

INSPECTION REPORT

RICHARD CHALLONER SCHOOL

New Malden

LEA area: Kingston-on-Thames

Unique reference number: 102606

Headteacher: Tom Cahill

Reporting inspector: Paul Sadler OIN: 1611

Dates of inspection: 4-7 February 2002

Inspection number: 190515

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Modern (non-selective)

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 11-18 years

Gender of pupils: Boys

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mark Draper

Date of previous inspection: 18 November 1996

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12499	Marie Durkin	Team inspector	English English as an additional language	
23528	Andrew Bird	Team inspector	Mathematics Equality of opportunity	
22691	Raymond Woodhouse	Team inspector	Science	
23469	Aneurin Davies	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
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15462	Clifford Blakemore	Team inspector	Geography Business education	
3832	John Ayerst	Team inspector	Art Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils and students?
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Richard Challoner is a non-selective Catholic voluntary-aided school for boys aged 11-18 years. There are 698 boys on roll, which is smaller than the average secondary school, but the school is over-subscribed. There are 88 males in the sixth form. Pupils come from a variety of social and economic backgrounds and despite the presence of selective schools in the area, standards on entry are average; they are above average in some subjects such as science. The proportion eligible for free school meals (7.1 per cent) is below the national average. The proportion speaking English as an additional language (7.5 per cent) is higher than in most schools, the highest number having Korean as their first language. Eleven per cent of pupils are of ethnic minority heritage, including four per cent from white ethnic minorities. There are 21.1 per cent of boys with special educational needs, of whom 2.5 per cent have a Statement of Special Educational Need. This is broadly in line with the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school providing very good value for money. Standards are very good in English, mathematics and science at the ends of Years 9 and 11 and pupils achieve very well throughout the school. In 2001 at the end of Year 9, the proportion of pupils achieving the levels expected was well above the national average in all three subjects, as was the proportion achieving higher levels. At the end of Year 11, 61.5 per cent achieved at least five GCSE passes at the higher grades A*-C, compared with 50 per cent nationally. These results represent a considerable improvement since the last inspection in 1996 and are also even higher when compared with boys nationally. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are a particular strength; leadership and management of the school are good.

What the school does well

- Consistently good teaching in all subjects.
- Pupils' standards and achievement, especially in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, art and modern foreign languages.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and attendance.
- Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare.
- The commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed.

What could be improved

- The quality and use of ongoing assessment at Key Stage 3.
- The use of the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation to plan future development.
- The accommodation for art and physical education.
- The provision for information and communication technology at Key Stage 4.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1996. Since that time there have been consistent improvements in pupils' standards by Years 9 and 11. In 1996, 15 per cent of the teaching observed was unsatisfactory; this has been eradicated. Of the key issues identified in that inspection, those concerning meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs, dealing with disapplication of the National Curriculum, providing an adequate music curriculum, improving provision for the professional development of staff, improving the co-ordination of personal, social and health education and dealing with health and safety matters in technology, have all been dealt with successfully.

Some work remains to be done on the monitoring of school policies, the assessment policy and meeting the requirements for information and communication technology for pupils in Years 9 and 11. Some

progress has been made on these issues. Overall, the school's improvement since the last inspection has been good.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Standards are well above average in tests and examinations in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9. GCSE results are well above average in English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology, business studies, French and Spanish. GCSE results are above the national average in music, information and communication technology and physical education, but are below average in geography and history. Overall, these results represent an improvement since the last inspection. There was something of a decline in results at the end of Years 9 and 11 in the period 1997-99. Improvements in Year 2000 and 2001 have more than made up for this and the school's improvement remains stronger than the national trend. The results represent good achievement on the part of pupils. In most areas, pupils' standards are at the national average on entering the school although strengths outweigh weaknesses in English, mathematics and science. Their skills in art, technology and PE are, however, below average. In work seen, particular strengths were in the use of extended writing across a range of subjects, oral skills in modern foreign languages and the standards of presentation of work using information and communication technology (ICT). The school sets and usually meets appropriate and demanding targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are mature and responsible. There is very little bullying or oppressive behaviour and the school has very good procedures for dealing with those incidents that occur.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Excellent relationships exist between pupils and with staff. Where pupils are encouraged to learn independently they respond very well.
Attendance	Very good. Both authorised and unauthorised absences are below the national average.

Pupils arrive for school and individual lessons promptly and are ready to learn. They respond with maturity and good sense to the high expectations of teachers. They work hard. Out of lessons, behaviour is also mature and sensible. Pupils are polite, showing consideration for other pupils and adults. There is very little bullying and the school's procedures for dealing with that which does occur are very good. When pupils are given responsibility they respond very well. In some lessons they are given too little opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is consistently good throughout the school, in almost all subjects for pupils of all ages. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. Teaching to the end of Year 11 is good or very good in all subjects except music where it is satisfactory. Teaching in art, modern foreign languages (both French and Spanish) and in business education is very good. Particular strengths are the management of pupils, which is excellent, teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects and their expectations of pupils, which are very good. There are no real weaknesses, although the quality and use of ongoing assessment is satisfactory only. Similarly there are few weaknesses in pupils learning, which is good overall. The strengths here are their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding, the effort they make and their pace of working, which are all very good. Provision for the teaching of the skills of literacy and numeracy are good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. Not all pupils have their full entitlement to ICT at Key Stage 4.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are supported well and have access to the full range of learning opportunities
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Teachers have good strategies to support pupils, but wider support is patchy.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for moral and social development is very good. For cultural development it is good and for spiritual development satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good provision is made, especially for promoting good behaviour and attendance.

The school has a good partnership with parents who make a good contribution to their children's learning. With families spread over a wide area, the effectiveness of links and the quality of information for parents are satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory, with strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills being good. There are good links with partner institutions, especially the nearby girls' Catholic school. Not all pupils in Years 10 and 11 have their full entitlement to information and communication technology; this does not comply with the requirements of the National Curriculum. The Christian ethos of the school makes a very positive contribution to pupils' moral and social development. The school has very good procedures for monitoring pupils' welfare, but those for monitoring some aspects of academic progress are only satisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The school is well-led by the headteacher; some senior staff have excessive workloads.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Legal requirements are met and governors support the school well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good, especially the monitoring of teaching and the effectiveness of staff.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources are used well to promote high standards.

Good leadership has enabled the school to achieve its aims of promoting high standards and good teaching through a strong Christian ethos. It is currently seeking to establish future development priorities. There is a very good shared commitment to improvement and good procedures to support staff and manage their performance. Governors and staff are well aware of the school's many strengths, less so of its few weaknesses. Some senior staff have an excessive workload and better use could be made of new technology in the management of the school. The adequacy of staff, accommodation and learning resources is satisfactory overall. The use of teaching staff and learning resources is good; accommodation is much improved since the last inspection, but that for art and PE is unsatisfactory. When using its financial resources the school makes good application of the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The expectations of staff.• The good teaching.• The leadership of the school.• The school is approachable.• Behaviour is good.• Boys like school and are making good progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some parents believe that there is too little or too much homework.• Some believe that the school does not work closely enough with parents.

The inspectors agree that those things that parents like about the school are strengths. They judge that homework is appropriate and is used well and that most aspects of its work with parents are at least satisfactory, although the geographical range of pupils sometimes makes communication difficult.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

There are 88 males in the sixth form, which makes it just over one half the size of the average. The sixth form provision is jointly planned with Holy Cross Girls' School and males and females are taught together in groups that may be taught in either school. The proportion of males eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Eighty-four per cent of students stay on in full-time education at the end of Year 11, but less than one half of these stay at the school, which is low. The school loses the higher attaining pupils, in particular to FE colleges and selective schools in the area. Some students move to sixth forms in other local schools. Most students stay for the two-year AS/A-level course and a small number for GNVQ courses. The normal entry requirement for A-level courses is five A*-C grades.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

This is a good sixth form providing good value for money. The long-standing partnership with The Holy Cross Catholic Girls' School works well and provides a good range of courses at A and AS level. It also develops students' social skills in the mixed environment. The Catholic ethos of both schools is maintained and there are good arrangements to support students' welfare. Leadership and management are good. There is limited opportunity to study vocational courses, but a thorough evaluation of likely demand is undertaken annually. A sudden increase in the number of students with English as an additional language has led to these receiving inadequate support.

Strengths

- Good teaching of A and AS-level courses.
- Students' opportunities to develop their social skills.
- The attitudes and behaviour of students.

What could be improved

- Support for students with English as an additional language.

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

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
English	Overall, the quality of provision in English is satisfactory . Strengths include the good subject knowledge and understanding of teachers and the good relationships that inspire trust and respect. Areas for improvement include improved monitoring of entry criteria to enhance the students' standards and the need for increased challenge to motivate and excite the students both in lessons and to encourage independent learning.
Mathematics	Overall, the quality of provision for mathematics is good . Strengths include good teaching and learning and relationships between students and teachers. Areas for improvement include marking and assessment and support for students with English as an additional language.
Chemistry	Overall, the quality of provision is good . Strengths include good teaching, assessment and the quality of resources. Areas for improvement include standards of students' work and monitoring of their progress.
Physical Education	Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is good . Strengths include good teaching, the curriculum offered and the students'

	achievements. The area for improvement is the quality of the accommodation.
Geography	Overall, the quality of provision is satisfactory . Strengths include the quality of teaching, the use of ICT and the use of fieldwork. Areas for improvement include the standards attained and the monitoring of students' progress.

Other work seen in the sixth form was of good quality, especially the quality of teaching and standards attained in art and design and in the key skill of numeracy.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Very good support and guidance are given in most respects, although it needs improvement for students with English as an additional language.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Good leadership and management enable effective use of the resources available. The federation with a girls' school enhances equality of opportunity for students.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The good teaching and relationships with staff. The help and encouragement they get. The choice of courses and the information about them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Careers advice and guidance. The information they get about their progress.

The inspectors agree that the aspects of the sixth form that students like are strengths. They also agree that, in some subjects at least, information about their progress could be improved. Careers advice and guidance is satisfactory.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils enter the school with average standards overall. Their standards in English, mathematics and science as measured by national test results at the age of 11 are a little above average, but tests on wider skills including those needed for art, technology and PE give lower results.
2. By the end of Year 9, test results in English, mathematics and science show standards to be well above average. These results represent good achievement, which was confirmed by pupils' written work and that seen in lessons. For example, in a Year 8 mathematics lesson, pupils drew on previous knowledge to solve complex numerical calculations using calculators. In a Year 9 English lesson in which a newspaper article was analysed, pupils were able to recall the spelling of words with silent letters; for example, 'psychology'. Standards are high in art and design and are well above average in design and technology and ICT. Standards are above average in other subjects except in modern foreign languages and music, where they are average. Overall, pupils achieve well in almost all subjects by the end of Year 9. For instance, in a Year 9 Spanish lesson, boys were able to recall and pronounce correctly difficult phrases such as 'dobla a la izquierda'; in Year 8, they could recognise and recall up to 20 phrases associated with sport. In a Year 8 PE lesson focussing on vaulting techniques in gymnastics, boys understood the importance of good body control and take-off techniques in order to ensure safety and success.
3. At the end of Year 11, the school's GCSE results significantly exceed national averages. This represents well above average standards and maintains a trend of improvement over time. In individual subjects, pass rates at grades A*-C in 2001 in almost all cases exceeded national pass rates by at least 15 per cent. Of particular note were the well above average results in art and design, English, French, Spanish business studies and design and technology. Results in other subjects were above average except in history and geography, which were below the national average.
4. These results represent very good achievement by the end of Year 11 when compared to pupils' average standards on entry to the school and, as at the end of Year 9, are reflected in high quality work seen during the inspection. In a Year 10 science lesson, pupils showed good understanding of the relationship between energy, power and time in calculating the energy consumption of appliances in their homes. In a Year 11 English lesson, they showed mature reflection and sophisticated inference in their analysis of the characters and plot in 'Lord of the Flies'. Scrutiny of work in mathematics showed increasing use of a wide range of symbols and equations used in appropriate contexts to calculate with accuracy. In skills of literacy and numeracy, generally pupils show good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs also show good achievement and in line with other pupils attain better results than might normally be expected; those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress, dependant on the skills of individual teachers.

Sixth form

5. Overall, the pass rate at A-level grades A-E improved from 71 per cent in 1996 to 87 per cent in 2001. The average A-level points score, which reflects the overall standards of individual students, has consistently been well below the national average in the recent past. This reflects the fact that many higher attaining pupils from Year 11 attend other schools and colleges for their sixth-form studies. The relatively small numbers of candidates for individual subjects means that comparison with national data is difficult and should be treated with caution. In 2001, results in art and design, media and sports studies were above the national average. Those for mathematics were in line with the national average and those for other subjects, including English, chemistry and geography, which were inspected in full, were below the national average. At AS level in 2001 the number of candidates was small; 81 per cent were

passed at grades A-E, although a high proportion of students who start sixth-form courses go on to complete them.

6. Much of the work seen during the inspection represented average standards for Alevel. For those subjects inspected in detail, standards were average in mathematics and chemistry, above average in PE and below average in geography and English. These differences arise because of the small numbers and varied background of the students, who range from those achieving very good GCSE grades within the school to those who arrive at 16 with limited English and without relevant prior qualifications. In English, students were developing skills such as the use of contrast and economical language. In work on 'Othello' they were unambitious, keen to give the 'right' answer and failing to give a range of interpretations. In mathematics, students were able to use previous knowledge accurately, for instance, of the coefficient of restitution and elasticity in work on the behaviour of particles. In chemistry they can easily identify oxidation and reduction and speculate on unexpected observations. They have good practical skills, for instance, in making and using chemical solutions of accurately known concentration. In geography, students have good knowledge of places and geographical terms, but their writing lacks the detail required of the higher grades at A level. Students with special needs achieve higher standards than might be expected, but those with English as an additional language are less successful, especially if they have recently entered the school without a background of GCSE. Standards in the key skills of literacy and numeracy are satisfactory; this is also the case in ICT although there is greater variation.
7. Achievement in the sixth form is good. In those subjects inspected, it is good in mathematics, chemistry and PE and satisfactory in geography and English. Students enter with modest GCSE passes and achieve sound A-level results. In PE, for instance, they can analyse their own weaknesses and adapt their technique to overcome them. In the key skill of numeracy they learn to estimate a sensible answer in order to check the likely accuracy of their calculations. Students with special needs achieve well, but those with English as an additional language often have difficulty understanding new work. They are insufficiently prepared for A-level learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The pupils have very good attitudes to school and their work; this is better than reported at the last inspection. This is reflected in the way they conduct themselves around the site and in lessons. For example, in a Year 7 geography lesson the pupils were interested and enthusiastic when they were studying land use in cities in the United Kingdom. In physical education lessons all pupils, in every year group, are very keen to learn.
9. The pupils who were interviewed during the inspection expressed positive views of the school. All said that any bullying is dealt with swiftly and that tutors and other teachers are very supportive if they have any problems. The inspection team judges relationships between staff and pupils and pupils and pupils as excellent.
10. The majority of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire feel that behaviour in the school is good. The inspection team agrees with these views and judges behaviour to be very good overall. Pupils move around the school site sensibly and when queuing outside classrooms. All teachers have high expectations of the way pupils conduct themselves in lessons and as a result behaviour in lessons is good overall. The pupils were very well behaved during a Year 9 Spanish lesson on directions and street plans. The behaviour of the pupils was also very good whilst adding fractions in a Year 10 mathematics lesson. The number of fixed period exclusions has increased since the inspection of November 1996, but the number of permanent exclusions has decreased. The prospectus clearly informs parents and pupils that the school uses the sanction of exclusion as part of its disciplinary procedures.
11. The personal development of the pupils is very good. The good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is successfully encouraging the pupils to work together and have an understanding of their place in society. In lessons, pupils are well prepared and organised. They enter classrooms sensibly, settle quickly and are ready for learning. In physical

education lessons the pupils are always dressed appropriately. Pupils are able to work successfully in groups; this was evident during a good, Year 10 physical education lesson when the pupils were working on a GCSE assessment. They support each other well during practical science lessons; for example, in a very good Year 9 lesson when the pupils were reviewing breathing. Opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility in the life of the school. The school council is made up of representatives from every year group and meets with the headteacher to discuss pertinent issues such as litter and the price of food in the canteen. Pupils complete their homework and they are encouraged to develop their independent learning skills through the use of the learning resource centre before and after school and during lunchtimes. There are also opportunities to use information and communication technology across the curriculum to further promote independent research skills. The majority of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire are happy that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.

