

INSPECTION REPORT

CARSHALTON HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Carshalton, Surrey

LEA area: Sutton

Unique reference number: 102999

Headteacher: Mrs E Coate

Reporting inspector: Mr D Cox
10297

Dates of inspection: 4 – 6 March 2002

Inspection number: 193116

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 to 18
Gender of students:	Female
School address:	Carshalton High School for Girls West Street Carshalton Surrey
Postcode:	SM5 2QX
Telephone number:	020 8647 8294
Fax number:	020 8773 8931
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Bennett
Date of previous inspection:	24 February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities (sixth form)	Aspect responsibilities (sixth form)
10297	David Cox	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupil's achievements. How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9970	John Acaster	Lay inspector		Students' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents and students.
22411	Ann Axon	Team inspector	Mathematics	
11933	David Driscoll	Team inspector	Physics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
22513	John Morey	Team inspector	English literature	
20247	Roger Parry	Team inspector	Geography Travel and tourism	
30427	Felicity Shuffle-Botham	Team inspector		Provision for Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
31705	John Mason	Team inspector	Communication studies	
16548	Donald Gwinnett	Team inspector	Art and design	
15277	Christopher Vidler	Team inspector	Business	

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA Ltd
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9PU

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Carshalton High School for Girls is a larger than average comprehensive school educating girls between the ages of 11 and 18; the school is situated in the London Borough of Sutton. Approximately a quarter of students in Sutton primary schools are offered places in local selective schools. There are 1148 students on roll, which is higher than when the school was inspected previously when there were 1074 students on roll. There are 136 students in the sixth form. The school is popular with parents and is oversubscribed. The overall social-economic circumstance of the students is below average. The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average at 21.3 per cent and is higher than that noted in the previous inspection report.

The school has a higher than average proportion of students with English as an additional language; and higher than that noted in the previous report. There is one student at an early stage of language acquisition. The minority ethnic groups are mainly of Indian, Black-African and Black-Caribbean heritage. The attainment of students on entry is below average and is lower than that noted in the previous inspection report when attainment on entry was judged to be average/below average. There are 179 students on the special educational needs register; this is 9.5 per cent of the school population, which is below the national average, but higher than that noted in the previous report. The proportion of students with Statements of Special Educational Need is below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with a very good sixth form. Students attain standards that are better than would normally be expected given their attainment on entry to the school because of the good teaching and the students' good attitudes. The school is very well led and managed so is improving rapidly; even the areas for improvement noted below are not weaknesses, simply areas that could be even better. The school provides very good value for money and the sixth form is exceedingly cost-effective.

What the school does well

- Students' attitudes to learning are good and their personal development is very good both of which help them towards their impressive achievements.
- The leadership provided by the headteacher, governors and staff with key roles of responsibility has developed a culture of success.
- The teaching of A-level physics is excellent; standards of attainment are particularly high in the subject.
- The very good teaching in Years 10 and 11 results in students achieving standards at the age of 16 that are much better than would be expected given their attainment on entry to the school.
- The excellent academic tutoring scheme is a prime mover in raising standards in Years 10 to 13.
- Provision for moral and social development is very good.

What could be improved

- The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9, although satisfactory overall, is not as good as that seen in Years 10 to 13.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics although satisfactory overall, is not as good as that seen in most other subjects in Years 7 to 13.
- The quality of teaching in science in Years 7 to 11 although satisfactory overall, is not as good as that seen in most other subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since it was last inspected in 1997. The quality of teaching has improved significantly. As a result, standards at GCSE have improved at a rate that is above the national average and last year's A-level results were the best in the school's history. The progress made by the school is a result of the determination of the headteacher, the governing body and the senior staff

to improve even the smallest weaknesses and to promote an ethos of high expectation that permeates the school. All the six main weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection have been dealt with very successfully.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Results in the national tests for 14-year-olds were close to the national average in English but below average in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools results were above average in English, below average in science and well below average in mathematics. The trend in the school's results has been in line with the national trend.

Results in the 2001 GCSE examinations were average; these results represent very good levels of achievement in Years 10 and 11. GCSE results have improved at a much faster rate than that seen nationally. Students performed particularly well in English literature, sociology, geography, drama and German in 2001, but their least successful results were in science, design and technology, French and mathematics.

Results in the 2001 examinations at GCE/AVCE were average compared with all maintained schools and with all post-16 institutions. Results have also improved significantly and those in 2001 were the best in the school's history. Of particular note are the A-level results for physics which are among the top five per cent of schools nationally. Students also performed particularly well in English literature but their least successful results were in biology and chemistry.

The school sets very challenging targets for its performance and is successful in meeting or exceeding them.

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

In the work seen during the inspection, the standards that students attain by the end of Year 9 are below average but above average by the end of Year 11. From the time they enter the school until the end of compulsory education at age 16 students, including those from different ethnic backgrounds and those with special educational needs, achieve well. Year 13 students are achieving well and attain standards that are above average.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Students show an enthusiasm for hard work. Students in the sixth form have outstanding attitudes to their work
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good in and around the school.

Personal development and relationships	Very good. Students show a good deal of respect for the opinions of others. There is a good degree of harmony in the school. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Students' attendance is satisfactory.

Students behave very well, not because of a fear of punishment but because they appreciate the impact that their actions will have on others. They are interested in the views of others and there is a singular lack of any form of oppressive behaviour. They readily accept responsibility and demonstrate a good degree of initiative.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Very 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 at the school is good overall. The quality of teaching, and of the learning that such teaching promotes, is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, very good in Years 10 and 11 and good in Years 12 and 13. Teaching was at least satisfactory in nearly all lessons. In three out of four lessons teaching was at least good and in two out of every five lessons teaching was very good or better. Teaching is better in Years 10 to 13 than in Years 7 to 9 because of the need to prepare students for examinations adds a degree of urgency to the teaching.

In Years 7 to 11, the quality of teaching is good in English and satisfactory in mathematics and science. Throughout the school, the skills of literacy are taught well; the skills of numeracy are taught satisfactorily. Teaching of students with special educational needs and for those students for whom English as an additional language is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, very good in Years 10 and 11 and good in Years 12 and 13.

Students put immense amounts of effort into their work and concentrate hard at all times. The best lessons take advantage of students' good attitudes by involving the students completely. Overall, students make good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school's curriculum is good; the curriculum in the sixth form is very good and meets the needs of the students very well.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Good: The students experience the same curriculum as others and make similar progress.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Good: The students experience the same curriculum as others and make similar progress.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good overall and has a strong impact upon students and the life of the school.
How well the school cares for its students	Very good. Standards of care are high. This is a caring school where staff know students well.

The school has a very good partnership with parents, who hold the school in high regard. All subjects meet statutory requirements.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher is an excellent leader and staff in other management posts support her very well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors have a deep knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and play a leading role in deciding the school's priorities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school analyses examination results exceptionally well and has very good systems for monitoring and supporting teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Funds are targeted very efficiently to where they will do the most good and the sixth form is exceedingly cost effective.

The way that the school meets its aim of developing the student both academically and personally is very good. Very good development planning and a complete lack of complacency have brought this about. Overall, the school works very hard to provide the best value for the money it receives.

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 progress that their children make. • The quality of teaching, including the expectations that teachers have of their students. • The quality of leadership and management. • The way that the school develops their children as young adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents being kept better informed about how their child is progressing. • The school setting a more appropriate amount of work to be done at home.

The inspection team agrees completely with parents' positive views. However, although a lot of homework is set, particularly in Years 10 and 11, this is fundamental to the students achieving well. The inspection team found that the annual reports do give parents an accurate picture of the student's learning and of targets for further progress.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form is smaller than in most other schools although it is growing in size. There are currently 136 students in the sixth form. The school provides a wide range of GCE A-level and vocational courses. Approximately one-third of students from Year 11 continues into the sixth form. The composition of the sixth form matches that of the main school in terms of ethnic groupings and students' socio-economic backgrounds. The overall attainment on entry to the sixth form is average. Most students embark on two-year programmes leading to A-level or Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE).

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form is very good and meets the needs of its students very well. Teaching and standards have improved significantly since the last inspection and overall excellent progress has been made. This rate of improvement is a result of excellent leadership and management. Overall, the sixth form is exceedingly cost-effective.

Strengths

- Students' attitudes to learning are excellent and their personal development is very good both of which help them towards their impressive achievements.
- The leadership provided by the director of the sixth form is excellent and has led to a significant rise in examination results.
- The teaching of A-level physics is excellent; standards of attainment are particularly high in the subject.
- The good teaching results in students achieving standards that are better than would be expected given their attainment on entry to the sixth form.
- The excellent academic tutoring scheme is a prime mover in raising standards.
- The curriculum is very good and meets the needs of the students very well.

What could be improved

- The quality of teaching in mathematics although satisfactory overall, is not as good as that seen in most other subjects.
- Standards and examination results in biology are not as good as those seen in most other subjects.
- Students are not adequately informed about the rigours and demands of the course in communication studies.

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

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Satisfactory. In the 2001 A level examination, there were too few candidates to make national comparisons reliable. Results are highly dependent on the cohort. However, the results suggest that over the past three years the attainment of students was below the level expected nationally. The quality of teaching is satisfactory.
Physics	Excellent. The excellent teaching leads to students gaining examination results that are in the top five per cent nationally.

Business	Good. Examination results over the past three years have been consistent and broadly average. The quality of teaching is good.
Travel and tourism	Very good. Examination results are average. The quality of teaching is very good.
Art and design	Good. A-level results were well above average in 2001. Results have steadily risen since the last inspection, when results were below average. The quality of teaching is good.
Geography	Very good. A-level results are well above average in 2001. Standards have steadily risen since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is very good.
English Literature	Very good. A-level examination results in 2000 and 2001 show pleasing increases to match national averages for the subject. Over the last four years the pattern of results shows a rising trend. The quality of teaching is very good.
Communication Studies	Good. Results in the GCE A-level were above the national average. The quality of teaching is very good.

