

INSPECTION REPORT

WOOLMER HILL SCHOOL

Haslemere

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125251

Headteacher: Susan Bullen

Reporting inspector: David M Bain
3258

Dates of inspection: 10-14 September 2001

Inspection number: 611001

Full 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 pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Woolmer Hill Haslemere Surrey
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Susan Stathers
Date of previous inspection:	May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3258	David Bain	<i>Registered inspector</i>	English as an additional language.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are students taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9619	Bob Miller	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; Links with the community; How well does the school care for its students? How well does the school care for its students? Accommodation and learning resources.
1578	Maureen Sinclair	<i>Team inspector</i>	Business education; Religious education.	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
30198	Reg Chick	<i>Team inspector</i>	Physical education.	Work related education.
15075	Bryan Stephens	<i>Team inspector</i>	Modern foreign languages.	
12336	Malcolm Overend	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography.	Assessment.
8076	Terence Bendall	<i>Team inspector</i>	Design and technology.	
11672	Peter Harle	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art; Music; Drama.	
7084	Jack Haslam	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information and communication technology.	
31441	Maggie King	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science.	
22958	Terence Bailess	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Literacy; Special educational needs.	
13122	Stephanie Matthews	<i>Team inspector</i>	History.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Equal opportunities.
10782	Henry Moreton	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Numeracy.	Personal, social and health education.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Woolmer Hill School is a small, mixed comprehensive situated on the edge of Haslemere, a generally very advantaged area. Although in Surrey, it is very close to the borders of Hampshire and West Sussex. There are currently 617 pupils on roll. The school is under-subscribed and, consequently, takes pupils from a fairly wide catchment area, including surrounding villages, and some late entrants who have experienced difficulties in their previous school. Whilst the intake to the school is comprehensive, pupils' prior attainment is above average, although many children in the area attend independent schools or travel to neighbouring specialist and beacon schools. About a quarter of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, mostly with specific or moderate learning difficulties. This is above the national average. However, only about 2 per cent have statements, slightly below the national average, including a small number with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Almost all pupils come from a white UK heritage background, with only a handful speaking English as an additional language and none at the early stages of learning English. Less than seven per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, well below the national average of 18 per cent. About three quarters of pupils continue in education when they leave Post 16 in local colleges and sixth forms. The school has experienced difficulties in recruiting teachers. Six posts were covered by temporary teachers at the time of the inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Woolmer Hill is a school with great potential. It has many strengths, not least in the commitment of staff and pupils to bring about improvements. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, which is now good and led in 2001 to much improved results, well above national averages at both key stages. Weaknesses in aspects of the school's leadership and management, issues related to inclusion and the school's partnership with parents are recognised by the new head, who has a clear vision for the school, supported by an able Governing Body. Strategies for performance management and induction of teachers, and the provision for pupils' personal development and for those with special educational needs are good. Relationships are very good. Teachers and pupils enjoy working in a happy school. The school gives sound value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Enabled pupils, in 2001 to achieve high standards, both in National Curriculum tests and in GCSE, especially in art and design, history, geography, drama, music and English.
- Provides good quality teaching and learning experiences in most subjects.
- Has a shared commitment to improvement, amongst staff, pupils and governors, and the capacity to succeed under a new head, who has a clear vision for the future.
- Supports pupils' personal development well, especially their social and cultural development, resulting in very good relationships, the development of initiative, personal responsibility and enthusiasm.
- Provides good support for pupils with special educational needs through the learning support department.
- Inducts new teachers well and has enabled the staff that work together well as a team.
- Has provided excellent facilities for physical education on an attractive school site.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Aspects of equality of access and opportunity related to inclusion, particularly with regard to curricular organisation, behaviour management and the achievement of girls.

- Aspects of leadership and management, including development planning and curricular and behaviour management.
- Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' academic performance, including the use of assessment, and aspects of personal development.
- The school's partnership with its parents.
- Staffing, including recruitment of teachers, the staffing structure and greater inclusion of support staff.
- Exploiting the potential of the site.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in 1997. However, whilst improvement in pupils' performance is good, improvements, overall, in areas identified in the previous inspection are unsatisfactory. There has been good progress in raising the quality of teaching, including some good monitoring by senior managers of practice. However, although some heads of department monitor their departments well, effective monitoring by middle managers is unsatisfactory, with limited academic monitoring of pupils across the curriculum. There is still little longer term strategic planning and weaknesses remain in the quality of reports and use of assessment. Good progress has been made in implementing the National Curriculum, except in reporting information and communication technology (ICT) levels at the end of Year 11, but there has been little improvement related to health and safety issues. However, many of these weaknesses are recognised by the new head and were already beginning to be addressed at the time of the inspection.

STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations. At the time of writing, comparisons for 2001 were unavailable.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	B	B	B	D

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

Attainment on entry is generally above average and remains so in external tests at age 14. Results in 2000 were above the national average in English and mathematics and well above in science. When compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, results were above average in science, in line with those nationally in English, but below average in mathematics. Results in 2001 showed a significant improvement in English and science, but not in mathematics. The trend in the school's results from 1996-2000 was broadly in line with that nationally. In most years, boys achieve significantly better than girls in mathematics and science. Whilst girls achieve better than boys in English, the gap is narrower than nationally.

In GCSE, attainment has been above the national average, although the trend in performance up to 2000 for core subjects was below the national trend. However, results improved significantly in 2001, with 62 per cent achieving five or A*-C grades, compared to 53 per cent in the school and 47 per cent nationally in 2000. Almost all pupils in 2001 achieved five or more grades A*-G, a massive improvement on the previous year. Unusually, boys outperformed girls. In 2001, results were significantly better than nationally in art and design, English language, mathematics, double award science, drama, geography and history, but significantly below in French and German. Results were also good in 2000 in design and technology, physical education and music, and in both years in English

literature but from a far smaller entry than is usual. For both National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 and GCSE, the school has set appropriate targets, both overall and for individual subjects. In 2001, these were met in English and science at the end of Year 9 and all were met at GCSE, except that for five or more A*-C grades.

Work seen during the inspection, generally confirmed external results. Overall, standards improve as pupils move up the school. Most pupils are confident and articulate, and have good literacy and numeracy skills. Examples of excellence were seen in top sets in science. Standards were above average in all lessons observed in art, and over half in English, history, music, drama and science, and in Key Stage 4 mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm. They participate fully in class, persevere and often develop good independent learning skills. A small minority display negative attitudes in some lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Whilst most behaviour observed during the inspection in lessons and around the school was good, behaviour of a minority is unacceptable. The number of fixed term exclusions over the last two years has been very high. There are clear indications that behaviour is improving and exclusions decreasing.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships are very good. Pupils respond warmly to visitors and co-operate well. Those given the opportunity to take on responsibility, such as School Council representatives and prefects, do so sensibly and display initiative.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average, although so is the rate of unauthorised absence. Punctuality to lessons is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	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.

The quality of pupils' learning is good and the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Overall, teaching is now a strength of the school. These are better figures than occur nationally. Some very good teaching was seen in all National Curriculum subjects and all year groups. Examples of excellence were seen in art and design, history, music and Latin. Overall teaching was very good in art and design and good or better in most lessons in ICT, drama, history, music, physical education and Key Stage 3 languages and Key Stage 4 mathematics, around two-thirds in English and geography and half in religious education, Key Stage 3 science and Key Stage 4 design and technology. The quality of teaching in English is creditable, given the staffing difficulties. That observed in mathematics is much more varied. Whilst much at Key Stage 4 is good, too much is unsatisfactory. In contrast to mathematics, better teaching in science occurs at Key Stage 3.

Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of their subjects. Lesson planning is effective. Teaching of basic skills is developing, with some good strategies for teaching literacy skills. In the best lessons a range of effective teaching strategies are used, which actively involve pupils. Teachers' expositions are generally clear and questioning is often skilful. In most lessons, pupils are enthusiastic and their energies are channelled constructively into learning. They are supported well in developing independent learning skills. Whilst in the majority of lessons, teachers' classroom management is good, where it is less skilled a small minority of less motivated pupils have a disproportionate effect, as observed in some mathematics and design and technology lessons, for example. Whilst the