12. As reported at the previous inspection, attendance rates at the school are well above the national average and rates of unauthorised absence are well below. The very good rate of attendance is having a positive impact on standards of learning.

Sixth form

13. Students have very good attitudes to school and their work. For example, in a good, Year 13 mathematics lesson the students responded well to the brisk pace and intellectually demanding work when they were modelling and solving situations of successive impacts. Most of the students are well motivated in their learning and prepared to work hard and think for themselves. However, this is not always the case during some English lessons when teachers spend too long on their expositions. The students co-operate well with the head of sixth form and their tutors, with whom they enjoy excellent relationships, as with their fellow students; there is a good atmosphere of mutual respect, which is enabling them to make good progress in their learning.
14. Behaviour is very good. Students know what is expected of them and respond accordingly. Numbers of fixed term exclusions fluctuate, but permanent exclusion remains very rare. Attendance rates are very good; students are expected to be in school at all times unless they are involved in lessons through the federation.
15. The personal development of students is very good. Through the way they conduct themselves, they are good role models for younger pupils in the school. The students are developing good personal and study skills and they contribute to the life of the school through such activities as the school council, the Year 7 team building day and as prefects.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. A notable feature of the teaching in this school is that it is consistently good. All teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory and over three-quarters was good or better. This consistency extends across all ages and subjects. A particular strength is the very high expectations of teachers. As a result, pupils move from lesson to lesson knowing that they must arrive and settle to work promptly. They then listen to their teachers and other pupils and work at a brisk pace throughout the lesson.
17. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of their subjects. Examples include a Year 10 business education lesson in which the teacher had a very clear understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of different production methods and was able to use a wide range of everyday products as examples to promote pupils' interest and understanding. In Year 11 design and technology the teacher displayed depth of understanding of the assessment requirements and was able to use the work of past pupils to show strengths and weaknesses in the work of the current class. Teachers not only have the requisite knowledge, but are able to use and apply it in a way that motivates pupils and enables their understanding to develop rapidly.

18. Lessons are planned well. Resources are available and are often of a high standard, for instance, the range of resources available to help pupils to understand glacial features in a geography lesson. Teaching methods are effective, especially those designed specifically for the needs of boys. Examples include the use of repetition and competitive games in a range of modern foreign language lessons and the use of work on 'The Mafia' in drama, which also challenged stereotypical male role models. Some teachers can get carried away with their enthusiasm for the subject and explain things at too greater length, occasionally leading to boredom.
19. Teachers' management of pupils is excellent. This leads from the expectation that work will start promptly, but staff also use strategies to ensure that all pupils are involved in the lesson, for instance, in PE. Time and resources are used very well, as are staff who support pupils with special needs. In the case of pupils with English as an additional language, support depends on the skill of the individual teacher and is variable.
20. The use of assessment is much more variable, due to the lack of a clear school policy. Some subjects, such as English, use assessment well, but in others such as ICT there is no clear rationale. The quality of marking varies from subject to subject. By Year 10, pupils have a clear understanding of their likely GCSE grades, but younger pupils have little idea of their progress in most subjects. The use of assessment at Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory, although it is satisfactory overall.
21. Generally homework is used well. It relates to classroom work and is used to extend pupils' knowledge. It is less effective for the high attaining pupils who may be asked to complete tasks that they have already completed in class.
22. Pupils learn well because they stick to the task and pay attention to the teacher. They are interested in the work and make very good effort, for instance, in PE where all take part to the best of their ability; there is no attempt to avoid the activities. In art, they use their own ideas to develop skill in a range of techniques. Pupils with special needs learn well and often achieve at the same rate as their peers. The learning of those with English as an additional language is satisfactory. When supported well by the teacher their learning is also good, but this is not always the case.

Sixth form

23. The consistently good teaching continues in the sixth form. It has many similar features to teaching in Years 7 to 11. In geography, a newly qualified teacher used very good subject knowledge of the impact of human activity on ecosystems to encourage students to think of examples for themselves. In chemistry, the teacher used examples and questioning well, again to encourage students to apply the concept to unfamiliar situations. In all subjects, there are high expectations and an easy rapport between teachers and students that encourages a good level of independent learning, for instance, in PE where staff convey their personal enthusiasm for sport. The use of assessment is satisfactory as students build on their understanding of their GCSE performance in order to get a clear view of what they need to achieve in order to attain particular grades at A level.
24. In the five subjects inspected in detail, teaching was good in mathematics, chemistry, geography and PE and was satisfactory in English. The differences concerned teachers' encouragement for students to think independently and the match of the work to the individual needs of the students. These features were better in the other subjects than they were in English. Good teaching of sixth-form students was also noted in art and design, design and technology, other science subjects and in the key skills of numeracy and ICT.
25. Students' learning is good as they work hard, acquiring new skills and knowledge. In mathematics, for instance, students work in pairs and present their findings, learning from each other. In a number of subjects, such as PE and art and design, they learn to recognise their

existing weaknesses and build on what they have learned. Students with special needs learn satisfactorily, but those with English as an additional language can flounder, for instance, in English, as many have no background of GCSE.

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

26. The school provides learning opportunities for its pupils that are satisfactory in both quality and range. The curriculum is sufficiently broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils and, apart from information and communication technology in Years 10 and 11, all National Curriculum requirements are met. Religious education is provided at all stages and pupils in Years 7 to 11 have personal, social and health education lessons. In Years 10 and 11, in addition to the National Curriculum subjects and religious education, pupils also choose additional subjects from a satisfactory range of options. A small number attend a link course at a local college of further education.
27. The teaching time is above the nationally recommended minimum. The time offered to most subjects is adequate, but time for music is limited in Years 7 to 9, where opportunities to extend activities are restricted. While most of the requirements of the National Curriculum are met, not all pupils have appropriate access to information and communication technology in Years 10 and 11. The school has developed good and effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills and learning is supported well across the curriculum. In art, for example, pupils are reminded of the mathematical features of pattern, symmetry and contrast. All departments are helping the pupils to learn key words in the vocabulary associated with each subject.
28. The provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good and has improved since the last inspection when the co-ordination of the subject was insufficient to ensure systematic coverage throughout the school. The PSHE co-ordinator and heads of year have taken responsibility for specific aspects, for example, study skills and written programmes for all year groups to meet pupils' needs as they progress through the school. The pupils receive one lesson a week and all teachers are involved in the delivery of PSHE. Sex and health education and education about harmful substances are successfully incorporated into PSHE. Outside speakers are also used to support the programme including the police and careers service.
29. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is sound. The special educational needs department and the school show a commitment to promoting an inclusive education and work hard to ensure equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. Targeted literacy support lessons in Years 7 to 9, in-class support in mainstream lessons, along with the option support group withdrawal sessions in Years 10 and 11, mean that pupils with special educational needs are enabled to access the full curriculum on offer.
30. Appropriate alternative provision is made for those 14 pupils, who are disapplied from modern foreign languages in the National Curriculum. Those with Statements of Special Educational Need and those at the School Action Plus stage all follow the option support group course. This disapplication is generally well documented in their records.
31. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. However, in order to assure consistency of experience, the school needs to monitor this provision more systematically. Several departments, for example, do not have the required statement showing their contribution towards this important dimension.
32. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory overall. This is a school with a positive ethos that values reflection, self-examination and the consideration of the non-material aspects of life. A good sense of the spiritual is woven into many aspects of the life of the school. The school's mission statement states that every pupil is given the opportunity to learn sensitivity, justice, generosity, compassion and self-discipline. However, the contribution made by subjects of the curriculum is uneven; opportunities are missed in some areas to promote spiritual

development. Subjects that do make an active contribution include history, art and music. In art, for example, pupils have very good opportunities to reflect on their drawings of local elderly people. Similarly, the display of stained glass in the school foyer is evidence that pupils are taught to reflect and contemplate the non-material aspects of life.

33. Provision for moral development is very good. Clear moral values are expressed in the school's mission statement. Teachers are very good role models for the boys, ensuring that they are taught a clear sense of right and wrong and that they demonstrate their concern for individuals and society. Pupils feel safe and valued in school and believe that staff know them well and treat them fairly. Pupils are encouraged to maintain the rules of fair play when involved in sporting activities. Teachers are not afraid to confront the moral implications of difficult issues, such as the recent terrorist activities in America. All subjects make a strong contribution and opportunities are also targeted through the new PSHE programme. Assemblies also make a good contribution.
34. Provision for social development is very good. The school encourages pupils to take responsibility and develop an understanding of living in a community. There is an active school council and a prefect system. A variety of after-school clubs provides opportunities for social development. Pupils are encouraged to work in small groups in their lessons. The Year 7 camp to the Forest of Dean helps pupils to develop their social skills in a different setting.
35. Provision for cultural development is good. The school strives to develop an appreciation of the pupils' own cultural traditions in many ways. There are regular drama and musical productions. In history, pupils visit the battlefields of the First World War, in Spanish there are visits to Barcelona and in drama there was a recent trip to Hungary. A respect for other cultures is fostered through a number of subject departments. Occasionally, however, opportunities are missed in this area; in English, for example, the theme of racism in 'Othello' was not considered.
36. The school makes good provision to ensure that pupils have equality of opportunity for all its activities. The personal and social education course promotes equal opportunities and challenges stereotyping and there are good examples of pupils learning to value other cultures within the curriculum. Overall, provision for personal, social and health education is good.
37. The arrangements for ensuring the continuity of pupils' learning when they transfer from the primary schools are satisfactory and are improving. Good contacts have been established with two of the schools and efforts have been made to build closer contacts with others, but the school takes pupils from a considerable number of primary schools. Pupils are placed in two equal groups in Year 7 and sets are arranged within those groups according to assessed standards. From Year 8, pupils are placed into ability bands and sets. Arrangements for movement between the groups are satisfactory.
38. On the whole the timetabling arrangements are satisfactory, but there are shortcomings that constrain achievement. In mathematics, for example, teachers do not always teach regularly in the same rooms and have to carry resources and equipment around the school. Classes are taught more than once on the same day and some older groups have triple lessons that are too long on some days.
39. Pupils who learn English as an additional language receive specialist support from a specifically appointed teacher working with special educational needs department staff. Some pupils are withdrawn from lessons for a brief, intensive course of teaching and return to lessons when they can understand and cope with the work. This is not consistent and some pupils flounder in lessons because of a lack of specialist support. The achievement of pupils who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory in the main school and unsatisfactory in the sixth form. This is because of the stringent course requirements with which some inadequately prepared students are unable to cope. The majority of pupils learn very quickly and adapt very well. In many subjects, teachers try to address needs, but are confounded by a lack of sufficient training.

40. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular opportunities. There is a good variety of sporting activities and there are further strengths in drama and music and in the programme of visits that the school provides. Numerous visits are arranged for pupils by teachers who teach subjects across the curriculum. The visits are very well designed to support and encourage learning.
41. Good links are established with the community that often enrich the curriculum or provide additional experience for pupils. For example, the police and the fire service visit the school to talk to pupils about their work. The school choir and the bands visit local churches and old folks' homes to give concerts. Pupils also visit old folks' homes to sit with the ladies and gentlemen and paint their portraits. Links have also been made with the local Korean community to help to support pupils from that community with limited English. Very good links are established with local secondary schools where the school is part of a sixth form federation to provide joint courses. Good links are also established with the local careers service that supports well the good provision that the school makes for careers education.
42. The school has made satisfactory progress in developing its curriculum since the time of the previous inspection. It has improved the provision for personal, social and health education, but time for music remains unsatisfactory and the provision for information and communication technology in Years 10 and 11 still does not meet requirements.

Sixth form

43. The curriculum offered for students in the sixth form is satisfactory. It is intentionally an academic curriculum, but it meets well the needs of students who choose to continue their education at the school. It is relevant to their needs, meets their aspirations and most students achieve well in the sixth form. Access to the sixth form is good. The provision is made in partnership with a federation of neighbouring schools and mostly in partnership with the Holy Cross Girls' School. Within the constraints of an academic curriculum the curriculum has a satisfactory range and breadth of subjects. Pupils also follow a good programme of key skills, but those wishing to learn PE and games for recreation must join classes of younger pupils. Opportunities to follow vocational courses are very limited. Support sessions are available for students with Statements of Special Educational Need who are following Post 16 courses. Key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are taught both through A-level courses and separately.
44. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and mirrors what exists in the rest of the school. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Although there are good opportunities for students to reflect on their own and other people's lives, not all subjects make an equal contribution to this aspect. Students' spiritual development is further enhanced through the provision of special masses to celebrate the beginning and end of their course. Students in the sixth form have increased opportunities for responsibility through, for example, the mentoring programme. They are also involved in organising a 'Leavers' Ball' and regular social events. They are given good opportunities to develop their interview skills by the local Rotarians.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The school's procedures to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety are very good. There is an appropriate health and safety policy, the site manager oversees risk assessments and the governors take effective responsibility for health and safety. The school has successfully addressed a key issue from the previous inspection by installing dust extraction equipment in the technology accommodation. The school has adequate numbers of qualified first-aid staff and appropriate arrangements are in place for the management and reporting of injuries. Child protection procedures are good. The deputy headteacher is the named responsible person and has been trained for this role. He delivers training to staff to ensure that they all aware of the procedures that are in place.