One AS-level and one A-level lesson in biology were observed. The AS-level lesson was satisfactory and the sound teaching enabled students to investigate the genetic malfunctions that lead to cystic fibrosis. One lesson of AS-level music was observed. Students benefited from individualised assistance from the teacher and good progress was made. The lesson showed careful planning and enabled students to develop their work into a formal score in written notation. In a Year 13 German class the students made very good progress and were achieving very well because of the very good teaching. The teacher insisted that students always answered in the target language even if a new theme represented some challenges to the students. In a Year 13 French class, the good teaching enabled students to achieve well; students developed their listening, writing and speaking skills on the subject of politics.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

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

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 quality of teaching is good and teachers are friendly and give freely of their time.• The very good extra-curricular provision including trips abroad.• Students have a clear understanding of what the school aims to do and how it goes about its work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality of information about the communication studies course.

The inspectors agree with the positive views of the students. The quality of teaching is good and it promotes good learning and achievement. The school provides a rich and diverse range of activities for students. Students are made aware of how the school goes about its work and the induction system is very good. The inspectors found that students are confused over the requirements of the communication studies course because the information does not inform them well enough.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Students' attitudes to learning are good and their personal development is very good both of which help them towards their impressive achievements.

1. In conversation, students in all year groups show much appreciation of the provision made for them by the school and are clearly happy to be there. As at the previous inspection, their enthusiasm for learning is impressive. They respond willingly to their teachers' friendly attitudes and high expectations and also relate very well to one another. The vast majority of parents expressing a view are happy with standards of behaviour and they are also very appreciative of the mature and responsible attitudes that students are helped to develop. The positive attitudes and very good behaviour go a long way towards producing the effective climate for working that is so apparent in the school.
2. Students like their school very much and speak highly of the education they receive. Students often proudly asked inspectors during the week what they thought of their school. Students place great value on the accessibility and helpfulness of the teachers and other support staff; they appreciate the activities that the school offers and support events outside lessons.
3. Relationships throughout the school are very good. A high level of respect pervades the school. Students are pleased to work together in pairs or groups. They are glad to contribute to the routines of the school. These mature and responsible qualities were demonstrated to excellent effect in a Year 13 communication studies class. Students were exploring the focus for each group's devised piece for a community arts project and were invited to present their plots. Thereafter, students gave a critical and constructive appraisal of the performance of other students.
4. Other aspects of personal development are very good, in response to the high expectations and high quality guidance that students experience. Right from Year 7, students are encouraged to aim high, develop a positive self-image and have realistic aspirations for their future education and careers. They show a mature and perceptive capacity to value each other's friendship and to consider the needs of others. As at the previous inspection, they respond with mature confidence to the additional responsibilities they can undertake to enhance the life of the school. For example, students in the sixth form add to the breadth of experience for younger year groups by organising various extra-curricular opportunities, such as debating and the breakfast club.
5. Sixth form students show excellent mature attitudes to their work and to the wider opportunities offered by the school. All share the same strong motivation for learning and appreciation of the high standards that the school can help them reach. All readily mix and work together irrespective of their different ethnic backgrounds, contributing to a sense of harmonious community that adds significantly to the quality of the learning environment.
6. Sixth form students know that they are present through their own choice and they are very keen to benefit from their studies and to achieve the best possible examination results. Their teachers' high expectations and the high proportion of good teaching add to their motivation, so that in six out of ten lessons their response is at least very good. It is never less than satisfactory, even in the few lessons where teaching is relatively less stimulating. Straying attention is never a problem although students are occasionally rather passive when the style of the lesson does not invite their active involvement.

The leadership provided by the headteacher, governors and staff with key roles of responsibility has developed a culture of success.

7. The excellent leadership provided by the headteacher has led to a rapid rise in standards at both GCSE and A-level. For example, in 2000 and 2001, there were examples of students gaining

excellent results at A-level and being offered places at Cambridge University. Parents say that the headteacher is never satisfied and is always seeking to improve the school; this is certainly true. The school aims to develop the potential of each student to the full, both academically and in terms of personal development. Weaknesses are tackled head-on, there is a distinct lack of complacency in the school and there is a very good commitment to improve still further.

8. The headteacher is supported well by a very good senior management team, whose joint expertise and skills add up to a considerable force for good in the school. There is a very high level of delegation to senior managers in the school. Other members of the senior management team share the headteacher's determination to improve; they carry out their roles very well. For example, the standards of students' personal development are expected to be just as high as their academic achievement
9. The sixth form is exceedingly well led and managed. The director of the sixth form ensures that all students are treated equally and that the school's aim of providing the best possible education for students is continually striven for. The director of sixth form is exceptionally well-informed about the students' academic and personal development because she has forged a team of highly effective tutors who know their charges very well. The introduction of the new curriculum in the sixth form has been managed very well and resulted in standards rising rapidly so that last year's results were the best in the school's history.
10. The role played by middle managers is good overall. Heads of department are given a good deal of responsibility and generally carry out their duties with a high degree of diligence. Perhaps the best example is observed in the way that physics has been developed since the previous inspection. The outstanding leadership of physics has led to students achieving examination results that are in the top five per cent of all post-16 institutions nationally.
11. Systems for monitoring teaching are generally very good as senior staff and heads of departments carry out frequent lesson observations. The observations are targeted at specific aspects of teaching, such as ensuring that all students know what the aims of the lesson are, and in this way a great consistency of good practice has been developed. Where teachers are found to require extra support, this is quickly provided. The outcomes of these systems are twofold. Firstly the quality of teaching is improved across the school and secondly the school's managers obtain a clear idea of what the priorities should be for development.
12. Governors play a very good role in shaping the direction of the school. They know its strengths and weaknesses very well and can, for example, discuss examination results in detail because they are kept so well informed. They take their roles very seriously and have thrown themselves into the life of the school.

The teaching of A-level physics is excellent; standards of attainment are particularly high in the subject.

13. Physics is a real strength of the school and provides a quality of education to which other departments can aspire. All teachers are agreed on the teaching strategies that prove to be the most successful and all implement such strategies consistently.
14. Students are regularly taught to the highest possible standards. Lessons place a great emphasis on teaching strategies that will allow students to tackle future problems with confidence. Combined with the teaching of examination techniques, students are exceptionally well prepared for the rigours of GCE A-level. For example, in one excellent lesson the teacher used rapid fire questioning to find out how one student would solve a problem and then asked for several other ways of tackling it. Each response was carefully matched to students' individual weaknesses, for instance by saying "if you have difficulty with this technique then use this method". As a result of this approach, students became confident in choosing and applying the method that was both right for them and appropriate for the problem to be solved. One other very significant strength of the teaching in physics is the sheer pace of lessons; the students cover vast amounts of work in every lesson.

15. The results of this high quality teaching are exceptionally high standards of attainment and examination results are in the top five per cent of all post-16 institutions nationally.

The very good teaching in Years 10 and 11 results in students achieving standards at the age of 16 that are much better than would be expected given their attainment on entry to the school.

16. The quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good or better in nine out of ten lessons and it is very good or better in four out of ten lessons seen. This is a considerable improvement on the quality of teaching observed at the time of the previous inspection and is the main reason for the rapid rise in examination results.
17. There are certain features that are common to many of these very good lessons and they provide clues to ways in which the satisfactory lessons could be improved. The start of the most successful lessons is particularly significant. The beginning of the lesson is usually brisk, lively and challenging; it immediately makes students think. In English, where many of these lessons are found, there is always a task early in the lesson that engages students in thinking. The teacher is indicating from the outset that he or she expects students to work hard but also that there is enjoyment and satisfaction to be gained from such learning.
18. Teachers' high expectations, obvious from the start, are maintained as the lesson continues. In a German class, for example, the teacher used very good examples of previous students' work to indicate to students just what they too could achieve. Teachers often expect extended spoken answers in response to their questions to the class. In history, teachers expect answers to be detailed and to include all the correct historical terms. Such practice in forming clear explanations provides the experience necessary for producing detailed written answers in response to examination questions at a later stage.
19. Once teachers have gained students' full attention they keep up the momentum, often with a series of short, focused tasks so that there is no opportunity for students' concentration to flag. Usually there is little need for obvious management of students; behaviour is very good and there are very good relationships between students and teachers. When necessary, however, teachers are quick to notice and deal with any straying of attention or loss of effort.
20. Lessons provide a very good atmosphere for learning. Students have the confidence to try things out, to attempt a more ambitious answer or to put forward an opinion, secure in the knowledge that the reactions of both teacher and fellow students will be sensitive and supportive.
21. The results of the very good teaching are standards that are above average. Students join the school with levels of attainment that are below average; they leave with GCSE results that are average and predictions for this year are for above average results. These results represent very good levels of achievement in Years 10 and 11.

The excellent academic tutoring scheme is a prime mover in raising standards in Years 10 to 13.

22. The school was one of the first in the local education authority to provide individual academic tutoring. Part of this scheme is the personal Academic Tutoring day (PAR). This involves students actively in the learning process and encourages them to take more responsibility for their own learning. Twice a year there are reviews where all students are interviewed and clear targets are set for improvement. Students in Years 7 to 13 are interviewed although interviews for Years 10 to 13 are subject specific; targets for Years 10 to 13 are subject specific. These interviews are very fruitful. Students have very good relationships with their interviewer, know what is expected and clearly enjoy the individual attention and encouragement.
23. The school's most recent work as part of a LEA project to raise achievement was to raise attainment for Year 11 students on the GCSE C/D borderline in English. The students were identified by each English teacher and focused individual support was provided. Information

about interviews and the targets set were disseminated to each student's English teacher. From there, each student was tutored; this resulted in students achieving GCSE results much better than expected given their attainment on entry to the school. This successful strategy has been extended in 2001/2002 to include mathematics and science.

24. The scheme is now embedded well in Years 10 to 13 with examination results at both GCSE and at GCSE/AVCE improving rapidly. The school is in the early stages of introducing this excellent scheme into Years 7 to 9.

Provision for moral and social development is very good.

25. The school makes very good provision for the moral development of students. The school's aims stress individual responsibility and accountability and are understood by all. A well-organised system of rewards and sanctions sharpens perceptions of right and wrong, as do the commendable role models set by the staff and senior students. The very good relationships that exist between staff and students encourage students to discuss issues of a moral nature openly.
26. Students are encouraged through work led by the equal opportunities group to consider the social inclusion of all people and to identify with those who may be different from themselves. The wide variety of activities and opportunities for residential visits enable them to develop their own talents and to learn to communicate confidently in different situations. There are many opportunities for students to work together both in the school and on external visits.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9, although satisfactory overall, is not as good as that seen in Years 10 to 13.