quality of ongoing assessment has improved, its use remains an area for development. Homework is used effectively in some subjects, but too many pupils do too little. Pupils with learning difficulties receive good support from teachers and learning assistants and make good progress in their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and balanced, but lacks a clear rationale. It is enriched by extra language provision and the introduction of GNVQ courses. Curriculum organisation limits equality of access for some pupils. Extra-curricular provision is good, and that for personal, social and health education, including careers, is sound. The school has good links with feeder primary schools and local colleges.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Support provided, both in class and when withdrawn, enables pupils to have maximum access to the curriculum and is valued by them and their parents. The introduction of the Skills way Initiative for some pupils in Year 10 is a welcome initiative. Monitoring and assessment procedures are good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for moral, social and cultural development is good, but that for spiritual development is only sound. The statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship is not met. Pupils are given many opportunities to discuss moral issues and develop cultural awareness, including the multi-cultural dimension. Pupils are treated as responsible individuals and given many opportunities to collaborate and take on responsibilities.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection are good, but those for ensuring the health and safety of pupils are unsatisfactory. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. Whilst there is an effective system of pastoral support, procedures for behaviour management of the minority of less motivated pupils have been unsatisfactory, as has the monitoring of pupils' academic performance.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The new head has a clear vision for the school, which has already impacted positively on the morale of staff, pupils and parents. Whilst developing a positive school ethos, aspects of leadership and management have been unsatisfactory in the past, particularly related to curriculum and behaviour management.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. There is an effective and supportive Governing Body. Whilst their role in shaping the direction of the school is sound, they have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school's strategy for performance management is good and has supported monitoring and evaluation of teaching and staff development, but development planning still needs to be longer term. Tracking of pupils' progress needs further development.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Financial planning is sound, but the principles of best value need developing. Accommodation has been enhanced by provision of the sports centre and refurbishment. Learning resources are adequate. The school has experienced significant difficulties in staffing over the last two years. However, induction of new and temporary staff is good.

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 appointment of the new head. • Most children are happy at school. • Most teachers are dedicated and hard working. • Support for pupils with special educational needs. • Induction of Year 7 pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour of pupils. • The school's links with them. • Information provided to them. • Leadership and management. • The quality of some teaching and staff turnover. • Extra-curricular activities. • The amount of homework.

The inspection team agrees with the positive perceptions of parents and found evidence to support most of their concerns. Evidence did not support parents' concerns about the quality of teaching. Inspectors agreed that teachers were generally dedicated and hard working and found most teaching to be of good quality, with few unsatisfactory lessons. Whilst most pupils behave well, there has been a high rate of exclusions. Some parents have not felt encouraged to participate in the life of the school. Some good information is provided through newsletters and the governors' annual report, but weaknesses remain in the quality of reports. Aspects of leadership and management need improving, but inspectors share parents' optimism in the appointment of the new head.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. At the time of the last inspection, pupils were reported as entering the school with higher than average attainment and maintaining this at both key stages. Results were described as well above average, with an increasing proportion of higher grades at GCSE. Overall, the position remained broadly the same from 1997 to 2000, but with a significant improvement in performance at both key stages in 2001.

2. Attainment on entry is generally above average, although there is some variation between years. In part, this is influenced by the gender balance and the numbers on roll in particular years. In the current Year 8, the largest year group, there are slightly more boys than girls. The proportion, in this year group, who achieved Level 4 or better in their Key Stage 2 tests at the end of Year 6 in their primary school, was well above in English and science and above average in mathematics. The proportion achieving above average, by attaining Level 5 or better, was well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English. Around 40 per cent had achieved an above average level in English and mathematics and 60 per cent in science. As well as Key Stage 2 results, all pupils sit a battery of standardised tests, which are used by the Local Education Authority (LEA) and the school to assess pupils' potential. These confirm the differences between year groups and support the school in setting targets for year groups and individual students. The catchment area of the school is quite wide, with the majority coming from Haslemere and the surrounding villages. However, the proximity of West Sussex and Hampshire, and issues related to transport routes, influence parents' choice of school. Although the only state secondary school in Haslemere, a high proportion of children in the area attend independent schools, and some are attracted to other schools, such as a specialist language college in Hampshire and the nearest Surrey school, which is a beacon school. In some years, a significant number of pupils have joined the school other than in Year 7, sometimes as a result of problems in their previous school, which have resulted in their exclusion or a threat of possible exclusion.

3. Overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 in national tests was above average from 1997-2000, well above in 1999. When compared to all schools nationally, the average point score achieved was well above average in all three core subjects in 1999, and in mathematics in 1998 and in science in 2000, but only in line in English in 1997 and 1998. From 1996-2000, the trend in the school's average National Curriculum point score was broadly in line with the national trend. In 2000, the proportions achieving the expected Level 5 or better were above average, as were the proportions achieving Level 6 or better, except in science where they were well above average. Results in 2001 showed a significant improvement in English and science. In both subjects, over four-fifths of pupils attained Level 5 or better, with around three-fifths attaining Level 6 or better. These are very good results, especially the proportion achieving Level 6 or above which is around double the proportion who achieved this level nationally in 2000. Results in mathematics were similar to those that had been achieved in 2000. As nationally, girls generally achieve higher levels in English than boys, although the gap overall was much narrower in 1999 and 2000 in the school than nationally. In 2001, although significantly more girls attained the expected level or better, 89 per cent compared to 70 per cent, the proportions achieving higher Levels 6 and 7 were more balanced between boys and girls. In contrast, in mathematics and science, whereas boys performed slightly better than girls overall nationally in 1999 and 2000, at Woolmer Hill boys performed significantly better than girls, with girls results being just above national figures, boys results well above. In 2001, however, a higher proportion of girls achieved Level 5 or better in mathematics, and in science proportions were roughly the equal for boys and girls. In both subjects, more girls achieved Level 6 or better, but more boys achieved the highest Levels 7 and 8.

4. When compared to schools that are similar in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the average point score in 2000 was average in English, above average in science, but below average in mathematics. However, the proportion attaining Level 5 or better was below average for similar schools in all three subjects, although average for Level 6 or better in English and mathematics and above average in science. Comparisons with similar schools in 2001 are unavailable at the time of this inspection, but previous years' results suggest English and science are, at the least, well above average. No comparison with similar schools, based upon previous performance at Key Stage 2 was available. However, a thorough analysis is produced by the LEA with attainment being analysed in comparison with prior attainment, amongst other factors. This analysis for results in 2000, suggests that whilst the very ablest perform better at Woolmer Hill than in Surrey overall, the majority of pupils perform at or just below the Surrey average. However, pupils in the lowest quartile according to prior attainment, achieve significantly less well in the school than in other Surrey schools. This is of concern and suggests, as identified by parents, pupils and many teachers, including the new head, there are issues related to the current banding and setting arrangements which are impacting on standards of attainment.

5. The results of teacher assessments in most other subjects improved in 2001. In 2000, results of teacher assessments in history, modern languages and art and design were well above national figures, whilst those in ICT, geography and music were above. In design and technology and physical education results were similar to teacher assessments nationally. In 2001, assessments were well above average in design and technology, geography, history, modern languages and music, and in the proportion working above national expectations in physical education and art. Assessments in ICT were close to average. Targets set for English were achieved in 2000, but those for mathematics were not. Appropriate targets were set for 2002, at a level met in 2001 in English and surpassed in science. These targets show that the school has been responsive to adjustments necessary to produce more positive comparisons with similar schools.

6. Overall, attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 in GCSE has been above the national average, but the trend in the school's average point score for all core subjects was below the national trend. However, results improved significantly in 2001. The average point score and the proportion achieving five or more A*-C grades were above national averages from 1998 to 2000, although the gap was narrowing. In 2001, both rose significantly. The proportion achieving five or more A*-C grades was above average in 1998 and 1999, but dropped to below average in 2000, whilst the proportion achieving one or more A*-G grades, which had been in line with national averages in 1998 and 1999, dropped to well below average in 2000. The 2000, results appear to be an exception, with both groups returning to previous levels in 2001. The school suggests that a small group of pupils, many of whom entered the school late from other schools, and who failed to enter or to pass many, if any, GCSE subjects, were responsible for the drop in results. Analysis of results and the improvement in 2001 suggest that this partially explains the drop in performance in 2000. As a consequence, when 2000's results are compared to similar schools, both based upon the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and on prior attainment at Key Stage 3, the average point score and proportion achieving five or more A*-C grades were below national averages, the proportion achieving five or more A*-G grades was well below average and the proportion achieving one or more A*-G grades was very low. If similar analyses had been available at the time of the inspection for 2001 results they would display a much more positive picture. The proportion achieving five or more grades A*-C was 53 per cent in 2000, similar to previous years; it rose significantly to 62 per cent in 2001. Only 88 per cent of pupils achieved five or more A*-G grades and 93 per cent one or more A*-G grades. These were much lower than previous years, but rose to 98 and 99 per cent respectively in 2001. The figures quoted for 2001 results include results for short course GCSEs, but, at the time of writing, do not include any adjustments as a result of appeals being made to the examination boards, particularly with languages. They may vary, therefore, from final published results.

