the issue of resources for music, already outlined in the Raising Attainment Plan for the GCSE. As musical activity grows and flourishes, the school needs also to review the accommodation for the subject: the main teaching room is already barely large enough to accommodate comfortably all of the activities demanded by the National Curriculum. As GCSE numbers grow, there will also be a need for more space for individual and group practice. The departmental handbook should also be updated to take account of all whole school policies.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths:

- The GCSE results in 2001 were almost in line with the national average, and better than in most subjects in the school.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Students' attitudes are good and they have very good relationships with their teachers.
- Very good extra-curricular provision, including the extensive opportunities for outdoor activities.

### Areas for improvement:

- Schemes of work that reflect the activities taught and are adapted to the needs of students in terms of the four areas of National Curriculum, risk assessment, information and communication technology (ICT) and literacy and numeracy.
- Curriculum planning to record and monitor the length of time allocated to each programme of study throughout each year group and key stage.
- Further analysis of results and assessment data to establish students' achievement and to improve curriculum planning.
- The maintenance and cleaning of the poor quality facilities.

157. In the 2001 GCSE examinations, approximately half of the students entered attained A\* to C grades, which is almost in line with the national average. The majority of students achieved well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Students attained better in physical education than they did in most of their other subjects. There has been a rising trend in examination results over the previous five years.

158. In the majority of lessons, students of all abilities, in all years, make good progress. Their achievement is good overall, and illustrates well the department's commitment to the inclusion of all students. Students' physical skills are average on entry to the school, and by the time they reach the end of Year 9 their attainment is above the national expectation. Boys in Year 7 have good co-ordination, and showed this when throwing the javelin for the first time. However, a few boys in Year 7 are unfit, and lack agility and speed when learning

how to long jump. The majority of students in Year 9 have acquired good basic skills in bowling, and they understand the importance of line and length in their delivery. However, students' analytical and evaluative skills are not well developed. Teachers miss opportunities to develop this strand of the National Curriculum, partly because there are no schemes of work to provide the guidance.

159. The standard of work observed in GCSE classes during the inspection was in line with the national average. The majority of students attain well in the practical aspects of the course. However, the knowledge and accurate use of technical language by Year 11 boys is limited, for example when describing the circulatory system. Teaching does not correct inaccuracies rigorously enough to improve students' depth of understanding.

160. Students in Years 10 in the non-examination classes attain standards in line with those expected nationally. All boys understand the importance of warming up for activities, and do so independently and effectively. A few boys are able to lead fitness activities with a very good knowledge of health and safety. One reason for attainment levels being lower in Years 10 and 11 is the limited curriculum time of one hour each week. This is insufficient to keep the boys fit and to improve their standards.

161. A few individual students and teams achieve high standards in district and county competitions in athletics, rugby, football, basketball, cricket and outdoor activities. The attainment of these talented students is well above the national average, and they benefit considerably from the opportunities offered by their teachers. The large numbers of students who attend extra-curricular activities demonstrate the very positive involvement of students in the subject. Students appreciate the extra time given to them by their teachers. However, 20 percent of Year 10 students did not participate in physical education during the inspection week. Their lack of enthusiasm differs from the majority of students who are keen, active and energetic.

162. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good, and this promoted good learning in the majority of lessons. In the best lessons, students benefit in their learning because a wide variety of challenging tasks are set and very good relationships have been established with them. Teachers make every effort to ensure the progress of all abilities of students by dividing Years 8 and 9 into groups of lower and higher attaining students and by using a very good range and size of equipment. Learning support assistants provide good support for lower attaining students. Teachers recap previous work and share the lesson objectives at the beginning of the lesson with the students. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, and their demonstrations give students a clear visual image of the activity and show them how to improve their skills. Equipment and activities to match the students' needs are well chosen. Although opportunities are missed for the department to develop numeracy skills in lessons, literacy is developed as key words form part of the good displays in and around the physical education areas, and appropriate terminology is used, for example in health and fitness demonstrations.

163. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides a good varied programme of activities at Key Stage 3. However, there are no records or curriculum maps showing the time allocated to each programme of study in each year group and key stage. It is not possible to identify where curriculum time has been lost in previous years, for example when the swimming pool has been out of order. The department provides opportunities for students to take on leadership responsibilities, for example the FA coaching badge. The 'Footloose Club' gives very good opportunities for developing personal and social skills in addition to participating in outdoor education activities, such as orienteering.

164. The head of department provides satisfactory leadership. Resources have been developed well to provide for all levels of ability. The experience of the teachers is used well in the departmental organisation and management. Displays are good and a very good level of extra-curricular activity is provided. Schemes of work are not adapted sufficiently so as to provide teachers with progressive, activity-based guidelines. Whilst monitoring and evaluation of teaching activities are undertaken, examination results have not been sufficiently analysed to fully inform curriculum planning. Accommodation is poor. The department has a sports hall, outdoor swimming pool and limited playing fields. The swimming pool is empty because of maintenance problems, the sports hall is in a very poor state of repair and the games pavilion is old and dilapidated. All facilities are poorly cleaned and in need of major repair work.