27. Teaching is better in Years 10 to 13 than in Years 7 to 9 because there is a degree of urgency to the teaching because of the need to prepare students for examinations. For example, in a Year 7 mathematics class the teaching lacked pace and the work did not challenge students sufficiently. There are a few occasions when the unsatisfactory management of students leads to unsatisfactory learning. For example in a Year 8 design and technology class, students became restless and bored and minor disruption to the lesson occurred.

The quality of teaching in mathematics although satisfactory overall, is not as good as that seen in most other subjects in Years 7 to 13.

28. The quality of teaching in mathematics does not have the same degree of urgency as that seen in most other subjects. In English for example, students have a real sense of enjoyment and relationships between teachers and students are very good. However, in mathematics, students are more reticent to ask for support and there is not the same level of encouragement in all classes for students to develop the skills needed for working on their own. All this leads to standards in mathematics not being as good as those seen in many other subjects and the achievement of students being only satisfactory.

The quality of teaching in science in Years 7 to 11 although satisfactory overall, is not as good as that seen in most other subjects.

29. In science the quality of teaching is not as consistent as that seen in most other subjects. In English for example, the quality of teaching right across the school is at least good and often very good. However, in science, whilst teaching is never less than satisfactory it rarely comes up to the same high standard seen in English.
30. Another issue is that the specialist teachers of physics are not deployed as well as they could be, particularly in Years 10 and 11 and this results in students attaining lower marks in their physics modules compared with their marks in other modules that make up the award for

double science. If the students' module results in physics were improved, many students who gained a GCSE grade D last year would have gained at least a grade C.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

31. To raise further the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governors and the senior management team should:
- (1) Improve the quality of teaching seen in Years 7 to 9 by (para 27, 24):
 - *introducing the excellent subject-specific academic tutoring scheme that is operational in Years 10 to 13 into Years 7 to 9; this will provide teachers with specific targets to aim for and will provide a greater sense of urgency to the teaching;
 - ensuring that all teachers set work that is challenging and inspires students to do their best.
 - (2) Improve the quality of teaching in mathematics in all years by sharing the good practice that already exists in most other subjects in the school (para 28, 96, 97).
 - (3) Improve the quality of teaching in science by (para 29, 30):
 - sharing the good practice that already exists in the subject;
 - making better use of specialist teachers of physics.

Sixth form

Improve the standards and the examination results in biology by ensuring that the quality of teaching is as good as that seen in most other subjects (para 34, 100).

Minor weaknesses in the sixth form

*Ensure that students are better informed about the rigours and demands of the course in communication studies (para 73, 80).

* Denotes already identified by the school for improvement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 - 11	39
	Sixth form	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students		47

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

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

Number	2	11	9	15	1	0	0
Percentage	5	29	24	40	2	0	0

Sixth form

Number	5	14	16	2	0	0	0
Percentage	13	38	43	6	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	1012	136
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	215	0

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	12	0
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	179	1

English as an additional language

	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	76

Student mobility in the last school year

	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.4
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	N/a	205	205

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Girls	158	116	126
	Total	158	116	126
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	77 (90)	57 (50)	62 (52)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	20 (59)	26 (24)	23 (16)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Girls	130	113	134
	Total	130	113	134
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	64 (61)	57 (46)	67 (57)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	30 (27)	27 (26)	34 (21)
	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 students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	N/a	209	209

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	100	198	202
	Total	100	198	202
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	48 (46)	95 (97)	97 (99)
	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 student	School	39.9
	National	39.0

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those students who achieved all those they studied	School	0
	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 / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations	Year	Male	Female	Total
	2001	N/a	171	171

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	N/a	64	64
	Average point score per candidate	N/a	14.9	14.9
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	18	17.5

		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	N/a	45	45	N/a	22	22
	Average point score per candidate	N/a	15.9	15.9	N/a	10.9	10.9

National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.9	17.4	9.8	11.4	10.6
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of students

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	30
Black – African heritage	28
Black – other	1
Indian	14
Pakistani	14
Bangladeshi	8
Chinese	2
White	1014
Any other minority ethnic group	37

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	3	
Black – African heritage		
Black – other	1	
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	67	1
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	69.3
Number of students per qualified teacher	16.6

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	327

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.4
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	22.1
Key Stage 4	20.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	3,245,678
Total expenditure	3,229,659
Expenditure per student	2,787
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,637
Balance carried forward to next year	34,656

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	19.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	24.6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1.6
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)	0.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1148
Number of questionnaires returned	108

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	46	46	5	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	44	54	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	56	4	1	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	57	14	2	1
The teaching is good.	31	66	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	48	19	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	44	3	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	42	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	24	57	12	3	4
The school is well led and managed.	44	52	1	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	55	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	54	6	3	6

PART D: THE SIXTH FORM

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

32. Standards in the sixth form are above average and students are achieving well.
33. Results in the 2001 examinations at General Certificate of Education Advanced level/Advanced GNVQ were average when compared to all maintained schools and all post-16 institutions, including grammar schools, colleges and independent schools, nationally. Results are rising rapidly and the results last year were the best in the school's history. The school's predictions for this year are for results to improve even further.
34. Results were very high in physics and place the school in the top five per cent of all schools nationally. Results were well above average in art and design, geography and sociology; above average in communication studies; average in English literature, history, government and politics, business and leisure and tourism; below average in biology and well below average in chemistry. There were too few candidates entered in other subjects to make valid statistical comparisons.
35. At the time of the inspection there were no national figures for comparison with the results of the new AS-level examinations taken in Year 12, but the school's results suggest that Year 12 standards are being maintained.
36. The headteacher, the director of the sixth form and the governing body have set challenging targets for improvement. The 2001 results indicate that the school has been successful in meeting these targets.
37. The proportion of students that enter the sixth form varies from year to year but is generally increasing. Each year between 40 and 60 per cent of students stay on. Of these, the vast majority of students complete their courses.
38. Students' standards in the key skill of communication are varied. Writing is mostly accurate but some errors of spelling and punctuation remain. Although some students can speak with great fluency, in the main, students' oral skills tend to be limited to brief responses to questions and much shorter contributions to lessons. Reading skills are generally well developed; students can retrieve information effectively and many read actively for pleasure.
39. Standards in the key skill of application of number are average. Whilst there is no single approach to the teaching of numeracy the teachers do well. In business a strong emphasis is placed on numeracy, especially the use of graphs and diagrams and this contributes well to students' coursework. In physics, students calculate the conditions for total internal reflection and can explain its application to the transmission of light in optical fibres. Some lower attaining students make basic errors in their calculations, including signs and ratios but their teachers correct these as they arise in lessons.
40. Standards in the key skill of information technology are average. Students enhance the presentation of their work. They use spreadsheet-modelling techniques accurately in physics and access the Internet when researching topics.
41. In the work seen during the inspection, the standards that students attain are well above average in physics; above average in travel and tourism, art and design, geography and communication studies and average in all other subjects inspected in detail.
42. In the work seen students are achieving exceedingly well in physics; very well in travel and tourism, geography and English literature; well in business, art and design and communication studies and satisfactorily in mathematics.

43. Year 13 students are achieving well. The rate at which students make progress is usually a result of the teaching they receive, so that when teaching is excellent as in physics, the standards attained by students are higher than expected. Where teaching is satisfactory, as in mathematics, the achievement of students is satisfactory.
44. Students with special educational needs achieve as well as other students in the sixth form and make good progress towards their individual targets. Higher attaining students, including those who are particularly gifted and talented, also make good progress. For example, in 2000 and 2001 a number of students were offered places at Cambridge University because of their outstanding success at A-level.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

45. Students enjoy the sixth form and show excellent attitudes within it. Their personal development is very good and the quality of relationships is excellent. Most students attend school well. By responding warmly to the stimulation, high expectations, and many extra-curricular opportunities to be pursued, their personal and learning skills develop very well. Students consider that they are being very well prepared for life outside school and speak appreciatively of the leadership, personal interest, and support and guidance bringing this about. Standards overall have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
46. Students apply themselves very well to their work. They find their studies interesting. They listen and concentrate very well. They are diligent in trying to produce work of a good standard knowing that less is likely to be rejected. They collaborate readily, enjoying the sociability and sense of partnership this produces. Students in Year 12 tend to be quieter and show less initiative in lessons than those in Year 13 who have had longer experience of discussion and presentation. Generally, however, sixth formers are very well motivated in their learning and are frequently enthusiastic. They bring these qualities to their work outside lessons and at home.
47. Students develop very well personally and academically largely because of the emphasis placed in the sixth form on the practice of study skills, and on the importance of individual effort in making things happen. Students are expected to make their own work experience appointments, for instance, and are encouraged to take up the many opportunities there are for initiative and widening their experience. Most are glad to do so and subsequently recognise with pleasure, and even some surprise, their sense of increased ability and confidence. Students learn, in particular, to communicate effectively. For example, in Year 12 general studies a student was observed giving a cogent and clear presentation, for assessment by her peers, on a topic related to her sociology studies. In Year 13, two groups of students each rapidly prepared, from given source material, a presentation on the incarcerations at Guantanamo Bay, distinguishing between 'facts' and 'opinions', in the context of human rights. Both presentations were delivered, on a team basis, with some style and technique. There followed a joint discussion on imprisonment. All students present contributed positively in vigorous, thoughtful and well-balanced debate. Similar qualities of positive, sensible and considerate self-expression were also seen in a purposeful lunchtime meeting of Young Enterprise, chaired, managed and serviced entirely by sixth-formers.
48. Relationships are harmonious and behaviour is exemplary. Students are very supportive of each other. Those in Year 12, for instance, state that Year 13 students are very friendly, and that the two year groups mix socially very well. Students have cordial relationships with their tutors, whom most have known for some years. The congenial and socially-responsible nature of relationships is impressively expressed in the well-kept surroundings of the large common room. The school does not have to resort to exclusions in the sixth form.
49. There is much activity among sixth-formers. They take a leading part in the school community. For example, those who are accepted as senior prefects meet frequently to discuss and plan. Sixth-formers head the school council and the monitoring of the school suggestion box. A group runs the weekly Christian Union meetings and provides an alternative assembly twice weekly.

Several lead the 'chat club'. This includes representatives from each year group and aims to support those who may have problems. Many sixth-formers organise and take part in their own specially extended and themed assemblies at Harvest and Easter. They run their own Ball. They provide paired reading for younger students. Within and outside the school they lead charity initiatives. Through many projects, activities and visits providing experience of the wider community, sixth form students acquire an appreciation of those in differing circumstances, and this is reflected in the very considerate and polite attitudes found among them.