46. Pastoral support for the pupils is very good throughout the school. Through tutorials and PSHE the tutors and heads of year have good information about the pupils' individual circumstances and the challenges they face that may affect their learning. Many of the parents at the pre-inspection meeting said that they feel this is a very inclusive school; staff are very supportive and encourage the pupils.
47. There are very good procedures for monitoring attendance. The tutors and heads of year promptly follow up any instances of unexplained absence or lateness. Registers are taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions and at the start of every lesson and lessons start on time because the pupils move purposefully during changeover periods.
48. The procedures for monitoring and promoting positive behaviour are very good and those for eliminating oppressive behaviour are excellent. A system of rewards and sanctions is in place and it is applied consistently throughout the school. The school is committed to a policy of inclusion and this allows some pupils to remain in school despite behavioural problems. The safety net timetable is well managed and supporting a number of pupils, keeping them motivated in their learning. A number of outside agencies are also involved in supporting pupils, including the educational psychologist and the education welfare officer. The pupils are in agreement that any bullying in the school is tackled promptly and effectively. The school's good programme for personal and social education makes an effective contribution to the overall provision for ensuring pupils' welfare.

Sixth form

Assessment

49. Assessment in the sixth form is satisfactory. Day-to-day marking is often good, with helpful comments to enable students to improve their work, although there are inconsistencies between subjects, reflecting the weak overall policy in the school. A particular strength is teachers' advice to individual students, for instance, in PE and chemistry.
50. There is limited analysis of students' progress or of their strengths and weaknesses as known from work prior to the sixth form. As a result, students' own knowledge of their progress is limited. This has a serious impact on the achievement of some students, most notably those with English as an additional language.

Advice, support and guidance

51. There was a good return of the students' questionnaire used for the inspection and it revealed very positive responses to many aspects of the school. However, there were a few areas that received negatives. These included the view that students are not well advised by the school or careers advisers on what to do after leaving school, the school does not provide a good range of worthwhile activities and enrichment courses and that they are not kept well informed about progress in relation to the qualifications they hope to get. However, the students who were interviewed during the inspection expressed enthusiasm for the sixth form and did not agree with these negative views. Inspectors judge that the range of opportunities is good and careers guidance is satisfactory. Twenty-three per cent of the students who responded to the questionnaire do not feel that the school listens and responds to the views of its sixth-form students. The inspection team has sympathy with these opinions as a number of sixth-form students are Korean and there are communication problems that are not sufficiently supported through funding for English as an additional language.
52. The school's procedures to ensure the sixth-form students' welfare, health and safety are very good. The students have excellent relationships with their tutors and the head of the sixth form. There are effective procedures for monitoring attendance in the sixth form and procedures for monitoring and promoting positive behaviour are good. An ethos of mutual respect has successfully been created between staff, students and their peers.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. Overall, the school has a good partnership with parents. There was a good response to both the pre-inspection questionnaire and the parents' meeting. Nearly all agree that the school expects their children to work hard and that they are making good progress. A small number of parents do not feel that they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. The inspection team agrees with these parents as annual reports to parents need to be more focused on what pupils have achieved and sharper targets set to improve future performance. Meetings between parents and teachers are well attended and help to keep parents aware of the progress their children are making.
54. The pupils' diaries are very well used as a means of communication between teachers and parents. Tutors regularly check them and detentions are given if parents have not signed them. Tutors also monitor the diaries to ensure that homework is set and that pupils complete it.
55. There is good information provided for parents through the newsletters, 'Headlines' and the school magazine, 'Chalk and Talk'. The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents meet statutory requirements. Meetings are held for parents, including those of pupils transferring from primary schools, options in Year 9 and open evenings for prospective sixth-form entrants. The required home/school agreement is an integral part of the prospectus and parents also have to sign a declaration that they have read and understood the criteria for admission to the school. The school benefits from parents and friends of the school who raise money through events organised by the parent teacher association. All these factors show that parents are having a positive impact on the work of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The school is well led by the headteacher, who was in post before the last inspection. The school has continued, successfully, to promote high standards through its Christian ethos. There is a commitment to equality of opportunity, which is reflected in the curriculum and in the way pupils with learning and language needs are integrated into the school. In particular, the school has developed a good strategy for monitoring teaching and managing teachers' performance, which has eradicated weak teaching. Induction of new staff, including those new to the profession, is good.
57. The school monitors and evaluates its own performance well and has a clear understanding of its many strengths and of how these can be improved further. There is less readiness to recognise, or at least to share, the school's few weaknesses. For instance, senior staff have acquired new responsibilities over a period of time, resulting in some having an excessive workload. A comparative review of their workload is needed. The school uses new technology in its work less effectively than most secondary schools, for instance, the management system in place is not used to its full capacity. The impact of leadership and management has been positive in improving standards of pupils' work and the quality of teaching. The current deployment of senior management responsibilities has had the effect, in a limited way, of depressing standards in a few subjects.
58. The governing body is very supportive of the school and carries out its legal duties effectively. The governors' annual report to parents is a very thorough and useful document. The committee structure is effective. Financial planning is good as are the procedures for ensuring that best value is obtained in the purchase of goods and services. The new accommodation is well planned and effective, especially the learning resource centre. The pupils have access to a good number of up-to-date computers and other modern technological resources. Accommodation for art and PE remains unsatisfactory, although the best use is made of what is available. Staff are well qualified and well matched to the demands of the curriculum; there is currently no non-specialist teaching. The number of support staff is relatively small. Those employed are efficient and effective, but inevitably teachers spend significant time carrying out routine tasks such as photocopying.

59. The governors and senior staff believe, rightly, that the objectives established in the past have largely been achieved. They are evaluating carefully the various options for the school's future development, such as specialist school status. Again, rightly, they wish to ensure that whatever path is chosen can be followed within the school's existing commitment to the achievement of high standards within a secure, caring and inclusive Christian environment. The school has very good capacity to achieve this and deserves every success in building on its current achievements.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

60. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The long-standing federation with a nearby Catholic girls' school works well, although the arrangements necessarily place some constraints on the rest of the school timetable. Nevertheless, the presence of girls in the school adds advantages that outweigh the constraints. They take a full part in the life of the school, for instance, in helping to lead assemblies. This enhances the reflection of the school's aims and values and offers models of equality for younger pupils.
61. The work of the head of sixth form enhances the provision. She has good relationships with students, their parents and external agencies, which broadens the range of opportunities for students. Students' progress is monitored effectively and weaknesses, for instance, in the support for students with English as an additional language, have been identified. This is a sixth form that offers good opportunities for its clients. In particular it offers continuity of education and good teaching to those who wish to remain in the secure Christian environment it provides and who need a high level of support in order to achieve worthwhile results, particularly at A level.

Resources

62. Resources are used efficiently and there is no significant cross-subsidy, either of the sixth form by the rest of the school or vice versa. The federated arrangement means that most classes are of reasonable size, indeed some are quite large. The staff have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to teach students successfully and their performance management and professional development is effective. The high quality and low turnover of staff in this area, where living costs are high, reflects their good level of job satisfaction, which is enhanced by the opportunities offered by sixth-form teaching.
63. Other aspects of the sixth form are resourced adequately, although the unsatisfactory accommodation for art and design and PE places some constraints on the range of opportunities these subjects can offer.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve further the already very good quality of education that the school provides, governors and senior staff should:

- (1) Improve the quality and use of ongoing assessment, especially at Key Stage 3 by:
 - Improving the consistency of marking and grading across the school;
 - Making pupils more aware of their own progress and potential.

See paragraphs 20, 53, 72, 83, 92 and 113.

- (2) Make better use of the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation to plan future development by:
 - Identifying the school's few weaknesses and planning to address them;
 - Establishing a long-term direction for the school through consultation on the options available with parents and other stakeholders.

See paragraphs 57 and 59.

- (3) Improve the quality of accommodation for art and design and the range of accommodation for physical education.

See paragraphs 58, 63, 102, 157 and 202.

- (4) Improve the provision for information and communication technology at Key Stage 4 by:
 - Ensuring that all pupils are taught the full National Curriculum;
 - Monitoring and assessing their individual progress.

See paragraphs 26 and 125-129.

Sixth form

- (1) Improve the level of support for students with English as an additional language by:
 - Providing appropriate guidance as to their most suitable courses of study;
 - Ensuring that staff have the necessary skills and training to support these students in their work.

See paragraphs 25, 39, 51 and 176.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	148
	Sixth form	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		75

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	3	44	68	35	0	0	0
Percentage	2	30	46	24	0	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	0	6	23	6	0	0	0
Percentage	0	17	66	17	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	610	88
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	41	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	18	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	90	5

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	55

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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 pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	121	-	121

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	109	101	98
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	109	101	98
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	90 (67)	83 (74)	81 (77)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	46 (23)	61 (56)	53 (34)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	93	108	94
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	93	108	94
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	76 (72)	89 (90)	78 (68)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	32 (31)	60 (63)	45 (26)
	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 registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	117	-	117

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	72	111	114
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	72	111	114
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	62 (59)	95 (94)	97 (97)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	47.8 (47.9)
	National	39.0 (38.4)

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

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

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	35	1	36

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	35	1	36
	Average point score per candidate	12.6	12	12.6
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.9	17.4

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	35	1	36	0	0	0
	Average point score per candidate	12.6	12	12.6	N/a	N/a	N/a
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.9	17.4	9.8	11.4	10.6

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

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0	N/a
	National		81

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	7
Black – other	10
Indian	8
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	622
Any other minority ethnic group	42

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	33	2
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	42.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.5

Education support staff: Y7– Y13

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	240

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

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

Key Stage 3	25.3
Key Stage 4	21.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-01
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	£
Total income	1,967,886
Total expenditure	1,947,607
Expenditure per pupil	2,811
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,775
Balance carried forward to next year	38,054

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9.5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

698

Number of questionnaires returned

361

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	46	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	49	48	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	45	2	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	57	12	3	1
The teaching is good.	45	52	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	49	9	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	36	1	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	30	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	35	50	9	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	66	33	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	43	1	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	49	7	2	9

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents were concerned about behaviour on public transport, but felt that the school had dealt with this well. They were also concerned about the relative timing of reports and parents' evenings. Parents, correctly, felt that the school was inclusive and of high quality.

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

ENGLISH

64. Overall, the quality of provision in English is **good**.

Strengths

- Strong leadership of the department encourages high standards.
- Teaching is good; there is some very good teaching.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Weaker classroom management in less successful lessons reduces pupils' achievements.
- The encouragement of independent learning.

65. Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 9 are well above the national average and well above the national average for schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds. English results are better than those in many other subjects. The results reflect an upward trend with a particularly marked improvement in 2001.

66. In the GCSE examinations in 2001, English results are well above the national average and well above the national average for similar schools. Results in English literature are also well above the national average. Results in tests and GCSE represent good achievement since they are higher than would be expected from the pupils' standards when they entered the school.

67. In the work seen during the inspection, standards by the end of Year 9 are well above average. This represents good achievement and improving standards, because, when the pupils joined the school, their overall standards were above average. Writing, in particular, has improved, showing particularly good achievement. Most pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of literacy skills. Their oral skills are good in classroom discussion and they are keen and confident speakers in formal situations. A speaking and listening assignment, seen in a Year 9 lesson, showed a high calibre of communication and use of persuasive language from confident, well-prepared pupils. Writing standards are well above average; pupils have grasped key skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar and their work is generally very well presented. Writing is also creative; for example, one Year 9 pupil's essay based on their first assembly at Richard Challoner included the lines, 'There was a deathly hush like the still of night and all we could hear were approaching footsteps. A tall imposing man with glasses gazed down on us'. The work of a minority of pupils is less well presented. Recent initiatives to improve boys' standards include a sensitive choice of texts and rigorous teaching focused on test criteria. These are beginning to have a positive impact. The standards of all pupils are benefiting from a wide choice in the variety of writing assignments and increasing use of ICT to aid the presentation of work. However, examples of poetic writing are comparatively infrequent, as at the time of the inspection Year 9 pupils had not studied poetry.

68. Standards in English by the end of Year 11 are well above average. The standard of work in English literature is also well above average representing good achievement since the end of Year 9. Pupils write with understanding and appreciation of Shakespearean texts and pre-twentieth-century poetry. They read a wide variety of texts and successfully make complex inferences. A key feature in the pupils' work is their ability to place texts in a historical context and then compare it with modern society. They can evaluate character and theme at a sophisticated level and produce detailed writing assignments. Overall, presentation of work is careful and consistent. Pupils can analyse media texts and research references. They use standard and non-standard English appropriately and are respectful listeners. A minority of pupils rely too heavily on the teacher and their work is brief, lacking in detailed understanding and insight.

69. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They receive good support from their class teachers and special educational needs staff, to plan lessons and devise strategies for success. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. This is because some pupils flounder in lessons without specialist support.
70. The quality of teaching and learning is good and there are examples of very good teaching and learning. In a small minority of lessons, pupils learn less than they should because the pace is too slow and successful classroom management strategies are lacking. In a small minority of otherwise satisfactory lessons, work for different groups of pupils is not matched closely enough to their needs, so some are insecure and take up unnecessary amounts of the teacher's time asking questions. In the very good lessons, there is a brisk pace; pupils are clearly motivated and a large amount of work is completed. Pupils enjoy exchanging ideas with each other and their teacher in an atmosphere of achievement and respect. Pupils respond well to their teachers' care for their achievement and this helps to develop the very good relationships evident in the department. In a Year 10 lesson on 'A View from the Bridge', the pupils thoroughly appreciated working to produce a structured, well-informed essay. They consciously shaped language for a purpose and presented their findings confidently. This is because the teacher sensitively drew out their ideas and encouraged their thinking. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils worked furiously to draft and polish their work on 'homelessness' and spoke meaningfully about their tasks in pairs. They produced a large amount of work and enjoyed it immensely; the teacher's enthusiasm infected the pupils, whose careful and sensitive analysis encouraged and developed their love of the subject. In a small minority of lessons, pupils are not sufficiently involved by the teacher, so they lose interest and less work is produced. In the literacy 'catch up' lessons pupils become chatty and produce less work because 45 minutes is too long for these short, sharp, focused activities.
71. The teaching of drama as a separate subject in Years 7, 8 and 9 increases pupils' confidence and understanding in both English and drama. It is well taught and pupils consequently make strides in learning that increase their self-confidence and social skills. It enriches the curriculum and enhances the good spiritual and moral provision in the English department. Pupils work on well-devised units of work, which match their interests as in the lessons on Arthurian England. A minority of pupils is boisterous and requires more effective classroom management techniques at times. Related extra-curricular activities, such as the very successful drama productions, celebrate pupils' achievements and increase their involvement and participation.
72. The leadership and management of the English department are good. The head of department has a clear educational vision that inspires both teachers and pupils. Teachers share the preparation of schemes of work and departmental responsibilities; as a result, they regularly discuss what is best for the pupils. The head of department observes lessons and shares good practice in improving teaching styles, classroom management and pupils' learning. Procedures for assessment are clear and used by the head of department to set individual pupils' targets. Pupils' work is now cross-checked for progress, standards and capability and this ensures that pupils are all pushed to reach their potential. Some inconsistencies in the marking of work mean that a minority of usually low attaining pupils' work is less stringently assessed and lacking in clear targets for improvement.
73. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Pupils' standards have improved and literacy teaching has been used effectively to target further improvements in English language. Relationships are very good and provide an effective learning climate. Accommodation is much improved. The quality of assessment is variable; the majority of marking is of a very high standard, but some is less detailed, informative and rigorous. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to extend their independent learning when the teacher talks too much and the pupils are passive. The English departmental action plan's main priority is to target pupils working around grade B to help their improvement to higher grades at the end of Year 11, so continuing the earlier success of the department in improving the standards of middle and low attainers. By giving challenging opportunities to extend pupils' skills and thinking, homework is used effectively to support pupils' learning. Standards are rising and, with the shared commitment to

sharing good practice and attention to identified areas for improvement, the department has the capacity to succeed even further.