165. Assessment procedures for students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are developing well. However, students are not informed about their levels and future targets in a form that they can easily understand, and this can only be developed effectively when schemes of work are in place. The department has been accepted for the sports co-ordinator programme and this will provide links with feeder schools.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

### Strengths:

- The subject has good leadership from an experienced practitioner.
- Teachers make lessons interesting and relevant.
- Most students have a positive attitude to the subject and achieve well.
- Teaching and learning is always satisfactory and sometimes good.

### Areas for improvement:

- Standards in both key stages.
- Assessment needs to be more secure and inform lesson planning.
- Learning resources, particularly for Year 10 and 11 students.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) needs to be introduced to enhance learning.
- Management tools, such as a subject handbook and an improvement plan, need updating.

166. The quality of provision has improved since the previous inspection, but lack of continuity in the teaching, due to staff changes and absence, has not yet impacted on standards which overall remain below expectations at both ages 14 and 16.

167. Students enter the school with a limited background knowledge and understanding of religion. During Year 7 they successfully acquire a basic knowledge of Hinduism and aspects of Christianity. In work seen during the inspection, a sound understanding is being acquired of the significance of symbolism in religion. Students' knowledge of Christianity is further strengthened in Year 8. The investigative work seen on the theme of Resurrection enables students to gain an appreciation of how people come to different views of religious events. In Year 9 lessons, students are beginning to recognise the impact of belief on behaviour as they consider rites of passage into adulthood in different religions and cultures.

168. At Key Stage 4, all students study a short course leading to GCSE accreditation. Over three-quarters of students are usually entered for the final examination. In 2001 the

percentage gaining grades A\* to G was broadly in line with the national average. Just over a third gained grades A\* to C which, although below the national average, represented good achievement in relation to their other subjects. Lack of continuity in teaching in this academic year means that the standards overall in Year 11 are low in comparison to last year, and to those achieved nationally. In work seen, some students of average ability are able to appreciate how religious values affect decisions on, for example, abortion or euthanasia. However, students' general lack of religious knowledge and understanding limits the extent to which they can discuss such matters, and low literacy skills restrict their ability to express their thoughts clearly in writing.

169. At both key stages, teaching and learning are satisfactory and sometimes good. Common strengths of much of the teaching include good lesson planning, good subject knowledge and challenging work for all students. Because of the sound or good teaching, students from the full range of attainment achieve well. Students with special educational needs are clearly identified in the teachers' planning. They have good support where a learning assistant is available; otherwise support is no better than satisfactory. Students of higher attainment are not so clearly identified, and the extension work that is often available on worksheets is there for those students who work faster rather than being a further challenge to students' thinking.

170. Lessons are well planned and clearly structured, with a variety of interesting tasks that help students achieve by building up their knowledge and understanding step by step. There is a brisk pace of learning with time-limited tasks, but very often not sufficient time is given for students to reflect on their work or for the teacher to check students' understanding. Questioning to reinforce learning is often limited, and teachers assume too much prior knowledge on the part of the student. It is for these reasons that learning in many lessons is not as good as it might be. Teaching reinforces good behaviour, positive attitudes, and respect for differing viewpoints.

171. The head of subject has only been in post since January and, although not a trained specialist, is an experienced religious education teacher. Leadership is good, with a clear vision for development. The curriculum meets the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus, but detailed schemes are not yet in place for Years 7 to 9. Textbook resources are particularly poor for students studying for the GCSE. Currently there are no outside speakers or visits to religious sites that would widen the range of opportunities for learning. Also, ICT is not used to enhance learning, as it should. Teachers' records of marking are good, but assessment is not yet in line with the targets set in the Agreed Syllabus. The management of the subject is not yet sufficiently secure, and procedures, planning cycles and monitoring arrangements are not in place.



## DRAMA

Provision for drama is **very good**.

### **Strengths:**

Well above average standards at the GCSE.

Very good teaching and learning.

Very good assessment and evaluation procedures.

Strong contribution to students' social and cultural development.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- Continue to raise students' levels of literacy and spoken English by demanding accuracy of expression.

172. Drama was introduced three years ago and high standards have already been established. Results at the GCSE for the last two years have been above the national average for all schools, and well above the national average for boys, with an increasing number last year attaining the higher grades.

173. Attainment in years 7,8 and 9 is good. Students of all abilities, including those with special educational needs (SEN) and English as an additional language (EAL), are willing to participate. They are able to demonstrate good physical and facial expression, and controlled movement.