50. The general standard of punctuality and attendance at lessons is good. This contributes effectively to high morale and academic attainment.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

51. Teaching in the sixth form is good, with around half of the lessons taught to a very good or excellent standard. Teaching is excellent in physics; very good in travel and tourism, geography, English literature and communication studies; good in business and art and design and satisfactory in mathematics.
52. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subjects that they teach. The vast majority are qualified specialists and this shows in the way that they can explain complex theories. In physics, for example, the teaching of important concepts is quite outstanding and is the key to the success of the department. In one very memorable lesson, the teacher started by talking about the repulsion of particles and pointed out to the students it was just like the work they had done in Year 7, so it must be easy. The teacher then moved on to ask the students about how they could get the particles closer together, introducing acceleration and again reminding the students that this was just the same idea as other work they had covered previously. So it was that the lesson carefully built up, until after about 20 minutes the teacher pointed out that the students had just worked out how small nebulae were formed simply by using physics that they already knew about. In most other subjects, the quality of planning is very good and meets the demands of the examination syllabuses very well.
53. The teachers' knowledge of the examination requirements also lead to good marking. Teachers point out exactly where marks will be lost and gained if the work was presented for the exam and also explain how revision techniques can be improved, such as by explaining different ways of presenting work in files in order to make notes more easily accessible.
54. The teachers have high expectations of what the students can achieve and set very demanding work. Lessons are conducted in a purposeful manner with a determined focus on learning that engages the interest of all. In an excellent Year 12 lesson on the poetry of Carol Ann Duffy students worked in three groups to focus on different poems and then pooled their learning in a whole-class session which was adroitly managed.
55. The very best lessons make use of the students' own thirst for knowledge and enthusiasm to learn. When they are given work to do independently, such as in art and design, they stick to their task with intense concentration and will readily seek the opinions of others in order to help them. Often, it is when the teacher uses a variety of methods that learning is at its best. In a communication studies lesson for example, the teacher set a problem-solving task for groups and then asked them to report back to the whole group on the technical aspects of a particular interpretation of characterisation. In this lesson students were active and involved and really threw themselves into their tasks. However, in some other subjects, such as mathematics, students are not sufficiently encouraged to become involved in discussion; they still behave excellently but the rate of learning is not as good as when they are active. Students are generally very self-confident, but some methods can boost this whilst others reduce it. Getting students to produce critiques in a foreign language of other students' work, for example, and displaying them publicly celebrates students' successes. Telling them that they will find the work very difficult, as in mathematics, before they start the topic, has the opposite effect.

56. Teachers are good at improving students' skills of communication in individual lessons. Teachers in sociology for example consistently use glossaries, word lists and reading aloud as part of their everyday lessons. When a student does read aloud, others listen attentively and so develop their powers of concentration.
57. Whilst there is no single approach to the teaching of numeracy the teachers do well. In business a strong emphasis is placed on numeracy, especially the use of graphs and diagrams and this contributes well to students' coursework. In physics, students calculate the conditions for total internal reflection and can explain its application to the transmission of light in optical fibres. Some lower attaining students make basic errors in their calculations, including signs and ratios but their teachers correct these as they arise in lessons.
58. Teachers make good use of the resources available to them. They provided opportunities for students to use information and communication technology in their studies.
59. Overall, the quality of teaching in the sixth form has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

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

60. The sixth form curriculum is very good and offers the same excellent equality of opportunity as that of the rest of the school. The curriculum is broad and very relevant. The extensive range of GCE AS and A-level courses, together with Advanced Vocational Certificates of Education (AVCE) meet the needs of higher attaining students particularly well and provides them with the choice of a vocational or more academic pathway. Lower attaining students are offered a good range of Intermediate GNVQs or the opportunity to retake GCSE subjects. Each route to accreditation also provides options within it, so that for example the very highest attainers may study four subjects to A-level while others study four AS-levels and drop one at the end of Year 12. By providing these different routes to accreditation, the school is meeting the needs and aspirations of the students very well, particularly in terms of their attainment on entering the sixth form.
61. The school goes to good lengths to ensure that the subjects available meet the needs of individual students, while taking full account of other opportunities available locally to continue their studies. Small groups, for example, are allowed to run if they are complementary to other studies so that students can study the combination of subjects most appropriate for them. There is an expectation that the great majority will continue from AS-level to full A-level in all of their subjects so the content of the courses are planned to take this into account. This ensures that students are well prepared for their work in Year 13, as the AS-level is not just seen as a course in itself but also as an integral part of a full A-level.
62. The provision for students with special educational needs is good. Their specific needs are well known to staff and the curriculum is modified accordingly.
63. Statutory requirements are met as all students study religious education while in Year 12, but the requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship is not met. All students also study for accreditation in the key skills. This course is very well planned and taught, so students make rapid progress, particularly in information technology and communication.
64. Students receive excellent quality careers advice in the sixth form, which builds exceptionally well on the extensive work carried out in the lower school. The quality of the school's work in this area has brought it awards for both the quality of education and the careers library. Careers education is integrated very well into the work of subjects and combined with the excellent provision that the school makes for work experience. The emphasis is placed upon the students taking responsibility for making all arrangements for their work experience in Year 12. The placements are combined with the teaching of key skills, so all students gain significant

benefits from the experience not just in terms of personal development but also in terms of improving their academic skills. Students also undertake a further three days' work later in the year that is specifically aimed at supporting charities. The placements are designed to be challenging for students, but still linked to their career aspirations. The school aims for students to experience a wide range of roles within their placement. For example, one student studying leisure and tourism worked at a top London hotel and on each day she worked in a different area to maximise her experience. The school makes very good use of its links with businesses in the local community in this respect.

65. Offering a variety of opportunities, ranging from sport through to music and drama, enriches the curriculum. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. While the school does not comply fully with the requirement for a daily act of worship, the quality of assemblies is good, and the 'alternative assemblies' provided by sixth form students in the Christian Union reflects the commitment of the school to their spiritual development. Other faiths are reflected in some of the assemblies and a weekly prayer meeting is available for Muslim students. The 'Y' club and religious education lessons for Year 12 provide forums for students to investigate the great questions that lead to spiritual development.
66. The moral development of students is supported through many subjects, in particular through their religious education in Year 12, where moral dilemmas such as the ethics of genetics and cloning are discussed, and consideration of such concepts as 'forgiveness and reconciliation' takes place. Their commitment to the school reflects a strong moral sense of duty and social responsibility. The sixth form is taking the lead in the work of the School Council and is responsible for receiving the concerns of younger pupils through a suggestion box and through their support for classes in Years 7 and 8. The opportunities for younger pupils to seek advice and support in the 'chat room' and at the 'early birds club' manned by sixth form volunteers are valuable and indicate the commitment of the students to the school community. Through the community service programme they provide additional support for pupils with special educational needs in the paired reading scheme and in their work in neighbouring primary schools. Their sense of social responsibility is enhanced by special workshops such as the three-day focus on wealth and poverty. This culminated in a visit to centres for the homeless situated in a centre of affluence in London.
67. Sixth form students develop their confidence as they move towards Year 13 and activities involving the Young Enterprise Group and the Debating Society provide excellent opportunities for this to be displayed and developed. Field trips and monthly theatre visits provide for their social and cultural development, as do the annual sixth form visits to Europe which enable them to develop a sixth form identity. Experiences gained, such as during their visit to the Anne Frank museum, are reflected back into the main school through assemblies and through their increased sense of school commitment.
68. The curriculum has undergone significant changes since the previous inspection. The introduction of the new system of AS and A-levels has been managed very well. Very good progress has been made since the previous inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

Assessment

69. The procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are very good. A substantial amount of data on students' attainment is collected and recorded when they enter the sixth form. This information is then made available to heads of subject and to sixth form tutors. As students progress through Years 12 and 13 information is gathered on their attainment and stored centrally, updated regularly and available to all teaching staff. Records on students' personal progress also complement the system.
70. The use made of assessment in planning the curriculum is good. There is a wealth of assessment data available to subjects although its use is not always consistent. Students'

progress is monitored closely through a variety of assessments linked to the published course. Targets grades are set for students on the basis of their prior attainment. They are not yet used specifically by all subjects to guide students on what they need to learn to achieve their target grades, as is the case in mathematics. There are examples of where good practice is firmly established. In English Literature for example, there is good use of assessment information to identify the needs of individual students. This enables teachers to match their work closely to the needs of individual students and results in all students achieving very well.

71. The quality of reports for parents and for students is very good. Annual reports give parents and students a very good picture of the student's learning and of targets for further progress. In most subjects there is a very good level of detail about the student's attainment and progress.

Advice, support and guidance

72. Educational and personal support and guidance in the sixth form promote students' achievements very well.
73. Information provided regarding courses is of a very good standard. It is attractively presented in the sixth form brochure. Year 11 prepares students appropriately. At the start of Year 12 induction is very thorough, formally extending over three days. It clearly expresses the more advanced expectations of sixth-form work, the initiative required, and the importance of practising study skills and is followed up by seminars in individual subjects. Sixth-formers new to the school are made welcome and quickly become integrated. However, there is a need to ensure that students are better informed about the rigours and demands of the course in communication studies.
74. Each group of students is under the direct care of a tutor who, in the case of those who have progressed through the school, has usually been known to them for some years. Students say they have confidence in their tutors, and also find their teachers very supportive. Tutors and teachers are conscientious about monitoring attendance through session and lesson registrations. Absences are followed up. Students' personal circumstances are taken sensitively into account. The director of the sixth form takes a close interest and pastoral liaison within her team is very good. Overall attendance figures for the sixth form are not, however, routinely maintained.
75. In addition to the normal course of educational guidance, there are formal arrangements for review each term. Students are given information and opportunity to reflect and prepare before these personal academic reviews with their tutor. Partly to enhance their significance the time-tabled sessions are held on days set aside for that purpose. Students say they find the discipline and discussion valuable. They know how they are doing and obtain a focus from critically reviewing their targets.
76. Much up-to-date information is readily accessible about further education and careers, for instance in the common room and through the extensive careers library. Students are expected, supported by guidance, to arrange their own work experience and fix up whatever interviews are necessary. Students comment as a result that this process has been strongly developmental in promoting their self-reliance and confidence. They also praise the parts played by the assimilation of work skills and the enrichment provided through the school's provision of cross-curriculum studies as important contributors in this process. Staff have built up very good knowledge, connections and experience by which to give such support, and results show in the outcomes being obtained.
77. Arrangements for the overall welfare and care of students, including child protection, are good. Care provision has much improved since the previous inspection.