Drama

74. The provision of drama in Years 10 to 11 adds depth and breadth to the curriculum. Results were above the national average at GCSE this year and pupils achieved well and gained results that were better than those in many other subjects that they studied. Standards in the work observed during the inspection were above the levels expected nationally and pupils achieve well.
75. The quality of teaching is good, resulting in good learning. The head of department is committed to the subject and contributes to the wider education it gives the pupils. In particular, the drama teacher successfully places emphasis on encouraging decision making skills and providing opportunities for pupils to think for themselves. At the same time, the teacher's requirements for pupils to develop their own portfolios of work, visit theatres and empathise with others help to develop their independence. Pupils learn well because lessons are well prepared and maintain a good pace. Consequently, all pupils gain the maximum insight into the subject as well as gaining knowledge of a wide range of sophisticated drama skills. Emphasis on varied activities, personal development and collaborative work enhances the enjoyment and motivation of the pupils. In a year 10 lesson, dramatic presentations were professional, carefully planned and executed and skilful thanks to the high expectations of the teacher and carefully targeted lesson planning. A wide range of extra-curricular activities contributes to the positive ethos of the school. In the prestigious annual production, staff and a large number of pupils work with many departments, which encourages collaboration in different disciplines and develops the very good relationships. More forceful classroom management skills are required for the small minority of boisterous pupils whose attitudes occasionally affect their learning.

Literacy

76. Literacy skills across the curriculum are above average and supported by good provision. The National Literacy Strategy has been adopted to improve standards across the school. A range of texts, in all subjects, encourages the use of technical and specialist vocabulary. The learning resource centre supports all subjects, for instance, by stocking specialised texts and multimedia materials. This is insufficient, however, and there is a dearth of specialist texts, especially for the sixth form. The English department has dictionaries and thesauruses available in each classroom and key words are displayed prominently in most classrooms to familiarise pupils with these words. Carefully censored Internet access allows pupils to research topics in detail and the learning resource centre is well used for this activity. Pupils discuss their work enthusiastically and sensibly in most subjects and show respect to their peers and staff by listening attentively. However, analytical discussion is not so well developed in all subjects. This is because there is inconsistent emphasis on developing literacy skills across subjects. Writing at length is a feature in English, French and geography and most subjects take the teaching of basic literacy skills seriously. With the support of the English and special educational needs departments, pupils gradually make improvements to their spelling, reading and writing skills. 'Catch up' literacy lessons last too long because pupils become distracted and work output is reduced.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good overall.
- Procedures for the assessment of pupils are good.
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are good.
- There are well planned schemes of work.
- The inclusion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with English as an additional language, is good.
- Achievement by pupils at the end of Years 9 and 11 is good.

Areas for improvement.

- The quality and range of learning opportunities, that will enhance pupils' personal development.
- The teaching of basic skills.
- The development of learning objectives and the use of a plenary session to inform the quality of teaching and learning.
- The development of marking, which offers both teachers and pupils feedback on what they need to do to improve pupil achievement further.

78. In 2001, the proportion of pupils at the end of Year 9 achieving Level 5 or above and Level 6 or above was well above the national average and also well above average when compared to similar schools. The pupils' test results were very close to teachers' assessment particularly at the higher level or above. The average points score for boys is well above the national average for boys in all schools and also well above that for similar schools. The average points score is greater than in English or science. The average points score for mathematics over the last three years is increasing at a faster rate than the national trend for boys. Given that standards in mathematics by pupils at the end of Year 9 is well above the national average and above their prior standards on entry to the school, the department is adding good value over Years 7 to 9.
79. In 2001, the proportion of pupils at end of Year 11 achieving GCSE grades A* to C was well above the national average for all schools and well above average by comparison with boys' results nationally. One hundred per cent of pupils gained GCSE grades A* to G, well above the national average for boys. One hundred per cent of pupils entered early for GCSE mathematics in November 2001 achieved grades A* to C. The average points score for all pupils was not as good as English or science. Over the last three years the proportion of pupils achieving GCSE grades A* to C have been well above the national average and are improving at a better rate than that nationally. Comparing pupils' levels of standards at the age of 16 with national benchmark information, the department is adding good value over Years 10 and 11.
80. The standard of work of pupils in Year 9 seen during the inspection is well above average, particularly by the highest attaining pupils. For example, Year 9 pupils were about to embark on trigonometry after reviewing the ratio between two sides of a right-angled triangle and its internal angles. There are clear examples and complete exercises of topics with all working shown, which enable the pupils to refer to and practise newly taught skills. Elements of all the National Curriculum standards targets are represented. However, examples of extension work for the gifted and talented pupils are not common. The standard of recorded work by the lowest attaining pupils is overall satisfactory, but with some unsatisfactory aspects. For example, brief exercises that involve answers only with few clear examples to guide pupils' thinking and presentation. Inaccurate, untidy or incomplete work is not challenged. Spelling errors and work requiring to be repeated appear unchecked. Standards at the end of Year 11 are well above average. Having successfully completed the GCSE course, the highest attaining pupils cover a range of topics from the GCE AS-level scheme of work. Recorded work is neat, accurate and presented with a concern for layout and appearance. Students' work illustrated good use of previously taught skills such as the rules of algebra when manipulating the formula for the general sum of an arithmetic series with n terms. Work by the average and lowest attaining Year 11 pupils is satisfactory with some good aspects. Work is legible, using a variety of means of conveying information such as graphs, tables, statistics and diagrams and of a higher standard than work completed previously.

81. Achievement in mathematics is good throughout for all pupils including those with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language. The commitment of specialist mathematics teachers and overall quality of teaching and learning is improving pupils' achievement. However, pupils make only limited use of ICT to support learning, owing to the difficulties of access to the school's computer facilities. Students' numerical skills are good, which are strongly reinforced across the curriculum without having to rely on the calculator. For example, Year 7 pupils were observed comparing and contrasting the length of words used by national newspapers, testing their initial hypotheses established at the start of the investigation. Year 11 pupils can apply the rules that distinguish rational from irrational numbers. Students develop a good appreciation of the rules of algebra, which they successfully apply to a variety of topics. Year 9 pupils can simplify algebraic functions and substitute values into algebraic expressions, such as the formulae connected to the circle. Students develop a good knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measurement and progress well in handling data and probability. Students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make similar progress to that of their peers.
82. Teaching and learning overall are good throughout Years 7 to 11. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is good. Teachers' expectations are high and good use is made of challenging questions to promote intellectual effort and deepen understanding. Teachers' planning, exposition and explanation are good. The acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is good, but undermined sometimes by some large classes with a wide range of ability, which is not catered for in lesson plans. Where lessons are very good, teachers' use time and resources to promote good learning and behaviour. For example, the planning of 'bite size' activities that reflect some lower attaining pupils' limited capacity to concentrate. Timetable anomalies, such as split classes and teaching bases, undermine the learning process. Teachers make good use of the limited time provided by learning support assistants. Where lessons are satisfactory, progress is slower because there is an over reliance on the textbook or work does not relate sufficiently to the planned objective.
83. Teaching methodologies generally do not provide sufficient opportunities for small group work, investigations and work at the whiteboard to enhance pupils' personal development. Opportunities for pupils to confirm their understanding, use the technical vocabulary and explain their thinking through 'open' questioning are often overlooked, resulting in teachers leading strongly throughout the lesson. Learning objectives are not shared with pupils at the start of lessons, which undermines their purpose. The use of the plenary session is at an embryonic stage. Students ask few questions in lessons. The number of display boards to support learning and celebrate pupils' work in classrooms and adjacent corridors are minimal and need to be increased substantially. Homework of an appropriate standard is issued regularly, but extension work for the higher attainers is omitted. Work is marked, but ongoing assessment is applied inconsistently and there is a lack of relevant diagnostic annotation in exercise books to support learning, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Students are unaware of the level of standards at which they are working or what to do to improve.
84. The standard of literacy in mathematics is satisfactory. Pupils' reading skills are very good, but there are few opportunities to develop speaking and independent writing skills through discussion and group work. Key words are displayed in classrooms, but key statements are uncommon in the exercise books of average and lower attaining pupils for whom there are few opportunities for using a writing frame included in the scheme of work. Teaching strategies for the implementation of a literacy policy are at an early stage of development.
85. The standard of numeracy is good. Students' prior level of attainment on entry to the school is above national expectations and they achieve well above national expectations by the age of 14 years. Opportunities to apply numerical skills across the curriculum are widespread. The standards of numeracy in ICT, history, art, music, mathematics and science are good. In mathematics, good use is made of the National Numeracy Strategy across Years 7 to 9. In art, pupils make good reference to repetition, sequence, motif, regularity and symmetry. In music, pupils make good use of graph work, notation, sequence and scales. In ICT, pupils use a simple

formula in spreadsheets ordering columns of data to calculate heights and weights. Year 10 and 11 science pupils were observed making very good use of graphs in coursework on the periodic variation in time of a pendulum linking length with mass. In mathematics, higher attaining pupils are encouraged to take part in the national 'Mathematics Challenge' and perform well. The school policy includes key words and methods to support a consistent approach to numeracy. Teaching staff have participated in INSET to raise awareness of the issues of numeracy. Many departments include references to numeracy in their schemes of work, although no whole-school curriculum audit has been conducted to support teaching and learning. Opportunities exist for lower attaining pupils to receive additional support where their basic skills are weak. In 2001, 100 per cent of pupils achieved GCSE mathematics grades A* to G by the age of 16 years. Library books to support pupil revision and coursework are good, however, reading books for pleasure that are suitable for the lowest attaining pupils are limited.

86. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection. There is clear educational direction in terms of the National Numeracy Strategy, raising standards and target setting. Subject specialists have a clear commitment to improving the quality of teaching and learning, although the sharing of good practice as part of their professional development needs co-ordinating more closely. Department policy, such as marking, ICT and literacy need reviewing and their implementation monitored and evaluated as part of a calendar of events that informs teaching and learning. Overhead projectors and other resources that are available are used well and have a positive impact on learning.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are well above average.
- Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of their subject.
- Pupils' attitudes to the subject and their behaviour in lessons are very good.
- Relationships between teachers and students are very good.
- The laboratories are of very good quality.

Areas for improvement

- The use of data to make an annual measure of the work of the department in each key stage.
- The monitoring and development of teaching skills in order to broaden the range of teaching methods.
- The identification of and provision for gifted and talented pupils.

88. Standards in science when pupils enter the school are above average. In national tests in 2001 at the end of Year 9, their standards were well above the national average for all schools and above those of pupils in similar schools. This represents good achievement. The average point score in science for the year group is the best the school has ever attained. There has been an upward trend in the last three years, which is faster than the national trend, particularly in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 6. Standards in science are nevertheless below those in mathematics, but comparable with those in English. Teachers' assessments of pupils' work show a closer correlation with test scores than in Year 2000.
89. In the GCSE examination in 2001 taken at the end of Year 11, almost all pupils were entered for the double science examination. The proportion of pupils gaining grades in the range A*-C was well above the national average, moreover, all pupils entered gained at least a grade G above the national expectation. Comparing results with those that the year group obtained when in Year 9 indicates that overall achievement during Years 10 and 11 is good. There has been a gradual increase in the proportion of each year group gaining at least a grade C in the last three years and in the average point score for successive year groups.

90. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are also well above average, reflecting results in national tests. There is a good balance throughout Years 7 to 11 of all the attainment targets in the National Curriculum. In Year 7, pupils use a good range of photographs and information from textbooks to help them to classify animal groups. As a result, they are able to distinguish between reptiles and amphibians and correctly classify a toad, for instance, with reasons for their decision. By Year 9, pupils are able to calculate the turning effect of a force and they understand that this depends on the distance the force acts from the pivot, as well as the size of the force itself. In Year 11, a higher attaining group considers how body temperature depends on the rate of production of sweat; they are provided with interesting data and most pupils are able to interpret their graphs. Lower attaining pupils cover the same range of topics, but not to the same depth; their ability to identify patterns and then predict results is not so well developed. Pupils particularly enjoy practical lessons; for example, in Year 9, they constructed a model lung to demonstrate the action of the diaphragm in breathing. This led to a lively discussion about the process, reinforced by pupils describing in their own words what happens, both orally and then in writing. Very good learning occurred as a result. Pupils with special educational needs and those from a range of racial backgrounds are well integrated into classes and all are learning well. By Year 11, pupils are able to produce good quality coursework as part of their GCSE assessment, undertaking their own investigations; higher attaining pupils, in particular, produce detailed analyses of their results.
91. The science department has responded positively to the national initiatives in literacy and numeracy. Developments include the display of key words in laboratories, although these are not always relevant to the lesson topic. There is also frequent use of good quality textbooks for reference, both in class and for homework. Pupils learn to express their understanding of scientific principles in their own words through their coursework investigations and the use of full sentences is encouraged when writing answers to questions. There is frequent practise in the use of number. For instance, pupils in a lower attaining group in Year 10 calculate the energy consumption in kilowatt-hours of various electrical appliances by using the power rating and the time for which each is used. There is overuse of bar charts, but by Year 11, pupils are adept at using and interpreting line graphs because of regular practise. In Year 8, for example, they plot line graphs to show how the solubility of salts in water varies with temperature. They respond well to the searching questions about the conclusions that can be drawn from the lines they plot. The use of computers and information and communication technology is inconsistent across the department, with little evidence in pupils' books of their use to improve learning and increase interest. The hardware available within the science department is not yet sufficient for a full class to use and teachers meanwhile do not make full use of facilities elsewhere in the school. As a result, the full potential of technology in the teaching of science is not being used. Learning about animal classification, for instance, would be more stimulating and effective if pupils were given access to appropriate computer software.
92. Teaching overall is good throughout the school and particularly in Years 10 and 11. Teachers' strengths are their very good knowledge and understanding of their subject, thorough planning and high expectation of pupils concentrating and being on-task. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and a good working atmosphere develops in lessons. Most classes concentrate well to the end of the lesson, with teachers clearly in charge and covering each topic in depth. Homework is set regularly, with a clear expectation that this will be completed on time; homework tasks do not always include work to seriously challenge the highest attaining pupils in the class. While classroom practice is good and includes some very good features, there are areas for improvement. There is a tendency for teachers to dominate lessons and to tell pupils, rather than teach them. Too much emphasis is placed on the subject matter when planning lessons and not enough consideration is given to how pupils will learn. As a result, there are still insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and to learn by doing, discussing, researching and thinking. For instance, in a Year 11 lesson on the periodic table, the introduction and demonstration were too long and the teacher failed to engage pupils by asking sufficient questions. The teaching is thorough and at the correct level, but lacks opportunities for pupils to use their initiative. Furthermore, teachers do not always give pupils sufficient praise for good answers, in order to encourage greater participation. Marking is

regular, especially of homework, but the grading of work does not provide pupils with information about how well they are progressing against the national norm.