174. Students in Year 7 exploring Shakespeare's 'The Tempest' are able to employ a range of drama techniques. These include establishing a time line to link events chronologically in the play, maintaining disciplined movement through the use of slow motion and showing understanding of character through thinking aloud technique. Year 8 students are able to improvise using the stimulus of the Degas painting 'L'Absinthe'. They are able to use the frozen picture technique when constructing expressive tableaux.

175. Achievement by all students in Years 7, 8 and 9 is good. By Year 9, students are able to consolidate a range of performance techniques they have learned. Working on two scenes from 'Macbeth', they read and use Shakespearean language well. They are able to select lines from the play and convey thoughts, emotions and atmosphere through sound collage and voices of conscience techniques. They show increasing awareness of audience through appropriate positioning and voice projection. They also show good understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses through self-evaluation.

176. Overall attainment and achievement in Years 10 and 11 are good. Physical performance standards are very good. Year 11 students responding to the stimulus of a Barnado's advertisement think quickly and creatively. They are able to express the thoughts and emotions of a potential suicide at different stages of his life through the very effective use of clipped dialogue and both naturalistic and symbolic frozen pictures. However, there is more variation in students' written essays, with lower attaining students sometimes hampered by clumsy expression. Spoken responses by some of these students are also relatively inarticulate. Despite this, there is clear evidence of good progress over the two years of the GCSE course, including that by students with SEN and EAL. They show good understanding and appreciation of different drama performances and theatrical conventions.

177. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is very good. Lessons are very well planned and structured to meet the needs of all students. Teachers' relationships with students are firm but good-humoured. Clear parameters, and the progressive development of drama skills, ensure well-controlled movement and expression by the

students. Very good classroom organisation is provided using a variety of groupings and tight time targets. High expectations and stimulating resources lead to inventive and imaginative physical expression. Teachers give very clear learning objectives, very clear criteria for success and for how to attain a higher level, and planned opportunities for detailed evaluation. These result in purposeful, focussed work with students having an informed and immediate idea of their progress and having the appropriate language to self-evaluate. Teachers also build well on students' misunderstanding and weaknesses, for example taking as a point for development the inability of some Year 10 students to take constructive criticism from their peers.

178. The subject is very well led and managed and has a high profile in the school. Drama makes a strong contribution to the students' social and cultural development. There are regular opportunities for students to take part in productions and to see performances by theatre groups both in and outside school. Resources and accommodation have been built up over three years. There is new stage lighting, and there are two carpeted drama studios that black out and are equipped with lecture chairs. However, the smaller studio is really too cramped for the effective movement of large classes.

## **MEDIA STUDIES**

Provision for media studies is **very good**.

### **Strengths:**

- Very good teaching and learning.
- Good resources.
- Very good opportunities for the practical application of information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- Continue to raise students' levels of literacy and oracy by demanding accuracy in written and spoken expression.

179. Standards in media studies are good. Results in the GCSE examinations have improved over the last three years. For the year 2001, the percentage of boys attaining grades A\* to C were in line with national averages for all schools and above the average for boys' schools. Attainment of all students observed in lessons, including those with special educational needs (SEN), is good. Visual presentation is very good. Students are proficient in the use of desktop publishing, digital photography and the manipulation of images and text. They demonstrate this through simulated magazine covers, illustrated magazine articles, film posters and their own designed advertisements for an anti-smoking campaign. Some of these are produced to a near professional finish.

180. Achievement over two years is good. Students are able to demonstrate a growing understanding of media institutions, their economic priorities and how they appeal to mass audiences. Year 10 students, for example, are able to simulate 'making a pitch' to gain financial backing for a new 'blockbuster' motion picture. Year 11 students are able to select which mythical news stories are most likely to appear on the front page of a tabloid newspaper, based on informed research into recent trends. They show increasing confidence in using appropriate media terminology, and a developing understanding of media concepts. However, despite constant teacher encouragement, some average and low attaining students in Year 11 are still reluctant to develop their ideas at length during discussion, and some written expression is clumsy.

181. Teaching and learning are very good, and sometimes excellent. Lessons are very well planned and structured to meet differing needs. Learning objectives are clearly communicated and key language effectively displayed on the whiteboard. Stimulating resources and a range of teaching styles and classroom groupings ensure that students of all abilities are engaged and also have the resources to make informed choices. For example, Year 10 students studying trends in motion pictures watched a trailer for a relatively unsuccessful film to decide why it had failed. They were able to make observations and deductions about last year's biggest selling films through data supplied from the Internet. They could then demonstrate their understanding by devising the outline of a new film and arguing in role for financial backing.

182. Students' work is clearly marked and assessed, with clear guidance for improvement. On occasions however, the teacher does not insist that the few reluctant students expand their oral contributions.

183. The subject is well resourced and provides very good practical opportunities within and outside lessons for students to use ICT independently. One lesson per week is timetabled so that students can use the computer room. The home-school magazine is produced entirely by the media students and they all contribute. They also video film all school drama productions. The videos are dubbed, reproduced and available for parents to purchase.