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

78. Parents and students express very strong, positive views about the school. Parents are keen for their children to do well and choose Carshalton knowing that if their child works hard then their child will have every chance of success. Parents and students are particularly keen on the extra time that teachers spend with students in preparing them for the rigours of examinations and for life when they leave the school. Parents value the considerable number of extra-curricular activities that the school provides that enrich the lives of the students. Parents and students speak highly of the many trips abroad.
79. The quality of reports for parents and for students is very good and informative. Very good numbers of parents attend the annual consultation meetings with staff. There are appropriate additional events to inform parents at key times such as when Year 11 students make their sixth form subject choices. Parents feel they can approach the school at any time to discuss any concerns they may have. Students value the time spent with personal tutors, both teachers and governors, and speak highly of the sensitive manner in which personal problems are dealt with.
80. Sixth form students enjoy studying at the school and rate highly the quality of support to help them gain good examination results. They feel they are well informed before they join and that they are enabled to settle down well. They greatly appreciate the way that teachers respond readily to any requests for extra help with work and voice especial appreciation of the support always available from the director of sixth form and the headteacher. Students are very happy with the quality of teaching. Students have a clear understanding of what the school aims to do and how it goes about its work. Students were unhappy about the advice provided about the communication studies course. They thought the academic aspects of the course had not been sufficiently highlighted.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

81. The quality of leadership and management of the sixth form is excellent overall. The director of sixth form ensures that all students are treated equally and that the school's aim of providing the best possible education for students is continually striven for. The director of sixth form is exceptionally well-informed about the students' academic and personal development because she has forged a team of highly effective tutors who know their charges very well. The introduction of the new curriculum in the sixth form has been managed very well and has resulted in very high standards not only being maintained but actually improved so that last year's results were among the best in the school's history.
82. The same very good systems are used for monitoring and supporting teaching as exist in the main school and they are equally effective. The director of sixth form is aware of the areas where high quality teaching is guaranteed and those very few areas where teaching is not yet reaching the same high standards. The results are observed in the improvement in the quality of teaching in the sixth form since the school was last inspected.
83. The director has the confidence of the staff and is fully supported by a well-informed and experienced group of tutors. There is a shared commitment to improvement and a very good capacity to succeed. The director meets on a regular basis with the headteacher.
84. The school's aims and the values that underpin the work of the sixth form are relevant to the needs of the students and are embedded exceedingly well in all aspects of the school's work. There is a very good relationship between the sixth form and the main school. Students in the main school and in particular students in Years 10 and 11 appreciate the support and guidance provided by the older students. Sixth form students appreciate the opportunity to work with younger students.

85. The leadership and management provided by many subject leaders are good. For example, the subject leader for physics provides excellent leadership and management, which has resulted in many innovative schemes being introduced and very high results being attained.
86. The governors view the sixth form as equally important as the rest of the school and take their role here equally as seriously. The governors have a very good understanding of the work of the sixth form and they have identified many of the strengths and weaknesses noted in this report through the very good monitoring systems that are in place. Committee structures are very good and there is a clear focus on the work of the sixth form. There is a very good and effective working partnership with the director of sixth form in shaping the direction of the school.
87. The school development plan includes areas specific to the sixth form and is of a very good quality; it focuses on raising achievement and sets a clear agenda for improvement. The priorities are appropriate and some of the issues noted in this report are already highlighted in the school development plan. The school applies the principles of best value extremely well. The headteacher and director of sixth form have set challenging targets for improvement. The school compares its performance with similar attaining schools in the authority and nationally.
88. The strategic use of resources is very good. A tight rein is kept on spending by the administrative staff, the director of sixth form and the senior management team. The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is very good. The sixth form is exceedingly cost effective not only in its subject provision but also through the enrichment opportunities that students enjoy.

Resources

89. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good overall. Teachers are well qualified and have the relevant expertise and experience in vocational areas. The arrangements for the induction of staff new to the school are very good with a well-planned programme of support that helps ensure that teachers settle quickly into the life of the school. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching is well-established and includes observation of lessons by senior staff with arrangements for the regular review of performance. The school has undertaken a carefully prepared programme of consultation with staff for the introduction of the performance management regulations. The in-service training of teachers is planned very well and linked to the school and subject development plans and this is having a positive effect on the quality of teaching.
90. The school has sufficient rooms for teaching and students have access to a good quality common room. There have been many improvements to the accommodation since the previous inspection.
91. The resources in the sixth form are satisfactory overall. The resources centre offers a welcoming and studious environment and is heavily used by students. There are sufficient books and resources in the resource centre and departments to support students' studies.

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

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

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

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	3	67	87	0	43	2.7	5.8
Chemistry	8	75	90	13	43	3.3	5.9
Biology	9	78	88	22	34	3.8	5.3
Physics	4	100	88	75	40	9.0	5.7
Business VQ	6	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	10.0	10.5
Leisure and Tourism VQ	16	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	10.5	10.0
Art and Design	8	100	96	63	46	7.8	6.6
Geography	8	100	92	63	38	7.5	5.8
History	7	100	88	14	35	5.4	5.4
Sociology	17	100	86	59	35	6.7	5.3
Other social studies	10	90	87	40	34	5.4	5.3
English Literature	28	100	95	25	37	5.9	5.9
Communication Studies	7	100	93	14	31	6.3	5.5
French	3	67	89	0	38	4.0	5.6
German	3	100	91	67	40	8.0	5.8
Other languages	1	100	93	100	56	10.0	6.84

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business	1	100	N/a	0	N/a	N/a	N/a
Leisure and tourism	9	78	N/a	22	N/a	N/a	N/a
Health and social care	8	88	N/a	13	N/a	N/a	N/a

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The focus was on mathematics.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- The good level of knowledge and understanding of the teachers leads to clear exposition and explanation of concepts.
- Good attitudes of students contribute well to their level of commitment to study.
- Teachers provide good guidance to students on the quality of work in lessons.

Areas for improvement

- AS and A-level students do not have sufficient opportunities to take a more active role in lessons.
- There is a lack of regular formalised assessments that would track students' progress as they proceed through the course and set targets for improvement.

92. The students in the sixth form study mathematics and most complete the GCE A-level course. The school offers mathematics at AS level and A-level in four areas of pure mathematics, statistics, discrete mathematics, and methods.

93. In the 2001 A-level examination, there were too few candidates to make national comparisons reliable. Results are highly dependent on the cohort. However, the results suggest that over the past three years the attainment of students was below the national average.

94. In the work seen during the inspection the standards that students attain by the end of Year 12 are broadly average and this represents a satisfactory level of achievement for those students. Attainment in the statistics module is better than that of the pure mathematics module. In statistics, students understand how to calculate variance and standard deviation, but have difficulty applying this to problems. Good work is seen in the statistics project. Students identify aims well and data collection and statistical analysis skills are good. In pure mathematics, students are developing sound, basic skills in differentiation and integration that prepare them well for future work on problem solving. Understanding of logarithms is weaker and students experience difficulties in differentiating the exponential function which limits their progress when solving differential equations in Year 13.

95. In the work seen during the inspection the standards that students attain by the end of Year 13 are broadly average and this represents a satisfactory level of achievement for those students. This is better than the examination results indicate, but the number of students is low and results are highly dependent on the cohort. In pure mathematics, students are developing sound skills in integration. They integrate accurately by parts, by changing the variable and by substitution. Students experience difficulties in understanding how to calculate the terms when expanding binomial expressions. Their understanding of the use of factorials is weak. In discrete mathematics, students demonstrate that they can apply their understanding of linear programming to a practical situation – graphs are accurate and students interpret them well to gain the information needed.

96. Teaching is satisfactory overall and students from all ethnic backgrounds learn satisfactorily as a result. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and there are examples of good teaching. The best feature of the teaching is the good knowledge and understanding of teachers, both of the AS and A-levels and GNVQ Key Skills. This was evident in a GNVQ lesson where the teacher explained clearly the requirements for students' portfolios including an emphasis on the need always to show that they have checked calculations. In another lesson, in pure mathematics,

students readily interrupted and asked the teacher to clarify procedures when finding the standard solution to a general differential equation. The teacher explained the methods clearly, always reinforcing basic skills, so that the students have confidence to attempt examples. Teachers provide good guidance to students on the quality of work during lessons. However, the quality of marking varies. It is better where the teachers point out where students have made mistakes and indicate what they need to do to improve. This enables teachers to monitor the understanding of students and set targets for further improvement. It also helps students when they revise for examinations. This good quality of marking is not consistently applied. Students use graphic calculators appropriately and although information and communication technology is not directly used in lessons, students often have access to computers both at home and in school and are encouraged to make full use of these resources to support their work in lessons.

97. Students respond well to the effective questioning of teachers and this enhances their learning. Students are attentive in lessons and will ask questions if they have difficulty in understanding a new concept. In response, generally, the teachers give clear explanations when students ask for clarification and this allows students to learn effectively. For example in one lesson the students were studying decay problems using differential equations. Their recall of how to differentiate the exponential function was weak, however, effective use of questioning, and patience by the teacher provided them with the opportunity to think about previous work and they were able to tackle the problem. In other lessons, the quality of questioning is such that it does not allow the students to explore their ideas and misunderstandings and this inhibits their learning. Students work well together but there are insufficient opportunities for students to make extended contributions in discussions involving the whole class. Students are generally alert throughout the lesson and a good level of concentration is maintained. Homework is set regularly. It is used effectively to consolidate and extend new work that is introduced in the lesson.
98. Although the overall procedures for assessing students' progress as they go through the sixth form are sound, there is no regular programme of formal, standardised tests with which the progress of students is measured against prior attainment. This limits the opportunity for sharing targets and validating them with students. However, in lessons, teachers provide good guidance to students on the quality of their work. The range of topics within the mathematics curriculum provides students with good opportunities to study new areas of the subject ensuring that interest and motivation is maintained and extended.
99. There is insufficient information on standards of attainment in the previous report to make a judgement on progress since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has been maintained. Overall progress is satisfactory.