93. Learning is good as a result of the thorough teaching and because the pupils have a very good attitude to their work. Pupils show respect for their teachers, they have a serious approach to studying and take pride in their work and achievements. They are naturally interested in science, in how things work, such as the electric motor and in patterns and rules, as used in the analysis of foods when testing for starch and glucose. They are encouraged to develop good habits of presentation of written work, which is beneficial when revising for examinations.
94. The leadership and management of the science department are good. The proximity of the six laboratories encourages good teamwork. The teachers are experienced, with a number of senior staff within the department. During the inspection, the teachers coped well in the absence of the technicians. Teachers normally teach their specialist subject, rather than 'science'; this means that they teach to their strength, but that pupils generally have more than one science teacher in a week. Most department policies are sound, but there is often some inconsistency in practice across the department in the application of these policies, for instance, in marking and in the use of information and communication technology. More emphasis could also be placed on the monitoring of the work of the department. For example, the data on examination performance are not used to make an annual comparative measure of the work of the department. Performance management is established, but the department does not yet give sufficient time to the improvement of teaching skills in order to capitalise fully on teachers' strengths.
95. Since the last inspection, the science department has made good progress. Standards in national examinations have improved significantly, because teaching is thorough and pupils are keen to succeed. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils with special educational needs are well known, as are their specific difficulties, so that they also achieve well. There has been some increase in the use of computers, but this is still an area for development. Providing appropriate attention is given to this and other areas requiring improvement, the department has a good capacity for further success.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Standards of work are very high at all levels.
- Pupils of all levels of standards achieve very well.
- Teaching is very good.
- The subject is very well led.

Areas for improvement

- The lack of computers in the art rooms constrain pupils' progress in that area.
- Accommodation for art is of poor quality.

97. In 2001 the proportion of pupils achieving A* to C grades in art at GCSE was well above the national average and pupils were more successful in art than in many other subjects. The results have been very high for a number of years.
98. Pupils' work shows similarly high standards that are well above average at the end of Years 9 and 11. By the end of Year 9, pupils draw confidently with a free hand. Concepts of colour and painting skills are very well established. Pupils observe with very good attention to detail and bring good understanding of form, perspective and scale to their work. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their skills in a variety of media and there are numerous examples of recent work of high standards in the art rooms and around the school in two and three dimensions. Throughout the school the work in art is closely related to the styles and traditions of other cultures. During the inspection there was a strong focus on Indian Art. In a Year 11

class, for example, pupils were exploring the use of colour and symbol to express their own personalities in self-portraits in the style of Indian artists. At all stages pupils have a thorough knowledge of the work and styles of a variety of artists and incorporate those styles into their own work. The school's assessments for the end of Year 9 agree with the inspection findings.

99. Pupils show good achievement in art as they move through the school and in many lessons they make good progress. In particular the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good; they are very well supported and many achieve very well in relation to their prior standards. Pupils with English as an additional language also show good achievement.
100. The quality of teaching overall is very good at all stages. During the inspection all teaching was at least good. Lessons are planned with great care so that tasks match pupils' prior standards and most effectively support progress. Skills development is carefully and consistently promoted so that pupils gain confidence in their ability to represent their observations and ideas in visual forms. Expectations are high and pupils know exactly what is expected of them. All teachers have very good subject knowledge and understanding, which enables them to provide good and effective technical support. Lessons move at a good pace and pupils focus consistently on their work as they develop their art skills and explore the creative possibilities of the task in hand. The content and strategies for each lesson are clear and teachers take great care in describing each detail of the task to be carried out. In all lessons, relationships and control are very good. Pupils, including lower attainers, are very well behaved and always ready to learn; they keep well to their tasks. Homework is used well to support learning. The tasks given for homework are appropriate and marking is positive.
101. Teachers in art are adopting successfully the school's strategies for promoting literacy and playing a part in encouraging numeracy skills. For example, during the inspection a number of classes were focusing on pattern as they printed borders for their work as part of the use of elements of Indian art. There was frequent reference to repetition, symmetry and contrast. Pupils also support their understanding of numeracy through work in a variety of scales and proportions, often using grids to change the scale of a piece of work.
102. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met, but opportunities to work with information and communication technology are too limited. Even so the department makes very good use of its digital camera. It would help if the department had at least one reliable, working computer. The department is very well led and has a clear direction. The policies and scheme of work are of very good quality and provide an effective framework for the development of art skills. The art teachers work hard to extend pupils experiences and take senior pupils to art galleries and exhibitions in Europe and London. Artists visit the school each year to work with pupils. Examples of work of high quality are displayed in many parts of the school and in the art block, which is a poor quality building offering unsatisfactory accommodation for the department. Since the last inspection the high standards reported at that time have been maintained and further developed.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Pupils' work is of a high standard.
- Teachers work hard and teach well to achieve these results.
- Computers are used as a natural tool, to both enhance the presentation of work and also for research and design development.

Areas for improvement

- The limited curriculum time restricts the breadth, balance and range of subjects taught within design and technology.

104. Standards in tests and examinations are well above average at the end of Years 9 and 11. The teachers' assessments of pupils' work at the end of Year 9 in 2001 show that standards are well above average for the proportion of boys' achieving at least a Level 5 and a Level 6. While teachers' assessments are not moderated outside the school the 2001 grades reflect the standards of work seen during the inspection. The GCSE results in 2001 are well above average for the A* to C range; all candidates gained a pass grade. Pupils tend to get similar grades in design and technology to those awarded in their other subjects. The 2001 results are higher than those in Year 2000, although these were also above average. Year 2000 was the year in which results started to rise rapidly from the average standards of 1999 and earlier and there is a clear upward trend.
105. The standards of work seen during the inspection are above average by the end of Year 9 and Year 11 and in both cases, pupils' achievements are good. In Years 7 to 9 pupils develop a range of skills, including a wide range of traditional craft skills. They are able to work with a variety of resistant materials; sometimes choosing the ones that best meet the demands of the design they have produced, as well as electronics equipment and computers. They understand the theory behind the subject such as the various components in an electrical circuit. They learn to make prototypes and from these are able to adapt and refine their ideas. They often produce innovative designs, for example, in the project involving mirrors and in designing and making board games. Their folder work closely follows the design process; the content of this work is above average in the ideas contained and the general level of presentation. Again this is well demonstrated in the work on board games on display. Throughout Years 7 to 9 all pupils use computers effectively, both to enhance presentation and to research. A good example was seen in a Year 7 lesson involving the production of mobiles. Images were found on the Internet, modified on screen and then used as a feature on the product. Most pupils are able to work deftly on a small scale, for example, some neat soldering work was seen in Year 9. This skill had first been learned in Year 7 and the recall of the process and speed of reinforcing their skills showed good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and this is more rapid when learning support staff are present in the lesson. The differences in the standard of work produced tend to be in the quality of presentation because of the very specific guidance and instruction about content and process given in lessons. However, lower attaining pupils show weaknesses in spelling and fail to use the spellchecker when entering text on the computer. The basic skills learned in the earlier years prepare pupils well for examination work in their chosen specialism. The solid foundation enables pupils to work confidently with a range of resistant materials. A Year 10 group show confident skill when working with metal and using the forge. As in earlier years, design folders are carefully produced and show individuality in the designs they contain. Pupils research well; again computers are used well for this. However, a number show lesser skill when they draw by hand; these drawings are sometimes untidy and lack clarity and finesse. Overall though, the work of lower attaining pupils is enhanced by their ability to communicate graphically. The work of all pupils is aided by the very clear instruction and guidance given by their teachers that results in good progress. Design folders are of a high standard with the best reaching almost professional standards.
106. Teaching is good in all years and there is a significant amount of very good teaching. Teachers know their subjects well, this is used well in Years 10 and 11 to ensure that pupils understand the tasks they are to undertake and teachers' knowledge of examination requirements ensures that pupils are able to understand what they have to do to achieve high grades. Teachers are very clear about what they plan to do during the lesson; what is less clear is what they want the pupils to learn. Lesson plans are also unclear about how the work will be adapted for different learners as well as those pupils with special educational needs. There are variations in the amount of emphasis given to developing basic literacy skills and the department has yet to take its full part in helping pupils to develop these and their numeracy skills. When formal teaching takes place all teachers are skilful in using questions that draw out pupils' understanding,

although sometimes these sessions are over-long. Especially in Years 10 and 11, teachers hold a lot of data about how well pupils are achieving, but they are not yet using this information with the boys to help them to set their own targets. Teachers manage the range of activities in their classrooms very well. They create an atmosphere of industry and safe working. For example, in a lesson using soldering equipment Year 9 boys understood the need for safety and a Year 10 class working with hot metal showed a mature approach to the task and equipment. The boys show an evident interest and enthusiasm for their work.

107. This is a small department; teaching is monitored formally as required for performance management, but the close working relationship, room sharing and open door policy all contribute to the sharing of good practice and informal monitoring. Management arrangements are sound. The timetable gives only about two-thirds as much time as the average seen nationally for the subject. This means that while compliant to the requirements of the National Curriculum, the department is not able to provide the breadth and balance expected and not all the Programmes of Study are fully covered. Links with primary schools, the community and parents are quite limited so the industrial influence that could add an extra dimension to the work undertaken in lessons is lacking. This realism would challenge all, but especially the higher attainers, to do even better.
108. There has been good progress since the last inspection report. While there remain concerns about the range of the curriculum, links with industry and the limited technician time to carry out preparation of materials and routine maintenance, standards have been raised, computers are now used frequently, marking is consistent and dust extraction has been provided.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- The consistently good teaching in all years. Teachers are well qualified; they manage pupils well and this leads to good achievement.
- The use of information and communication technology to promote learning.
- The fieldwork provision throughout the school broadens learning opportunities for pupils.

Areas for improvement

- The standards pupils reach in GCSE at Grades A* to C.
- The leadership and management of the subject. The head of department has major whole-school responsibilities and this limits the time and energy to develop the subject.

110. The standards pupils reach at the end of Year 9 are above average. Teacher assessment of pupils' standards at the end of Year 9 show that pupils achieve above average standards and this is confirmed in work seen during the inspection. The GCSE results in 2001 were below the national average at grades A* to C but, almost three-quarters of pupils achieved their expected grade or higher. Pupils did less well in geography compared to their achievement in most other subjects they studied and the results were lower than those achieved in Year 2000.
111. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 are above average. This represents good achievement as pupils enter the school with average standards. Pupils gain knowledge of a wide range of topics drawn from different parts of the world, such as the distribution of earthquakes and understanding of how countries develop their economy. They develop map-reading skills and how to use scale to measure distances, but standards of the minority, more so the lower attaining pupils, is reduced by careless and untidy maps and diagrams. Pupils have knowledge of geographical terms such as meanders and waterfalls and explain how they are formed, but the minority has difficulty remembering terms previously learned and in written work they do not explain answers in enough detail. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, have good computing skills and apply them in geographical contexts like measuring the wealth of countries. Pupils have good speaking and

writing skills except for a significant minority who are weak in spelling. Pupils use number well in many topics. High attaining Year 7 pupils, for example, were able to read the scale on a map to calculate accurately the distance between places, whilst most pupils successfully used coordinates to locate places on maps.

112. From evidence seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 11 are average, better than suggested by the evidence of recent examination results. This represents satisfactory achievement based on their standards at the end of Year 9. Pupils consolidate map skills and produce sound standards in GCSE coursework. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11, for example, used maps effectively and wrote analytical accounts about urban patterns in Guildford. Lower attaining pupils structure projects well and the standard of presentation is improved by the use of computers, but many do not write enough detail in explanations. Many pupils are competent in map skills and produce clear, labelled drawings of the erosion of the coast. High attaining pupils in Year 10, for example, understood the ways by which coasts are protected from sea erosion through a study of the Dorset coast, but frequently other pupils do not link theoretical study to knowledge of places. Pupils know about the sources of energy in Britain and are able to research information about the merits of the different types. High attaining Year 11 pupils, for example, prepared accounts about different renewable energy sources and gave good oral presentations to the class. Other pupils, however, find difficulty in remembering and understanding information about the topic and consequently answers are not well explained.
113. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is good. Teachers are well-qualified subject specialists and plan lessons carefully using a range of resources to support learning. High attaining pupils in Year 9, for example, made very good progress in a lesson about the development of poor countries. The teacher gave guidance about the focus of study and supported pupils' computer-based research on indicators of development of countries. Pupils responded very well by showing independence in learning and commitment to the task. Teachers manage pupils very well. Lessons have clear aims and teachers set a brisk pace with time controls set for different tasks. Pupils respond well by concentrating and co-operating with teachers and as a result, good progress is made in most lessons. Pupils with special education needs make satisfactory progress overall. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, good progress was made about the development of towns because additional resources supported their writing difficulty and a pupil for whom English is an additional language was well engaged in discussion. Pupils' know how well they are doing and work is often marked with supportive comment. There are inconsistencies in the regularity and quality of marking, however, with insufficient attention given to the standards expected of maps, diagrams and accuracy in spelling.
114. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils in Year 10 is good. Teachers plan lessons carefully and regularly reinforce work previously covered. In most lessons teachers manage pupils very well and in conjunction with pupils' good attitude to learning, helps to ensure that time is well used and that good progress is made. Occasionally the minority of pupils, mainly lower attaining pupils make unsatisfactory progress because of poor concentration and negative attitude. Consequently, they do not make enough progress. Teachers are very supportive of the needs of pupils. Pupils with writing difficulty are helped through structured worksheets and leads to improved recording of information. Close attention is given to the preparation of pupils for GCSE coursework tasks and this is improving the quality of written and illustrative work, particularly the higher attaining pupils who develop very good map work skills. The marking of work, however, does not consistently make high enough demands on pupils' effort and achievement and the minority of pupils do not take enough care or develop answers fully. Teachers make good use of available resources. Books and atlases are well used and supplemented by use of computers and well-produced reprographic support materials. These provide a clear focus for learning and relevance for the needs of pupils of different standards.
115. The leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory overall. Staff are well supported, particularly the newly-qualified staff in the department where there is a comprehensive programme of support in place. Opportunities for in-service training are good and the quality of teaching is monitored. Development planning is satisfactory, but needs to focus more on strategies to raise standards at GCSE. The subject is managed efficiently, but due to major

school responsibilities of the post-holder there is insufficient time and energy to plan and implement strategies for improvement or to develop the schemes of work. Assessment of pupil performance is satisfactory, but the use of assessment information is not yet fully effective. The curriculum is good and enhanced through opportunities for fieldwork experience for all pupils.

116. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory overall. Teaching has improved and is now good for pupils in Years 7 to 11. Information and communication technology is making a good contribution to learning and fieldwork provision is a continuing strength of curricular provision. GCSE results are now lower than previously reported.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good; teachers are enthusiastic and committed. As a result, pupils want to learn.
- The department has worked hard to establish good cross-curricular links and also makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- History is becoming a more popular choice in Years 10 and 11.

Areas for improvement

- The departmental development plan needs to focus more clearly on strategies to raise standards in Years 10 and 11.
- Accommodation is cramped and overcrowded and makes it difficult for some kinds of group work.

118. In assessments carried out by teachers, Year 9 pupils gained above average standards in 2001. Inspection of pupils' work in their classes, discussions with pupils and the standards of their written work seen during the inspection all confirm that standards in the current Year 9 are above average.
119. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of a wide range of historical facts, situations and characters. They understand that historical situations have both causes and effects. Pupils in Year 7, for example, can list several reasons for the decline of the Roman Empire. They are learning to use historical evidence critically and are able to arrive at substantiated conclusions. Most pupils communicate this knowledge and understanding effectively in writing and their written work generally does justice to their ideas. Below average pupils, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language have a sound understanding of basic historical events and, when they find written expression difficult, can explain these events orally.
120. Pupils make good progress from Years 7 to 9. At the beginning of Year 7, pupils come into the school with average standards in history. The majority of pupils have achieved above average standards by the end of Year 9. Below average pupils, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make similar rates of progress as those of their peers. On one occasion, however, the lack of in-class support for two pupils meant that they made insufficient progress in a lesson.
121. The percentage of pupils attaining grades A*-C in the GCSE examination in 2001 was both below the national average and below the school average. The proportion of those gaining a pass grade was above average. Evidence from scrutiny of work and observations of lessons indicates that current overall standards are also below average, although most pupils are achieving satisfactorily when judged against their prior standards.
122. Teaching seen during the course of the inspection was good. Pupils learn well as a result. Teachers are enthusiastic and have a good knowledge of their subject. They work hard to make history relevant and interesting. Pupils respond well and generally work hard in their lessons. Teachers explain things clearly and ask questions that build on pupils' answers thus extending

their knowledge and understanding. Just occasionally, however, questions are too difficult for pupils to answer and the focus of the lesson becomes unclear. There is scope, therefore, for teachers of GCSE classes to consider more explicitly the key focus of the lesson and to plan questions more systematically. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and they work well with individuals and small groups to ensure that boys of all abilities understand and make progress.

123. This is a well-managed department. History makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and also to cross-curricular links. For example, pupils learn about the life of Richard Challoner in Year 7. In Year 9, pupils work on World War One statistics in a topic jointly planned with the maths department. The department is beginning to make good use of information and communication technology. Although lessons are taught in specialist rooms, these are cramped and overcrowded, making it difficult to cope with some kinds of group work. In order to improve further, the development plan needs a clearer focus on strategies to raise standards. Sufficient progress has been made in addressing issues from the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Standards and achievement in Years 7 to 9 especially in handling and using information.
- Standards in GCSE information systems.
- The scheme of work providing opportunities for skill development in Years 7 to 9.
- Quality of teaching in discrete ICT courses.
- Pupils' use of ICT for improving the presentation of their work in a range of subjects, including design and technology, geography and modern foreign languages.

Areas for improvement

- Statutory requirements for all pupils to be taught the National Curriculum Programme of Study in Years 10 and 11 are not met.
- Lack of emphasis on control and modelling throughout the school.
- Procedures for assessment of standards and progress across the school, especially in Years 10 and 11.

125. The school's own assessments of standards at the end of Year 9, in 2001, show a well above average proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 or above. The results are not moderated externally and proved to be inaccurate in the light of inspection evidence. Previous years' results showed a wider spread in standards at the end of Year 9. In 2001, the results in the GCSE information systems at the end of Year 11 were above the national average for the percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C and A*-G. One third of the boys in the school follow the GCSE course; almost twice the national average. No assessments are available for pupils who did not choose information systems as an option in Years 10 and 11. Overall, standards are above average at the end of both Years 9 and 11, except for pupils who do not study the subject at GCSE, where there is limited evidence.
126. The school does not collect data on information and communication technology standards when pupils transfer at the end of primary school. Discussions with pupils and observations in Year 7 suggest that standards cover a wide range, but are broadly average overall. Pupils show good achievement throughout Years 7 to 9. Standards seen during the inspection are average overall, but show a wide range across the various applications that the pupils use. Whilst good quality work was seen in word processing, use of spreadsheets and graphical presentation, weaker work was noticeable in control and modelling. High attainers can use functions and formulae confidently in different contexts and use text, graphics and download material to create high quality presentations. Lower attaining pupils can present work well and use the spellchecker. They can follow instructions to complete a task, but are not able to use the technique in other

contexts. Standards observed in GCSE information systems are above average especially in spreadsheets, text and graphics manipulation and presentation. Standards for those not following GCSE are more variable. Standards observed in some other areas of the curriculum are good. Pupils' work is not assessed in ICT across the curriculum and there is no monitoring of coverage of the Programmes of Study. The achievement of those following GCSE courses is good; that of other pupils in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.

127. The quality of teaching is good; it is sometimes very good. It is most consistent in GCSE information systems. Very good planning and preparation of lessons leads to the pupils being on task throughout lessons. Clear lesson objectives are communicated to the pupils and they are motivated to complete them. Lessons are highly structured. In Years 7 to 9 teachers provide pupils with a clear introduction, set tasks on worksheets and facilitate and support the learning. This enables all learners to reach the minimum level, set in the objectives for the lesson, to complete a particular task. For example, in a lesson on using the 'and' function, even the lowest attainers were able to complete a spreadsheet to show an interview being offered if a pupil had a pass in GCSE English and mathematics. Higher attainers can convert written information into the appropriate 'if/or' function. Lessons seen lacked variety in teaching methodology. All lessons start with exposition, followed by pupils working from a structured worksheet and a quick plenary. This highly structured approach can limit the challenge to higher attainers working more independently. Examples of this were seen in Year 7 lessons on formulae. The extension worksheet that was also highly structured, was 'more of the same', rather than demanding higher level skills. More individual work and challenge are provided in GCSE information systems. The behaviour of the pupils is very good. Pupils take care of the resources and equipment. They are motivated to learn the subject and are keen to volunteer answers to teachers' questions. They enjoy the subject and are highly attentive, maintaining concentration throughout lessons.
128. Overall leadership and management of ICT is good. Good schemes of work are in place, linked to the National Curriculum Programme of Study in Years 7 to 9 and the examination syllabus in Years 10 and 11. The process of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning has begun, with the support of the LEA adviser and now needs to be further developed internally. The moderation of standards, through scrutiny of folders and individual pupils' network space, in order to lead to higher standards, does not happen across the full Programme of Study. The subject development plan has four clear priorities, but they are not linked to pupil outcomes. Much of the 1999-2003 plan is linked to the provision of resources rather than improving standards. There is an adequate number of teaching staff and they are qualified to teach the subject, however, there is a lack of sufficient support staff, which frequently results in teaching staff being interrupted to carry out support functions, for instance, network management. There is some confusion and lack of clarity in the overall lines of accountability for the development of ICT and the responsibility for ensuring equality of access to an ICT curriculum for all and monitoring of standards.
129. Since the previous inspection, standards in Years 7 to 9 and in GCSE information systems have been maintained. The quality of teaching continues to be good and the attitude and behaviour of pupils is still very good. There have been improvements in accommodation and resources. Schemes of work have been developed and there is improved lesson planning. All teachers' ICT skills have been improved through internal and external training. Practice in the use of ICT across the curriculum has developed in design and technology, science, modern foreign languages, music and history and has been maintained in geography. There is still insufficient attention given to control and modelling in Years 7 to 9. Assessment has improved in these years, but more rigour is needed across all sections of the scheme of work and across the Programme of Study in Years 10 and 11. The school still does not meet the statutory requirement in Years 10 and 11 for all pupils and for assessing and reporting standards at this stage. Overall, satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection and the school is well placed to address the remaining issues.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- The standards that pupils reach in the GCSE at grades A*-C.
- The very good teaching.
- A very well led department, resulting in a shared commitment to improving standards in languages.
- Pupils' attitudes to language learning are positive, resulting in good concentration and willingness to contribute to speaking activities.

Areas for improvement

- The development and use of assessment to National Curriculum Levels for pupils in Years 7 to 9.
- To review schemes of work for pupils in Years 7 to 9 in order to fully implement the revised National Curriculum including identifying work for different groups of pupils and consistent opportunities for independent reading.
- Further development of departmental documentation to make explicit opportunities for the teaching of literacy and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

131. Results in the 2001 GCSE examinations for both French and Spanish are well above the national average at grades A* to C. The teacher assessment of pupils' standards in 2001 shows that standards are just below the national expectations at Level 5. This was the first year that languages were reported at Level 5, however, the judgements are not entirely secure at this level, appearing to have underestimated pupils' standards.
132. In work seen during the inspection the standards that pupils reach in Year 9 are at the national average. In both French and Spanish, pupils speak willingly and confidently and higher attaining pupils are able to go beyond minimal responses. They speak with good pronunciation and intonation and can express simple opinions. In listening they can understand longer dialogues, for example, about pocket money and daily routine. In reading, although pupils can understand shorter passages, there were few opportunities for them to take part in more extended independent reading. In both languages pupils can write short passages accurately in the present tense, but only higher attainers in French have started to use the past tense.
133. In Year 11 in both French and Spanish the written coursework completed indicates that standards continue to be well above average. Lower and average attaining pupils are able to use tenses other than the present, although not always accurately and can use different structures and vocabulary over a range of topics. Higher attaining pupils are able to write at length and accurately, using more complex structures and a range of idiom. Students speak confidently and in some cases, at length, in preparation for the oral component of the GCSE. In Spanish, pupils can listen to longer passages of spoken Spanish. In French, pupils can tackle the range of tasks presented in listening and reading GCSE papers at foundation tier and higher attaining pupils are starting to be confident in higher tier tasks.
134. Pupils' achievement is good in both languages in Years 7 to 9. They develop good speaking and listening skills and develop accurate writing skills. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are able to contribute to the range of oral activities with confidence. For higher attaining pupils, however, including in French a pupil from a French-speaking background, there are few opportunities for more extended work. In Years 10 and 11, pupils make good progress in French and Spanish. They write with increasing length and accuracy and the fluency and confidence of their spoken language improves steadily.
135. Teaching and learning in French and Spanish for all pupils is very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, both in terms of language expertise, providing very good models for pupils and in terms of examination requirements so that pupils in Years 10 and 11 know what they need to learn and what they will have to do to improve. There is consistent use of the target language in Spanish and French lessons resulting in pupils using the languages well themselves. Lessons are timed well with very good pace and teachers use a wide range of activities, including games and songs, which motivate pupils, who, therefore, have a very

positive attitude to language learning. ICT is used very well to support language learning. Two very good lessons included a Year 8 group using a French web site on 'telling the time' and a Year 11 Spanish class, presenting information about part-time jobs in a spreadsheet. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are set appropriate targets in terms of GCSE grades and are supported in their learning by teachers using strategies to improve examination performance.

136. Planning in Years 7 to 9 does not always include opportunities to extend higher attaining pupils and there are few opportunities for independent reading. Also in Years 7 to 9, pupils are not aware of their progress in National Curriculum Levels and the ongoing assessment and marking gives them little information about how to improve their performance in languages.
137. The department is very well led and managed. It works as a team with a clear commitment to improve and maintain standards and share good practice and resources. Department documentation is very clear, with appropriate priorities for development and policies covering a range of issues such as: target language use; ICT; special educational needs and numeracy and assessment. All of these are implemented by the whole department. Further work is needed, however, on making explicit other areas such as literacy and opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education in languages. The scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 is in the process of being revised to incorporate the revised National Curriculum Order in French alongside the introduction of a new textbook. This work needs to expand into Years 8 and 9 in French as well as a review of the Spanish scheme of work, in particular to provide work suited to different pupils' needs and opportunities for Level 5 standards.
138. Since the last inspection the department has made very good improvement. Teaching has improved resulting in pupils having good speaking skills with many opportunities for pupils to work in groups and pairs. Higher attaining pupils are able to use past and future tenses accurately and GCSE results have improved significantly. The classroom management of all pupils is very good.

MUSIC

139. Overall, the quality of provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The music teacher is a skilled musician and has good subject knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils make good use of technology.
- Pupils who study music in Years 10 and 11 show good performance skills.
- In 2001 the proportion of pupils achieving A* to C grades in music at GCSE was above average.
- Results show an improving trend over the past three years and numbers opting to take examination courses in music are increasing.

Areas for development

- Use assessment more effectively to plan tasks that better match pupils' levels of standards.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to work with acoustic sound.
- Allocate more time for music in Years 7-9.
- Improve the management of instrumental teaching.

140. In 2001 the proportion of pupils achieving A* to C grades in music at GCSE was above average. Results show an improving trend over the past three years and numbers opting to take examination courses in music are increasing.
141. The school's assessments and work seen during the inspection indicate that standards are average at the end of Year 9 and are above average at the end of Year 11. Pupils work mostly on electronic keyboards at all stages and they demonstrate good music keyboard skills for workshop use. In classroom activities they show appropriate competence in performing and composing and listen with satisfactory awareness, understanding and attention to detail. Pupils listen to the works of composers and different styles of music. During the inspection, for

example, pupils in a Year 8 class were using the 'blues' style as a basis for composition. Skills of pitch and rhythm are generally in line with expectations, but often skills in pulse are below expectations. For example, when pupils in Year 9 were composing a short tune to illustrate a cartoon character, they used keyboards well to invent and extend their tunes, but some found difficulty in playing them in time with the automatic accompaniment. In this exercise it was also apparent that pupils had insufficient knowledge of form and compositional device to extend and give shape to their compositions. Understanding and use of timbre is also underdeveloped. Overall, however, pupils have a good understanding of melody and harmony. They use notation successfully for their working needs and show an appropriate ability to memorise music.