SCIENCES

100. The focus was on physics, but biology and chemistry were also sampled. In biology, results in the 2001 GCE A-level examinations were below the national average. Biology attracts about ten students each year and results are normally similar to those attained in 2001. One AS-level lesson and one A-level lesson in biology were observed. In the satisfactory AS-level lesson, the sound teaching enabled students to investigate the genetic malfunctions that lead to cystic fibrosis. The teacher challenged students' thinking through questioning and discussion as they worked and ensured a sound pace of work was maintained throughout. In chemistry, results in the 2001 GCE A-level examinations were well below average. Results vary significantly from year to year, for example in 1998; students did significantly better in chemistry than in most of their other subjects. The numbers of students taking chemistry differs significantly from year to year.

Physics

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

Strengths

- The excellent teaching leads to students gaining examination results that are in the top five per cent nationally.
- Teachers have an outstanding ability to explain difficult concepts in the most simple and understandable way.
- The excellent leadership and management have led to the subject developing from a position of no provision to one where it produces the best results in the school in just a few years.

Areas for improvement

- Students lack confidence in their own abilities in physics and, in particular using mathematics, for no justifiable reason.

101. The department offers courses in GCE AS and A-level physics. There are five students in each of the current Years 12 and 13. No student has ever failed to complete a course and all students continue to full A-level.
102. The GCE A-level examination results in 2001 were very high and placed the school in the top five per cent of schools nationally. These results represent an excellent level of achievement given the students' GCSE results when they joined the sixth form.
103. The standards of work seen during the inspection are well above average in both Years 12 and 13. This standard is slightly lower than the A-level results would suggest because the current students are not quite as good as those who studied the subject last year, but they are still achieving extremely well. Students' knowledge and understanding of topics they have studied earlier in the course are generally very good. For example, students in Year 13 were able to explain the basis of the gas laws by referring to work they had carried out earlier on kinetic theory and the nature of elastic collisions. The students are exceptionally methodical when carrying out practical work and they ensure that their results are accurate by, for example, taking multiple readings or checking anomalies as a matter of course.
104. Students' files are very well organised and provide sets of notes that are quite superb, particularly in terms of providing a reference source for revision purposes. The students' written work on their experiments is well laid out and logical, but some simple errors are allowed to creep in, such as missing units or not including the degree of accuracy to which they are working. The monitoring of students' notes is exceptionally thorough, all errors are picked up and, more importantly, the teachers are ensuring the best possible set of notes from which students can revise.
105. Teaching and learning are excellent overall. There are four key elements that bring about the outstanding levels of achievement: teachers' planning, their explanations, the use of questions and the way that no time is wasted. The lessons are planned to match perfectly the requirements of the syllabus. In an assessed practical task on measuring the resistivity of conducting putty, for example, the experiment chosen allowed the students to use, and the teacher to assess, a wide range of practical skills while still assuring that the task built on students' knowledge and understanding of their previous work. Such planning leads to students gaining an excellent grounding in both theoretical and practical areas of the subject. The way that teachers explain complex concepts is quite outstanding and is the key to the success of the department. In one very memorable lesson, the teacher started by talking about the repulsion of particles and pointed out to the students it was just like the work they had done in Year 7, so it must be easy. The teacher then moved on to ask the students about how they could get the particles closer together, introducing acceleration and again reminding the students that this was just the same idea as other work they had covered previously. So it was that the lesson carefully built up, until after about 20 minutes the teacher pointed out that the students had just worked out how small nebulae were formed simply by using physics that they already knew about. This approach leads to students' deep understanding of the topics that they are studying, because they work it out for themselves rather than simply being told about it. It also helps to raise students' confidence in their own abilities. While students are extremely hard working and concentrate fully in lessons, they are often hesitant and do not like answering questions in class. This lack of confidence in their own abilities is totally unjustified, but very

difficult to overcome, as it appears to be so well ingrained. In one lesson, for example, a student worked out the answer to a calculation very quickly indeed, but when the teacher asked her how she had done it the student replied that her method was “weird” and “I’m no good at maths”.

106. Despite the lack of confidence, teachers do not try and make the work easier for students, knowing that this would do them a disservice. Instead, questions are demanding and teachers often use carefully gauged questions which invite the students to think about their answers, and not reply with automatic agreement with the teacher. The consistency with which this approach is applied ensures that students have got into the habit of always thinking deeply about the work they are doing. Teachers cover vast amounts of work, very quickly, in lessons. They are adept at combining the teaching of syllabus content with tips on how to answer examination questions or arrange their notes in the best way. Throughout lessons, teachers make short notes of the key points on the board and students must write them up more fully in their own words outside of the lesson time. The notes on the board are always the bare minimum, but cover the topic perfectly so that the time spent with the teacher is maximised. There is nothing flashy about the teaching; instead it can be summed up as quietly compelling and completely fascinating.
107. Outside of lessons there are other very important factors that help to bring about such excellent progress. A system of individual, weekly tutorials has been introduced for the students in response to their slightly lower levels of attainment than previous years on joining the sixth form. These tutorials are very important in raising student’ self confidence, as they allow problems to be discussed in private when a student does not want to appear ignorant in front of others, and also help to form strong relationships with the teacher. The two excellent teachers work closely together and know their students exceptionally well.
108. The leadership and management of the subject are excellent. The subject has gone from being an issue at the time of the last inspection, in terms of lack of provision, to being the best in the school. Progress has been excellent. The curriculum has been researched in great detail so that the course chosen meets the needs and aspirations of the students exceptionally well. The course is based on teaching physics through its application, rather than teaching topics in total isolation from the real world, and builds exceptionally well on the work covered in Years 7 to 11. The choice of course, together with the individual tutorials, ensures that students all receive exactly the same excellent equality of opportunity.

BUSINESS

The focus was on business.

Business

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

Strengths

- The department is well managed and does much to increase the confidence of students and develop skills required in the workplace.
- Thorough well organised management, which has coped well with staffing difficulties.
- The good quality of support and guidance available to students helps to raise their confidence.
- The good teaching incorporates and builds on a wide range of vocational activities.
- Responsive, co-operative and articulate students are encouraged to develop skills necessary for future success in the workplace.

Areas for Improvement

- The development of more sharply focused activities to improve learning.

109. Business courses include Intermediate GNVQ and AVCE Business. Both are well established but class sizes tend to be small. Retention rates are good and all students completing courses in 2001 were successful in gaining intermediate or advanced level qualifications. Examination

results over the past three years have been consistent and broadly in line with the national average, with the majority of students gaining pass grades, while a smaller proportion achieve merits or distinctions each year.

110. The standards of work seen during the inspection are average in both Years 12 and 13 and this represents a good level of achievement. Students taking the intermediate course show good recall of basic business concepts such as the different business sectors' ownership but are less confident about developing more extended responses, for example in distinguishing between private and public limited companies. They are more confident in using their direct experiences of part time employment and work experience. Teachers do well to build the confidence of some quite hesitant students. Those on advanced level courses, especially those in their second year, are much more confident. In undertaking preliminary work for their business planning module they are able to integrate effectively different aspects of their course, for example the importance of carefully targeting promotional activities to clearly identified markets. Students work very well together and have shown a high level of initiative in organising a visit to a careers convention. They also show considerable skill in understanding the intentions of TV advertisements and relating these to market segmentation. Students develop good analytical skills, are confident orally and are good at using appropriate language in context.
111. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are very supportive and do much to develop the confidence of students. Students reported that teachers are always ready to help. Courses are very well planned and this has helped smooth the transition to meet the demands of the new specifications. Standards moderators have complimented the department on "the well structured courses which clearly benefit student learning". Feedback to students is very clear, and practical advice is given as to how grades might be improved. Attendance is closely monitored and teachers keep a record of students' mobile phone numbers. Teaching which draws on and fully involves students is very effective, but some activities lack focus, and opportunities for wider learning are missed, such as where intermediate students undertaking a survey into different types of businesses could have been used to help them made evaluative judgements and to develop wider data handling skills. Similarly assignments could be improved if students were encouraged to focus more on the use of underlying knowledge and understanding in order to investigate particular business issues, for example how specific health and safety issues might be best tackled.
112. The organisation and management of the department is very good. Although teachers have appropriate vocational experience they lack formal business qualifications. One teacher has recently left after only one term's employment and the department is reliant upon the employment of permanent supply staff. Good management skills, and highly effective teamwork, have minimised the adverse affect of these changes on the standards achieved by business students. The department makes good use of additional resources provided by the local educational business partnership, and uses activities such as Young Enterprise to develop broader business skills.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus was on travel and tourism.

Travel and tourism

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

Strengths

- Learning is very good because students are very well taught.
- Students meet their teachers' high expectations through independent and collaborative learning.
- Very good assessment procedures keep students well informed of their achievements so that they are well motivated to reach their target grades.
- Standards are at least average, and students' achievements are very good.

Areas for improvement

- To increase the number of students taking the courses through continued marketing.
- To provide further opportunities for students to improve their oral presentation skills.

113. The department provides courses at two levels. GNVQ Intermediate Level Leisure and Tourism is a one-year course taken in Year 12. In 2001, nine students studied the course and examination results were average. Sixteen students took the AVCE in Travel and Tourism in 2001 after two years of study. They all attained accreditation which was in line with the national average. Current students follow courses with new specifications aligned to the grades for GCSE and GCE Advanced Level courses. Higher level students take the Advanced Vocational Certificate in Travel and Tourism. It is not possible to make comparisons over time because of these changes. The majority of students complete their courses.

114. Present students' attainments overall are above the national average in Year 13, and average in Year 12. Their achievement on both courses is very good. Intermediate level students know how to maintain good customer relations in an organisation such as a leisure centre. They create a number of role-play situations, often based on their own work experience, to show good and poor handling of customers' complaints. Students undertake the role of the customer or the sales assistant and manager convincingly. They have good written communication skills. For example, one student drafted a good reply from a holiday company to a customer who complained about the lack of surf when he went on a surfing holiday, referring the customer to the time of the year and the terms of the holiday agreement. Students need some prompting to link the purpose of maintaining good customer relations with making a business profit, although their notes on the work of travel agents showed they knew this. Students with special educational needs make good progress. Advanced level students have good research and information and communication technology skills. They use these to gather up-to-date information via the Internet. For example, Year 13 students assembled thoughtfully selected information for tourists at a number of different resorts. They presented this information as a display as part of a 'Welcome Meeting' that they gave as resort representatives of a tour company. Students absorbed many facts about their resort, and they showed awareness of what tourists should know. For example, for two Arab resorts they alerted the audience to local religious practices, and the need for appropriate dress. In both courses students assess each others' performance against a number of aspects and award marks. Students demonstrate skills in giving and receiving criticism positively. Students enjoy their courses and recognise the enormous gains they make in self-confidence and organisation. The advanced students took great pride in successfully organising a visit of 48 people to a musical at a London theatre. They did all the research, costing and reservation of the seats, transport and refreshments.

115. The quality of teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have a thorough understanding of the specifications of the courses and the knowledge, understanding and skills that students should develop. They carefully plan their lessons so those students acquire skills needed for independent research and presentations, but also the ability to work closely with others. During Year 12 all students improve their communication, number and information and communication technology skills through an accredited key skills course. Teachers manage students very well in an unobtrusive way. They make good provision for students with special needs so that they take a full part in all activities and make good progress. Very good time management is essential for success on these courses, as completion of work by the deadlines is an integral feature of assessment. Teachers give deadlines on a board in the base room, but expect students to take responsibility thereafter. Assessment is regular, thorough and guides students towards improvement. Students follow the development of their assignment grades on a display

board, and they are consequently motivated to increase their total points score and final grade. Positive relationships are a strong feature which enable students and teachers to work together positively in assessing strengths and weaknesses, and finding ways to improve. For example, other students and the teacher gave suggestions as to how Year 13 students could improve their oral presentations as resort representatives. The course co-ordinator has developed strong links with a large number of commercial organisations so students benefit from a choice of work experience placements, which greatly support and compliment their theoretical learning.

116. Provision is very much improved since the time of the previous inspection. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management of this curriculum area. She fully meets the school's aims to provide opportunities for students to make the most of their potential. All students have clear pathways linking their studies with higher education courses, management training or employment. The newly suited accommodation provides a good centre for vocational studies. Students make very good and appropriate use in their learning of the information and communication technology facilities, and other equipment such as a camcorder. Numbers of students following the courses fluctuate. It is clearly beneficial for effective teaching and learning to have classes large enough for students to be able to benefit from the interplay of ideas through lively debate and this is not always the case. The co-ordinator is strongly marketing the subject's distinctive contribution to the curriculum in order to maintain and increase numbers.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus was on art and design but music was also sampled. GCE A-level music was not offered for examination in 2001. Two students are now studying AS-level music in Year 12. One lesson of AS-level music was observed. Students benefited from individualised assistance from the teacher and good progress was made. The lesson showed careful planning and enabled students to develop their work into a formal score in written notation.

Art and design

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

Strengths

- The good quality of teaching that results in productive learning, above average standards and good achievement of students.
- The well organised department that ensures rapid progress irrespective of students' individual starting points.
- The good use of assessment to let students know how to improve

Areas for improvement

- There are limited opportunities for students to reflect cultural diversity through their work.
- There are limited opportunities for students to engage with social and moral concerns.
- The lack of individual workspaces where students can leave and return to their work.

117. Art and design is offered at GCE A-level and AS-level. The subject attracts about ten students each year. A strong feature of the courses is that completion rates are extremely high.
118. The GCE A-level examination results in 2001 were well above the national average. Standards have steadily risen since the last inspection, when results were below average. Whilst students' prior attainment fluctuates from year to year, they generally achieve well over time when comparing their average GCSE scores to their above average grades at A-level.
119. The work of students in lessons seen confirms the above average standards in recent examination results. The overall standards of work seen in Year 13 are above average. Students produce work in a variety of media and scales. In one lesson, students were successfully assessing the quality of each other's research. Their sketchbooks contained a high quality of research, with thoughtfully written annotations supporting illustrative sketches, paintings and

photographic evidence. Students had reflected on the work of established artists and used this knowledge to improve their own work. One student, for instance, had taken particular note of the thick brush strokes of a particular artist, and used this technique effectively in her own work. She had gone a stage further by mixing paint with sand to create a textured surface that added interest to her painting. Higher attaining students are often enterprising in their work. One student had taken a complex painted still life scene and used this to create a sensitive semi-abstract batik. Lower attaining students take things at face value and tend to create items that lack ingenuity or subtlety. Nevertheless, all Year 13 students will pass the course if their current rate of progress continues, and most show signs of increasing artistic maturity as their work becomes more elaborate and visually engaging.

120. Year 12 students achieve satisfactorily in relation to the predictions based on their GCSE grades. They have an improving understanding of the A-level and AS-level requirements and make good links between their own work and the work of established artists that they use for inspiration. However, some students do not yet retain knowledge. In one class, for instance, they had difficulty remembering the names of the artists they had used for inspiration, and had not yet developed a fluent use of technical language to appraise works of art. There tends to be an increase in the rate of progress later in the course as students crystallise and synthesise the practical and intellectual aspects of learning. Throughout the course, students make sound use of computers to research their chosen topics and make effective use of digital cameras and processing software to manipulate images.
121. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' planning has clearly expressed objectives that provide a good structure for learning. As a result, students are clear about what they have to do and work well without close supervision. Students are highly motivated and enjoy their courses. They have positive relationships with teachers and have a clear understanding of their own learning. For instance, they know what grade they are working at and what they have to do to improve that grade. This understanding is well supported by teachers' regular detailed written assessments and the good quality verbal feedback given in lessons. Teachers know their subject areas well and communicate this knowledge engagingly, making full use of their complementary skills to bring the learning alive. Students talked enthusiastically about the skills of different teachers, and how these help to promote a wide range of skills and interests. As a result, students remain involved and committed. Teachers provide good opportunities for students to evaluate their own and each other's work. This places the responsibility for learning back with the students and helps them to become more independent. Students listen well to teachers, are committed to their work and engage in extra study and practical work at home. Most students visit the department in their spare time to do extra work and this has a positive impact on their learning.
122. The leadership and management of the department are good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, when some teaching was a little disorganised. Teachers are now well organised and their clear expectations have resulted in improved standards. The accommodation is unsatisfactory for the sixth form because the space for students to pursue their own work is too cramped. Consequently, students do not have an individual workspace where they can leave and return to their work. This acts as a disincentive. Also, most lessons only last for one hour, which is too short to encourage a sustained practical absorption. As a result, some work lacks a visual intensity.

HUMANITIES

123. The focus was on geography but government and politics and sociology were also sampled. In government and politics, results in the 2001 GCE A-level examinations were average. No students followed a course of study leading to examination in 1999 and 2000. In the one government and politics class observed, the very good teaching led to students making very good progress and achieving very well. Students became involved in an in-depth discussion on the comparative differences between the USA and UK political systems. This was particularly well handled by the teacher and students gained a good deal out of the lesson.

124. In sociology, results in 2001 were well above average and these represent a significant improvement over a four-year period. In the one Year 13 sociology class observed, the good teaching enabled students to make good progress and achieve well. The teacher displayed a very good knowledge of the topic of urban crime and students enjoyed discussing the topic, putting forward their own opinions, safe in the knowledge that their opinions would be valued by others in the group.

Geography

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

Strengths

- Students' learning is very good because they are very well taught. They confidently use the skills of research, analysis and interpretation in order to meet their teachers' high expectations.
- Students achieve very highly in their assessed work and investigations because they are strongly motivated to succeed, work hard and are very well organised. They demonstrate ability for independent and collaborative work.
- Teachers assess students' work regularly and provide clear guidance on how to improve so that they can reach their targets.
- Leadership and management of sixth form geography are very good.

Areas for improvement

- More opportunities for extended essay writing in Year 12 to prepare students for the style of answers required in Year 13.

125. The department offers courses in GCE AS-level and A-level geography. Results in the 2001 GCE A-level examinations were well above the national average. The trend in results is rising as attainment was in line with the average the previous year. Over this period all but one student has remained to complete the second year of the course. In 1998 and 1999 no students took advanced geography courses. The current Year 13 students gained a significant number of higher grades in the AS-level examination at the end of their first year in the sixth form.

126. The standards of work seen during the inspection are above average and this represents a very good level of achievement. By the end of Year 13 students have a very good grasp of a wide range of issues in physical, human and economic geography. For example, a small group 'brainstormed' their knowledge and understanding of the impact of urban sprawl on rural environments. From their hydrological studies they knew that growth of the built environment contributes to increased risk of flooding. They used their Year 12 fieldwork in the Mole Valley as an example of the flooding they witnessed around Dorking. Students cited the problems of air, water, and visual pollution associated with urban growth and industrialisation. They collaborate very well in exploring topics synoptically, sparking off ideas and sharing their extensive knowledge and understanding of the issues in depth. Their writing of essays improves considerably. They use clear language to present balanced arguments. For example they explore the pros and cons of tourism on the economy, social life and environment of Kenya. Students have good information and communications technology skills. They use these for essays and independent investigations. They skilfully analyse statistical information using spreadsheets and graphs. However, most of their information and communication technology work is done at home because access is limited at school. The quality of students' fieldwork is very high. Students commented that they wished for more opportunities for extended essay writing in Year 12 so as to prepare them for the style of answers required in Year 13.

127. The quality of teaching and its impact on learning is very good. Teachers have detailed subject knowledge and very good understanding of advanced level requirements. They consequently expect students to use their advice to reach the highest standards they can. For example, in a Year 12 lesson the teacher discussed with students their learning of China's 'one child policy' to curb population growth. The focus of this lesson was to amalgamate students' learning from a detailed case study and a video so they could answer an examination question in 15 minutes.

The teacher read out a sample answer to one part of the question and asked the class what marks they would award, and how it could be improved. It was decided that the use of statistics on birth rates and population growth would give a better answer. Students also learnt much about Chinese attitudes to family life, and the wider effects of the population policy on the numbers of females. Teachers prepare their lessons very thoroughly, and have high expectations of students' capabilities to work independently. In the unavoidable absence of a teacher during the inspection Year 12 students proceeded with the activity she had prepared. Each student presented to the class their research into a range of problems of urban growth in more economically developed countries, such as commuting and congestion. Students summarised their research in succinct word-processed notes for the class using bullet-points, tables, diagrams, maps and graphs. They said that the challenge of presenting their learning to the class made them master the issues thoroughly. Teachers help to demystify topics by providing Year 12 students with frameworks and key questions. These help students to access textbooks and other source materials with greater understanding and keep up with the fast pace of the teaching. Through fieldwork students' understanding of physical processes is increased. They learn to use a range of techniques to test hypotheses. For example, about how beach material is moved along the Dorset coastline. Students learn how to answer questions fully through the careful marking of their work, and the advice given on how to gain more marks. Teachers give much emphasis to this and using good quality communication with correct spelling and grammar. Teachers manage students very well by inspiring them to reach their highest standards, and encouraging independence and self-confidence, but as some students said 'they are there to catch you if you fall'.