142. Although constrained by a shortage of curriculum time that restricts opportunity for extending their work, pupils in Years 7 to 9, including those with special educational needs, show satisfactory achievement in relation to previous work. Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve well and, in particular, show good performance skills.
143. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout Years 7 to 11. The teaching is rooted in good subject knowledge and understanding, so that the learning processes of the subject are well understood and pupils are set appropriate tasks. In addition, there is skilled musicianship and good and effective technical support. Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good and pupils work in a positive and encouraging environment. Their efforts are always met with encouragement and understanding, which in turn promotes positive attitudes to learning in all pupils and in particular the lower attainers. On the other hand, in Years 7 to 9, assessment in lessons is underdeveloped and does not support planning well. Consequently, tasks are too often set that are too difficult for most pupils. They try hard to meet the expectations set, but few achieve them successfully and this is a constraint on achievement. In Years 10 and 11, tasks are better matched to pupils' standards and learning is more effective. In all lessons a good range of strategies that support learning are used effectively, so that pupils have support when they need it and, at other times have the opportunity to make decisions for themselves. Homework is used effectively to support and extend the work covered in the lesson. Little evidence was seen during the inspection of teachers using opportunities to extend pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, but the promotion of information and communication technology skills was good.
144. Pupils respond well to music. They are always well behaved and enthusiastic about their learning. They work hard in lessons and most sustain their concentration throughout, although a few, when working with headphones allow their attention to wander.
145. The curriculum for music is well balanced and covers a good range of musical styles and genres. Pupils have access to a good range of electronic instruments, but work with acoustic sound is limited in the classroom. The accommodation at present available would be a constraint in extending acoustic work any further. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that provide opportunities for pupils of all ages to make music vocally or with instruments. The school choir works to a good standard in four parts. Sixty-six pupils have instrumental lessons.
146. Management of the curriculum provision for the subject is satisfactory. The director of music sets a clear direction for the subject and is in the process of rewriting the schemes of work and assessment policies. Assessment that measures pupils' standards at the end of each topic is satisfactory, but assessments that take place within lessons and are used to plan the next stage of learning are still being developed. The management of instrumental teaching needs to be improved. The teachers need to be monitored regularly so that provision can be made for their professional development. Proper checks should be made to ensure suitability, registers of pupils' attendance at lessons should be kept and checked and teachers should be able to quickly find where pupils are in the school.
147. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum for Years 7 to 9 and makes a strong contribution to pupils' experience of information and communication technology. Much of the content of the curriculum is attractive and pupils tell us that music is now popular in the

school. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching and standards have improved. There has been a considerable change of staff, but the time for music in the curriculum is still well below average and is a constraint on pupils' achievement in Years 7 to 9.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

148. The overall provision for physical education is **good**.

Strengths

- Good standards of teaching.
- The department is well led; there is a good team ethos.
- Very good quality documentation to support teaching and learning.
- High quality pupil/teacher relationships.
- Pupils' attitudes.
- The curriculum throughout the school is well organised.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment criteria could be shared with the pupils.
- Liaison with primary schools.
- No established classroom base exclusive to PE for the delivery of GCSE and A/S A level.

149. Overall, the standards in physical education are above average. Pupils of all abilities show good achievement, including those with special educational needs. For pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2001, teachers' assessments show standards above those expected nationally for pupils of this age. Observation of lessons confirms the accuracy of these predictions and revealed that some pupils achieved higher standards as a result of their perseverance and practise, coupled with skilled, knowledgeable and effective teaching.
150. By the end of Year 9, pupils are acquiring appropriate knowledge and understanding. They achieve well, with very good lessons seen in basketball where pupils can demonstrate that they are able to transfer ball-handling skills learned in isolated practices into games situations. In swimming, pupils are able to demonstrate the mastery of basic stroke techniques and in gymnastics an improving degree of movement control.
151. In GCSE in physical education examinations in 2001, 70 per cent of the pupils gained grades in the range A*-C and all gained grades in the range A*-G, continuing the upward trend of previous years. Results were above the national average. In GCSE groups, pupils have learned to refine their techniques in selected activities and are acquiring knowledge of the requirements of fitness and the ways to test it. Standards of written work in GCSE are above average.
152. Many opportunities arise for pupils to progress from past experience, through planned and progressive programmes of study. In most lessons pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own performance. They offer informed opinions of their own and others' work, developing the skills of analysis of movement. Standards achieved at the end of Year 11 are above average and pupils achieve well in a range of activities, including soccer, where tactical attacking and defensive strategies are being developed. High attaining pupils understand and can demonstrate good personal survival techniques. Middle and lower attainers improve style and stamina through practise.
153. The overall quality of teaching is good throughout the school with some very good lessons seen. Schemes of work are very well structured and show progression lesson to lesson and through all the years. Individual lessons are effectively planned and objectives clearly defined and shared with pupils. Pupils can reflect on their progress against lesson objectives enabling appropriate targets for improvements to be defined by them. Explanations are clear and detailed; high expectations are a feature of every lesson.

154. Teachers are confident, motivated and well qualified. They have secure knowledge and understanding of their subject. In all lessons seen, teachers' knowledge and expertise have a positive significant influence on learning. They are effective in planning and organising tasks, that are well paced, match pupils' capabilities and contain appropriate challenges. Teachers use a variety of teaching styles in the same lesson, ranging from whole-class direct, to group work, individual tuition and pupil exploration. In Years 10 and 11 there are many opportunities for pupils to discuss their work and teachers contribute well to their literacy skills through their use of technical language in question and answer sessions. There are opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and when they arise, pupils enjoy this responsibility, leading warm-up sessions, building gymnastic sequences or evaluating partners' performances. Relationships are excellent. Discipline is firm, but relaxed, promoting high motivation and good order. Groups of pupils work independently and are purposefully engaged whilst teachers concentrate on others. Emphasis on safe practice is a feature of every lesson. The number of non-participants is very low indeed and these pupils become employed as referees or recorders, with appropriate worksheets provided. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils. They are good role models and communicate their knowledge and enthusiasm very effectively; as a result pupils enjoy the subject and co-operate sensibly to improve their work. Standards are enhanced by their efficient organisation of varied practical and theoretical work that extends pupils' knowledge and competence; relevant use of ICT and video recordings enhance the observation and analysis of the subject.
155. Pupils' attitudes are very good throughout the school and have a positive effect on learning. Pupils arrive on time, change quickly and readily engage in the tasks presented. Interest and enthusiasm are evident across all age groups. Boys are well turned out for both indoor and outdoor work. Pupils are capable of persevering and working very hard, physically in activities. Pupils enter the school with a wide variety of experience and standards are below average for their age. Quality teaching enables pupils to achieve well throughout the school.
156. The department is highly motivated and hard working. Individual members are strong, talented teachers whose specialities are dovetailed and they support one another. All teachers are computer literate and able to research and stretch their pupils further in theory lessons as well as practical. An efficient, experienced, enthusiastic head of department, who delegates well and supports his staff, gives very good leadership. Substantial documentation has been collectively produced to support teaching and learning. Monitoring of assessment procedures and evaluation of units of work and Programmes of Study have been adapted to meet the new requirements for national levels in physical education.
157. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. Courts and grass areas are inadequate and unsuitable for this department to deliver its planned programme. There are hard play areas that are uneven, slippery and litter strewn. Fields are often waterlogged, muddy and inaccessible. The lower changing rooms are poorly appointed, antiquated and drab. The field's changing pavilion has been destroyed.
158. Liaison with primary schools is difficult because of the numbers involved and the department does not assist them in their curriculum development. Liaison works better with higher education establishments and a large number of clubs.
159. A year-round programme of extra-curricular activities is a feature of the department. It is well supported up to and including Year 11. It serves to enhance pupils' social development as well as their practical skills. This programme provides open access to clubs, practices and matches. The school has entered many competitions. This represents a significant commitment of time by the physical education staff, supported well by other teachers in the school.
160. The variety and regularity of this additional provision have positive effects on pupils' standards and makes a strong contribution to the life and ethos of the whole school.

161. Since the last inspection the good standards in physical education have been maintained. An expansion of the GCSE programme has been well managed and success rates are high with predictions for greater growth and success in 2002. This represents good improvement.
162. A/S and A Levels have been expanded in a joint venture in the Federation of Schools, with success. Sadly there has been a deterioration of facilities where such courses can be delivered. Much greater use of technology greatly assists pupils' standards, learning skills and independence.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business Studies

163. Overall, the quality of provision in vocational courses is **good**.

Strengths

- The well above average GCSE results at grades A* to C.
- Very good teaching results in pupils achieving high standards.
- The links with the business community contribute well to improving pupils' knowledge and understanding in the subject.

Areas for improvement

- The use of data to set individual learning targets.

164. Pupils' standards at the end of Year 11 are well above average. This represents good achievement given pupils' standards on entry to the course. Results in the GCSE examination in 2001 were well above the national average at grades A* to C with many students achieving the highest grade. Pupils achieved higher in business studies than they did in the other subjects they studied and the results show improvement on those of most recent years.
165. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Staff are well qualified with substantial experience and this has a significant impact on the good progress that most pupils make. Resources, including ICT, are well used to promote learning and these are complemented by drawing on the experience of the local business community to bring additional relevance to learning. Occasionally, the learning of lower attaining pupils is unsatisfactory due to poor attitudes of the minority because they do not apply themselves to the tasks set.
166. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The development planning priorities are very appropriate in focusing attention to the introduction of the new GCSE course and to raise standards further by additional support to weaker pupils. The assessment of pupils' work is regular, but some extended pieces of writing give insufficient information about how well pupils are achieving. The procedures and use of assessment to monitor progress are good, but could be further improved through the setting of individual learning targets.
167. There was no report at the last inspection.

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

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

169. The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2001.

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
French	1	-	78	-	13	-	1.65
Mathematics	10	60	62	-	15	0.80	1.51
Physics	1	-	52	-	4	-	0.90

GCE A-level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	12	100	96	58	46	7.33	6.57
Biology	2	50	88	-	34	2.00	5.25
Chemistry	7	57	90	-	43	1.71	5.90
Communication (Media) Studies	6	100	93	50	31	6.00	5.53
Drama	6	100	99	17	38	5.67	6.59
English Literature	10	90	95	10	37	3.80	5.91
English Language	5	100	92	20	30	4.00	5.28
French	1	100	89	-	38	6.00	5.59
Full Design and Technology	1	100	91	-	30	6.00	5.38
Geography	10	80	92	10	38	3.80	5.74
History	5	80	88	-	35	2.80	5.45
Mathematics	11	75	87	38	43	5.00	5.80
Other Languages	1	100	93	100	56	8.00	6.84
Physics	8	88	88	38	43	4.50	5.67
Religious Studies	1	100	92	100	38	8.00	5.84
Spanish	1	100	89	-	39	6.00	5.70
Sports/PE Studies	9	100	92	44	25	5.33	5.09

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Leisure and Tourism	1						

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

170. Mathematics and chemistry at A and AS Levels were inspected in detail; work in physics and biology at the same levels was also sampled. In 2001, standards in physics were below the national average, although the number of candidates, eight, was small. In biology, the two candidates form too small a sample to make a judgement on standards. Teaching in this area is good; teachers have good subject knowledge and plan their lessons carefully.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good; lesson plans are well structured, which effectively helps students to build up their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is good.
- Good corporate learning occurs in all lessons as a result of the positive relationship between the students themselves and with their teachers.
- The Application of Number component of the Key Skills course is organised and managed very well.

Areas for improvement

- The progress of male students with English as an additional language.
- Marking is not as thorough as it should be with few annotations related to students achieving their target grades.

172. Results in the 2001 GCE AS-level examination were below the national average in terms of average points score. The results showed a decline compared to the previous year, although male student numbers have increased. Two-thirds of male students entered, achieved a pass grade or better, although none achieved grades A or B. Achievement at GCE AS level was below national expectations based on prior standards at GCSE.
173. Results in the 2001 GCE A-level examination were above the national average for male students in terms of average points scores. There was an insufficient number of students entered for GCE A level in the previous year for comparisons to be made, although the few students all gained high grades. The proportion of students achieving the highest grades A and B has increased compared to the 1999 cohort, but remains well below the national average. A strong feature of the course was that completion rates were high with male students achieving broadly above their prior standards at GCSE. Overall, the department is adding satisfactory value.
174. The standard of work of current students is overall average. In Year 13, students' achievements are good. In the lessons observed, students responded well as a result of effective teaching, which demands much of them. Lesson structure focuses their learning. In one lesson, students drew well on their previous knowledge to understand and use the coefficient of restitution when working on the conservation of momentum in mechanics. Students were able to interpret the mathematical outcomes in real terms when three particles travelling in a straight line collided with one another. Written work is comprehensive, well presented and well managed. The

students persevere when difficulties arise and are prepared to ask questions when misunderstanding occurs.

175. Students in Year 12 were observed investigating from first principles the origin of the exponential function, making good use of previously taught skills. Students were observed plotting points, determining gradients and drawing tables of values from which they were able to deduce the value of 'e'. With the exception of students with English as an additional language, students were able to contribute confidently to classroom discussion with the teacher. Students interpreted the outcomes correctly, but a summary of the systematic stages leading to 'e' was cursory and failed to empower the students in their learning for this particular aspect of pure mathematics.
176. The quality of teaching and learning is overall good and the students learn well as a result. Teaching is characterised by the good co-operative learning that takes place in all lessons between student and teacher. However, students with English as an additional language achieve less well than their peers because of the lack of necessary specialist learning support. For example, the lesson on the exponential function in Year 12 required students to work both in pairs and collectively to check their understanding and formulate an agreed strategy for completing the investigation. Students with English as an additional language had difficulty appreciating the task fully and completing it in the time available despite the teacher's careful planning. Teachers have high expectations of the students and work is intellectually stimulating and demanding. Teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding supports learning well. Resources that are available are used well, but are generally paper based and undermine the efficient and effective conceptual development of the subject in this high technology age. Teachers are aware of students' strengths and weaknesses, but the quality of marks awarded and written annotations do not reflect the students' target grades expected at the end of the course and need to be more sharply focused. These are areas for improvement in the context of teaching and learning that has many strong features.
177. Students learn well. They are attentive, co-operative, work productively and respond to questions, contributing to lessons. Students support and help one another effectively, talking and listening, working independently and in small groups. The students respond well to the supportive teaching and different learning styles they experience. In a lesson on the 'Application of Number' element of the Key Skills Level 3 course, the start made good use of everyday experiences, that then required the use of students' knowledge of cumulative frequency, interquartile range and various representative values. The lesson was challenging, conducted at a good pace and accounted for the student's academic background, resulting in good learning taking place due to the thoroughness with which the teacher dealt with the topic.
178. The good teaching and learning result from work in the subject being well led and managed. There is clear educational direction and a commitment to building on what has already been achieved and to improving standards. The teachers are enthusiastic and work well together. Students still in Year 11 who have completed their GCSE course and successfully achieved grades A* to C are only a short way into their GCE AS level course and are achieving very well. Student numbers are increasing compared to recent years. The department makes good use of target setting and review with its students. Resources such as ICT and the use of the interactive whiteboard would help maintain the learning momentum that has already been achieved in the department. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

Chemistry

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

Strengths

- The course is well planned, as are individual lessons.
- Teaching is good, in particular, teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of their subject.
- There is a high proportion of practical work; this increases interest in the subject.
- A wide range of students is permitted to join the course; they enjoy the work.
- There is regular assessment of students' work in order to monitor progress.

Areas for improvement

- Overall standards at AS and A level.
- Analysis each year of students' results in examinations compared with their standards at the start of the course, in order to monitor the work of the department.
- The quality of some resources.
- The routine monitoring of students' folders.