128. The head of geography provides very clear leadership of sixth form teaching, and the course is very well managed. Both these aspects contribute to students' successes. Schemes of work for the new advanced level examinations are thoughtfully organised, and the Year 13 scheme is still being developed. On-going improvement to the schemes, for example closer integration of fieldwork and resources, is included in the development plan.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

129. The focus was on English literature and communication studies but French and German were also sampled. Too few candidates took GCE A-level in French and German to make statistical comparisons with national averages reliable and the numbers of students studying French or German are relatively low. In the one Year 13 German class that was observed the students made very good progress and were achieving very well because of the very good teaching. The teacher insisted that students always answered in the target language even if a new theme represented some challenges to the students. In a Year 13 French class, the good teaching enabled students to achieve well. Students developed their listening, writing and speaking skills on the subject of politics.

English literature

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching, which is very good overall: teachers have a clear sense of purpose, present challenging tasks to the class and have very high expectations of what should be achieved by students.
- Students' achievement and attitudes to their work are very positive indeed: they show great commitment and very good achievement.
- The leadership and management of the head of English are very good: the subject is led with passionate commitment, which provides very clear direction for staff and students.

Areas for development

- Develop students' oral work when engaged in whole-class lessons.

130. English literature is offered at GCE A-level and AS-level; completion rates for courses are high. GCE A-level examination results in 2000 and 2001 show significant improvements to match national averages for the subject. Over the last four years the pattern of results shows a rising trend. In the two most recent examinations a much higher proportion of students gained grades A and B than hitherto and there was a 100 per cent pass rate. Although there are currently no figures on which to base comparisons with schools nationally, the 2001 AS-level examination results present a very promising platform for future success at A-level.
131. The standards of work seen during the inspection are average. This represents a very good level of achievement overall. Students' oral skills are insufficiently well-developed in whole-class settings, where contributions to discussion in lessons observed tended to be limited to brief answers to questions or references to the text being studied. However, students collaborate very well in smaller groups when asked to do so; an appropriate critical vocabulary is developing particularly in Year 13 classes. Some higher-attaining students make penetrating comments on their reading. Most students are moving towards appropriately reflective and critical readings of the texts under study, but were unable to sustain these insights in extended class discussion. Students often write at length, taking great care over the preparation and planning of extended pieces of writing, with detailed note-making, both in lessons and in independent study being a highlight. Most students write accurately and are developing an appropriate style. Many students had used information and communication technology to assist study, with evidence of internet-based materials being accessed to support research and independent enquiry.
132. Individual lessons are very well planned and students respond with enthusiasm to the opportunities offered to them. Relationships with one another and with teachers are very good indeed. Attention should be given to overall course planning, ensuring better co-ordination of texts studied in order to exploit opportunities for learning more systematically.
133. The quality of both teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and employ a range of teaching methods to motivate and challenge students. Lessons are conducted in a purposeful manner with a determined focus on learning that engages the interest of all. In an excellent Year 12 lesson on the poetry of Carol Ann Duffy students worked in three groups to focus on different poems and then pooled their learning in a whole-class session which was adroitly managed. Teachers have high expectations and consistently challenge students to achieve: in a very good Year 13 lesson on the poetry of Keats the teacher's persistent questioning helped students to refine their thinking, recognise subtlety in language and reach appropriate critical outcomes. A Year 12 lesson on literature of the First World War was set up as a role-play activity in which different groups of students spoke as advocates for particular texts; this was an enterprising and successful context for learning. Students like and respect their teachers for their evident commitment and shared passion for literary study; an atmosphere of enthusiasm and active engagement with learning was apparent in all lessons. This is particularly notable when students are asked to work in groups and where a mature focus on the task in hand was sustained on each occasion group work was observed. Feedback to students on their work is good: regular use of assessment objectives supports learning in lessons; marking of written work is characterised by helpful marginal notes and comments on how students can improve their performance.
134. The leadership and management of the head of English are very good: the subject is led with passionate commitment, which provides very clear direction for staff and students. Teachers work as part of a team, which has shared values and offers students consistently high-quality experiences in lessons and in extra-curricular activities.
135. Progress since the last inspection has been good: attainment has improved considerably both in terms of the number of higher grades being achieved in examinations and in the overall pass rate; the quality of teaching overall is now very good. The quality of oral work by students needs to be improved so that they make sustained spoken contributions not solely when working in groups but also in whole-class contexts.

Communication studies

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

Strengths

- Teaching is very good, encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning and develop their own creative faculties.
- Facilities are very good, enabling work in all disciplines of performing arts to flourish.
- There is a very strong sense of commitment to the performing arts from staff and students alike.

Areas for improvement

- Students are not fully aware of the content and demands of the AS-level course before embarking on it.
- Common links between the three art forms of drama, dance and music are not rigorously enough made to promote the highest standards.
- Lack of soundproofing in the new block detracts from concentration, especially in learning through musical appraisal.
- Library resources for dance and music are outdated and inadequate.

136. Communication studies is offered at both GCE A-level and AS-level. Group sizes of about 10 students are commendable for the size of the sixth form. Most students who take the AS-level examination continue with the full A-level examination course. However, in the current Year 12 a significant number of students who started the course have opted out of the subject because they find the academic aspects of the subject too demanding.
137. The GCE A-level examination results in 2001 were above the national average. Over the past four years all students have achieved a pass grade and results have been broadly in line with the national average. The number of students attaining higher grades has been modestly increasing year by year. At this stage, it appears that the AS-level results will be equally as encouraging.
138. The standards of work observed in the inspection corroborate that the above average standards are being maintained. Students achieve well and are making good progress. Those who have taken drama in Years 10 and 11 at least maintain the high standards they have aspired to at GCSE and those who have taken dance in Years 10 and 11 make good progress to achieve comparable standards. At present, there are no students taking performing arts who have taken music in Years 10 and 11. However, music is also offered as an AS-level subject.
139. In Year 13 students have realised an enterprising community performance project involving a group production at a local Elizabethan mansion drawn from interpretation and historical and sociological research of this venue. In preparing, students devise projects, and re-interpret fables to give them direct relevance to their own lives. They work creatively and intelligently at realising these in a judicious blend of dance and drama. They discuss the development of their work well and refer accurately to concepts covered in the contextual study component to exemplify their creative ideas. Some students also avail themselves of the individual singing tuition, which the school offers to enhance their repertoire of available performance techniques.
140. In Year 12, students also show a high level of creative and expressive engagement. They are able to distinguish between different approaches to drama, both in theory and in practice. For, example, in group work they showed that they could apply both Stanislavskian realist and Brechtian epic techniques to the same short storyline drawn from the Caucasian Chalk Circle. In dance, too, they effectively assimilate advanced techniques, such as contact improvisation. No music lessons within performing arts could be observed during the inspection, but other evidence suggests that students enjoy the challenge this discipline offers, although academically and intellectually standards lag behind those of drama and dance. In written work students do not readily think beyond the areas of their immediate artistic interests and spelling of key words and names is variable.

141. Teaching is very good overall, and students learn very well as a result. That their level of achievement is not higher is due to the fact that the course requires them to have a sure grounding in three disciplines and most commence the course with a GCSE in only one of these. Most students work very hard to overcome this, with a strong degree of mutual support, also engendered through the teaching techniques. However, the change to a multi-disciplinary approach is one reason why peers drop out of the AS-level at an early stage. Teachers show a high level of subject knowledge and understanding. This, combined with well-informed and challenging questioning, ensures a high level of motivation and inspires the students to think through their presentations creatively and intelligently. They use a very good range of appropriate and effective strategies to ensure that concepts are well grasped and can be applied in the students' own creative endeavours. For example, in a Year 12 lesson on contact improvisation, students came to a practical understanding simply by use of the game 'Twister' and controlling a soft ball through body contact. However, once achieved, the students were challenged to place the technique in a context of other techniques to bring about expressive form, too. Effective use of simple resources is also a characteristic of the drama teaching. Teachers offer individual tutorials in developing essays, which helps students to overcome some of the weaknesses already noted. The inter-disciplinary coursework essay poses the most problems, an aspect reinforced in the delivery of the curriculum, which tends not to seek out every opportunity to make connections between the arts. For example, specific reference to music being used for dance was overlooked; little importance was placed on music and dance as an element of *Verfremdung* in epic drama. Greater use of on-going assessment of both written and practical work would assist students to take even greater responsibility for their own learning. Homework is given regularly and is well done, despite its often informal nature. This is because teaching engenders interest and motivates very well.
142. While the subject does not meet the expectations of all, the students who have persisted are very positive about the courses. Their attitudes are very good. Students work maturely, with humour and with pace in group work. They all contribute in discussions and are sensitive to the expressive material being developed. One girl was moved to say, "I wanted to cry" at the performance of a drama improvisation by her peers. This sense of appreciation extends beyond the classroom, where several performing arts students lead regular clubs for younger pupils as well as getting involved in community arts productions.
143. The school offers a very good range of opportunities for students to extend their abilities outside of timetabled lessons. These include productions, clubs, workshops, and musical ensembles and individual tuition. The contribution of performing arts to the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Work-experience placements assist those students who aspire to study further or consider a vocation in the performing arts.
144. The subject is well led and managed with very good resources and much new accommodation. However, soundproofing is inadequate for concentrated listening in the new block and the library facilities for drama and music are outdated. Furthermore, research through the Internet is restricted as it is not possible to access video and audio from sites promoting the performing arts. The staff have a clear vision for the subject. For students to achieve the highest grades, planning needs to make links across the three art forms in a more logical and systematic way. Since the last inspection report the subject has developed well. In order to develop further, the performing arts need to address the issue of pre-course information, promote more the common links between the three art forms of drama, dance and music, and address the accommodation and resources issues raised.