180. The A-level results in chemistry in 2001 were below the national average. These results are also below the standards obtained by the school in the previous three years, mainly due to the school permitting a wide range of entry to the course. Only one half of the students taking the final examination gained a pass grade and no students obtained the higher grades A or B. These results are in line with students' earlier GCSE grades.
181. The standards of work of the current students in Year 13 are average, with a wide range of predicted grades, including A and B. This reflects the better GCSE grades gained by this group. The results gained in last year's AS-level tests were disappointing for a significant proportion of students when compared with their GCSE grades; this contributed to a higher than normal proportion of students leaving the course. A small number of students are repeating modules in order to improve their grades. In the lessons seen in Year 13, students' achievements are good. In practical work, they are encouraged to predict the outcome of redox reactions before undertaking the tests. This helps to consolidate their understanding of their observations, requiring them to think about their work and to relate changes to reduction and oxidation. They show a high level of concentration, there is good support from the teacher and a very good working atmosphere develops. Written work in folders and exercise books shows a wide variation in both the care taken and the overall depth of understanding.
182. Students in Year 12 also show a wide variation in standards. They achieve largely as predicted based on results at GCSE; a significant proportion of students joining the course require a high level of support from their teachers in order to benefit from the work, including students for whom English is not their first language. In one lesson, the teacher, therefore, spends more time than anticipated in recalling work from a previous lesson to ensure that students are thoroughly prepared for the practical work and for the calculations required. In another lesson, they show better recall of the theory and skills required when taking a practical test requiring the use of titration to find the strength of an acid solution.
183. Teaching is good overall. All lessons are well prepared with clear learning objectives and careful exposition. There is a high proportion of practical work; this helps students to learn by doing and provides opportunities for them to use their initiative. Teachers have a very good understanding of their subject and are able to pitch their questions at the appropriate level to match the depth of students' understanding and their ability to deal with the topic. Where necessary, they are given the additional help needed in order to complete their work, such as calculations, accurately. A significant proportion lack confidence when using formulae. They are over-reliant on using a calculator, but are able to use them accurately. Little use is made of computers to support learning, for example, in researching additional and detailed background knowledge and information.
184. Students' written work is often in the form of notes of the topics covered in lessons, supplemented by worksheets. Teachers stress the importance of maintaining accurate notes, but little supervision of the quality of routine work in books and folders occurs. Additional

emphasis is placed on the recording of key words, definitions and formulae so that students have immediate reference to these statistics. Homework is set regularly and thoroughly marked. This provides better opportunities for students to express their understanding of the work in their own words and helps teachers to monitor students' progress and identify any underachievement. Students have a very positive attitude to their work, particularly in Year 13 and respond well to the teaching. Relationships between students and teachers are very good and students co-operate well when working in pairs during practical lessons. They particularly enjoy the high proportion of practical work, which helps them to relate chemical theory to practice. The learning of individual students shows wide variation, but is satisfactory overall.

185. The good organisation and teaching of the course are the result of good leadership and management. The recent appointment of a deputy head of department, who also teaches chemistry to A level, increases the range of teaching strategies that are used and gives students a broader chemical base for their queries. The topics are effectively organised and students appreciate that the timing of mock examinations helps to prepare them thoroughly for their module tests. The department has gained valuable experience from the results of last year's AS examinations and predicted grades for 2002 are likely to prove more accurate.
186. The quality of resources overall is satisfactory. Textbooks are of very good quality and in good condition and there is a satisfactory supply of basic equipment. Access to computer hardware and software, however, is not provided for sixth-form lessons, or required extensively for homework tasks, in order to supplement classwork. The quality of overhead projector transparencies used in teaching is often unsatisfactory.
187. Overall, the chemistry department has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

188. No subjects in this curriculum area were inspected in detail. The only subject offered is design and technology at A/AS level; in 2001 there was only one candidate so it is not possible to comment on standards.

BUSINESS

189. No subjects in this curriculum area are currently offered, although the school has plans to offer business studies at A level from 2002.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

190. ICT is not taught at examination level, but is developed as a key skill through a number of subjects. When used, it is taught well, but students' opportunities to extend their skills depend on the courses they choose. For instance, opportunities to use ICT in geography and PE are more extensive than in mathematics and chemistry.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

191. In this curriculum area, A-level physical education (PE) was inspected in detail.

Physical education

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

Strengths

- Teaching of AS and A level is good; expectations are high and a range of challenging activities is planned.
- Teachers promote high standards in all areas of work and are good role models.
- Curriculum arrangements are good and meet the needs of the students.
- Students' achievements, good range of skills and their presentations represent good understanding of the topic.
- Good technical language development.

Areas for development

- No established classroom for A-level teaching.
- Poor facilities on site.

193. In 2001 A-level results in physical education were above average. Forty-four per cent of course members achieved grades A-B and 100 per cent achieved grades A-E. Students produced practical performances, contemporary and course work, which were above the national average.
194. These results represent good achievement for all students, particularly those who enrolled in 1999 with entry levels below the stated requisite standard. There were also students who had not studied physical education as an examinable subject before. A/S-Level students in 2001 achieved 68 per cent A-C grades and 85 per cent A-D grades, the remainder were ungraded. Results compare favourably with other A-level subjects offered.
195. In work seen during the inspection, standards overall are above average; students achieve well. Students reach high standards in their practical work by the end of Year 13. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. There are differences of ability and experience in the theory of physical education. Performances, seen on video or downloaded from the Web, are analysed with confidence; some are capable of fine tuning their work, others are not so accurate. They are unafraid of airing their views on sport and physical education generally. They have secure knowledge from research about how sports are funded and from where, how coaching works and how qualifications are obtained. They are familiar with coaching styles and how these are employed with examples taken from a series of national sports. A technical language is being developed and is being used to describe and analyse, for example, the various phases in throwing events in athletics and the kicking action in football.
196. Students who do not possess the confidence to use technical language are supported and encouraged to do so. On occasions, students are asked to demonstrate in order that the other students can see the muscular action and reaction in certain activities.
197. Good progress has been made by all students in the short time since they started this course in the sixth form. Students who are attaining at the highest level have developed well in their analysis and evaluation of what a skilled performance is and how it is determined. Technical vocabulary is used in discussions by most students whose vocabulary is being strengthened daily. Presentations, whether in writing or word-processed, show a detailed understanding of common denominators between their sports. The use of technical terms such as axis, fulcrum, rotational force and centre of gravity in discussion assist in recognising these similarities and could be applied to common training programmes. Constant research enables students to recognise how major external forces or major issues can impact participation.
198. Overall, the teaching of AS and A-level PE is good with very good lessons seen. Students are taught by specialists who are secure in their background knowledge of the subject. Lessons are well planned, researched and stimulating. The most effective teaching showed high expectations and proceeded at a good pace with challenge, which resulted in good learning. All teachers engage students in question and answer sessions to ensure that they clearly understand the lesson's aims, so they become immediately aware of what they are going to learn. Teachers have an enthusiasm for their subject and it is transmitted to the students. Lessons are planned in considerable detail to satisfy the needs of all students. All students are well supported and

their opinions are valued. The impact of teaching is that students are primed and encouraged to visit websites and engage in independent learning. Good use is made of off-site facilities to compensate for the paucity of provision in school, although timetables and regular use of the computer base is invaluable.

199. A review of lesson activities takes place in every lesson, allowing students to voice opinions and hypothesise. A variety of teaching styles is used from whole-class direct, to group work, or individual tuition in the same lesson. There is a strong commitment to meeting pupils' needs. Relationships are always good. There is mutual respect and courtesy. There is a high level of care that results in good achievement. Care is taken over students' assessment. Students know where they are, what progress they have made and what is left for them in order to complete their course successfully. Regular assessment of students' work takes place in order to plot their progress, plan for future delivery and assist students with their development.
200. Students show a very good attitude to the work. They are highly motivated and enthusiastic about the physical education course they are following. They respond well to the positive teaching and their learning is enhanced. They are able to develop in activities they have chosen to follow. The personal exercise programme is used effectively to increase their own fitness levels. The students have been encouraged to express their own opinions throughout the school and most are well formed. They are sufficiently confident to debate issues that are controversial and take a moral standpoint over issues such as drugs in sport. Students are encouraged to rely on their own independent researches into issues and activities. Teachers give good guidance and support into these areas of study, encouraging students to make use of their information and communication technology skills to produce sophisticated, word-processed extended assignments. The quality of these is evidence of a deeper personal research.
201. The department has good leadership and management. The staff show a determination to continue the improvement in teaching and the standards that students attain. Deployment of teachers to their individual areas of expertise promotes high standards of performance amongst the students engaged in the A-level course.
202. For students not following an A or A/S-Level physical education course there are very limited opportunities to continue their practical participation in school sport in curriculum or extra-curricular time. Good management and concern for the students' welfare has ensured that strong links with sporting associations and clubs have been developed. Students are strongly encouraged and guided to join them in order that they can continue with their sporting development. A good percentage of A-level physical education students hold representative honours in younger age group school teams and at area and county level. Their current practical participation through outside clubs enhances their practical skills and helps to raise standards. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. There are hard play areas that are uneven, slippery and litter strewn. Fields are often waterlogged, muddy and inaccessible. The field's changing pavilion has been destroyed. The department lacks a suitable base in which to teach theory and store resources for this aspect of the course.
203. Since the last inspection, improvement has been good with more students studying A-level physical education and achieving good grades. Good standards in practical lessons have been maintained, the curriculum development has strong foundations and is delivered by teachers with a strong commitment to succeed.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

204. No courses are offered in this curriculum area.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

205. In this area work in art and design at A level was sampled. Teaching and learning were good and students attained above average standards in their work.

HUMANITIES

206. Geography at A level was inspected in detail. Work in history was sampled; this was of good quality. Standards are average, achievement is good as students have modest GCSE grades; teaching is good.

Geography

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching in Years 12 and 13 is good.
- Information and communication technology is well used to support learning.
- The residential fieldwork provision for Year 12 students broadens curricular experience.

Areas for improvement

- The standards students reach at AS and A level.
- The use of information to set learning targets and monitor students' progress.

208. The standards that students attain at the end of Year 13 are below average overall, although the majority do achieve expected standards for success on the AS and A-level courses. This represents satisfactory achievement given the below average standards on entry to the courses than is normally seen. At AS level in 2001 one third of the students gained grades A to C and three-quarters of the entry achieved a pass grade. The A-level results in 2001 were well below the national average and standards were lower than other subjects in the school. The results show a progressive decline over recent years. One half of the students who began the AS course chose not to proceed to A level. In some cases this was partly because they began employment or training, but also because the low grades awarded in the examination indicated that they were unlikely to achieve good results at A level.
209. In work seen during the inspection, standards are below average. This represents satisfactory achievement given the below average standards at the end of Year 11. Students have knowledge of different environments such as the tundra and tropical rainforests and understand how such areas are affected by human interference. Students in Year 12, for example, used the Internet to research and classify information in order to assess the importance of soil and climate in maintaining the ecological balance of the region. In discussion, however, many show limitations in depth of their knowledge and understanding of the issues studied. Students have sound essay writing skills, but do not place enough emphasis when interpreting evidence; consequently, the quality of writing is generalised. Students have a sound knowledge of places and terms and are able to apply them in appropriate context.
210. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the course requirements and students improve their knowledge and understanding because teachers explain issues clearly. Resources are well used in lessons and for students to work independently. In a Year 13 lesson, for example, the planning of the lesson was effective because it encouraged students to be self-reliant and use computers, text-books and maps to research and record information about the influence of glaciation on the landscape of Northern Canada. Learning was good because students showed mature attitude to learning and made gains in their knowledge of terms and glacial processes. Students make slower progress in developing their essay writing skills. Work is not well structured, lacks detail and often makes insufficient use of examples to explain issues. Work is regularly marked, but does not always inform students enough about what is expected in order to improve their work. Students with

special educational needs make sound progress because of their very good attitude to learning and the support that teachers give them. Students broaden their experience through participating in residential fieldwork in Shropshire. This greatly enhances their understanding of the physical study of rivers and improves their knowledge of places.

211. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Close co-operation with other sixth-form providers through the links with another local school ensures that teaching and learning is well co-ordinated and regular exchange of information makes certain that student needs are well met. Heavy demands placed on the head of department result in slower progress being made than is to be expected in developing the scheme of work and the use of assessment data to set learning targets and monitor individual progress of students.
212. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall. GCE A-level results continue to be below the national average for similar schools, but textbook resources are now sufficient for needs and the use of information and communication technology has improved.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

213. Work in English at A level was inspected in detail.

English

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

Strengths

- Good subject knowledge and understanding.
- Good relationships that inspire trust and respect.

Areas for improvement

- Improved monitoring of entry criteria to enhance the students' standards.
- Increased challenge to motivate and excite the students both in lessons and to encourage independent learning.

215. Results in the 2001 GCSE Level English Literature examinations indicate standards that were well below the national average. Trends over time are inconsistent, but, generally, standards have fallen. AS level results in 2001 are more encouraging and indicate improving standards. The retention rate is average.
216. In the work seen during the inspection, students' standards in the sixth form are below average. Their GCSE grades on starting the course were below average and the standards of work seen represent satisfactory achievement. Some students who are not capable of achieving a pass are accepted on the course. Most students have a secure knowledge and understanding of their work. Their oral skills are good in classroom discussion, but falter when speaking in formal situations. Students make valid and cogent observation and use technical vocabulary in their writing. Concise and succinct writing is a problem for some students largely because their independent research skills are underdeveloped. Some students, particularly in Year 12, cannot make sophisticated inferences from texts or sustain detailed textual analysis. Recent initiatives are beginning to redress writing problems by careful selection of reading texts and more variety in writing assignments.
217. Students with special educational needs make the same satisfactory progress as other students. Students who speak English as an additional language make unsatisfactory progress overall because of a lack of sophisticated English skills. The study of multicultural texts deepen students' understanding of literature, but not all lesson planning allows for students to have the opportunity to air their views and develop their independent learning. When lessons are planned to include developed student contribution, their comments are focused and sensitive. Students respond positively to their teacher and each other.

218. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It includes some teaching and learning that is very good. All staff are specialists and knowledgeable in their field. In the good lessons there is a brisk pace, students are clearly motivated and a large amount of work is completed. Students enjoy their work with each other and their teacher in an atmosphere of achievement and respect. In a Year 13 lesson on 'Othello' the students thoroughly enjoyed using specialist vocabulary to analyse the texts and discussed issues enthusiastically. Students appreciated the opportunity to receive one-to-one attention and help from their teacher especially as the students have a certain cultural naivety on issues such as race. When the teacher tried to extend and deepen the discussion, students floundered and relied on the teacher for illumination. In the less good, but still satisfactory, lessons students learnt marginally less because of a more pedestrian pace and excessive talk by the teacher. Students' work is marked regularly and consistently to a very high standard, although some comments are bland and do not target improvement especially for lower attaining students.
219. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Teachers share the preparation of schemes of work, which encourages equality for the students and the development of staff. Assessment procedures are clear, which result in focused marking and specific targeting to secure individual student improvement and inform curriculum planning. This is not consistent as some students' work is marked less rigorously. The head of department is respected and valued by English teachers for his expertise and contribution to their professional development.
220. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. Results in national tests are well below the national trend, but current initiatives suggest improvement. There is still insufficient opportunity for students to develop their independent learning.