7. Overall, the comparative performance of boys and girls from 1998-2000, was similar with both achieving average point scores a similar amount above the national scores for their

gender, but with girls significantly outperforming boys, as nationally. However, in 2001 this changed dramatically. Whilst the average performance score for girls dropped a little, that for boys rose significantly and was in line with that for girls, whilst nationally the gap between boys and girls continued to widen. In a year group with almost identical numbers of boys and girls, on every other comparison except for point score, boys achieved better than girls, with, for example, 64 per cent of boys achieving five or more A*-C grades compared to 60 per cent of girls. A similar pattern of better results for boys than girls occurred in 1997. This suggests that whilst there has been a steady improvement in boys results in the school, results of girls are much more volatile. The school is supported in setting targets at GCSE by analyses from the LEA. The targets set for 2000 were conservative, but except for that for five or more A*-C grades, were not met. A much more challenging target of 68 per cent was set for five or more A*-C grades for 2001, based on the excellent Key Stage 3 results of that cohort. This was not met, but targets for other comparitors were surpassed. Appropriate targets have been set for 2002, although that for average point score is very challenging.

8. In 2000, results were significantly above national averages in art and design, design and technology, English literature, physical education, geography, music and history, and for science for boys, and significantly below in French. In 2001, they were significantly above in art and design, English language, English literature, mathematics, double award science, drama, geography and history, and significantly below in French and German. Results in English language have shown a significant improvement from 50 per cent A*-C grades, below national averages in 1999, to 63 per cent in 2000 and 72 per cent in 2001, well above average. As nationally girls have generally achieved far better than boys, although the gap narrowed in 2001. Results in English literature, which were around national averages in 1998, rose in 1999 and then again in 2000 and 2001, with almost all candidates achieving higher grades, A*-C. However, in both years only around half the year group were entered for the subject, compared to 83 per cent nationally. Lower, band pupils are not given the option to sit the subject, a serious inclusion issue, which limits the achievement of some pupils. Because the entry is selective, results for boys and girls are similar, unlike nationally where girls significantly outperform boys. In both language and literature, the proportion of very high grades A* and A was impressive in 2001. A similar improvement to English has occurred with the mathematics results. In 1999, results were in line with those nationally with 48 per cent achieving grades A*-C, this rose to 57 per cent in 2000 and 62 per cent in 2001, well above average. In 2000, as nationally, girls' results were slightly better than those for boys, but in 2001, whilst girls' results remained similar to the previous year, those for boys improved significantly. 67 per cent of boys achieved grades A*-C compared to 57 per cent of girls. There was a similar pattern in double award science, with results in 1999 being in line with national averages with 50 per cent achieving grades A*-C, rising to 58 per cent in 2000 and to 66 per cent in 2001; well above national averages. In contrast to the national picture, boys achieved significantly better than girls in 2000. This was repeated in 2001, where there was a slight improvement by girls but a dramatic one by boys. Seventy one per cent of boys achieved grades A*-C compared to 57 per cent of girls; national figures for 2000 were 47 per cent for boys and 51 per cent for girls. Whilst the performance of boys in mathematics and science is extremely pleasing, results suggest some underachievement by girls in both subjects, especially when compared to English results.

9. Amongst other subjects, consistently good results have been achieved in art and design. In 2000, all 28 pupils who were entered achieved grade A*-C, whilst in 2001, 85 per cent did so, with over a third achieving the highest grades A* or A. These are excellent results. Girls consistently achieve better than boys in art, as they do nationally. Achievement in other arts subjects is also good, most years. From a large entry, in 2001, 81 per cent of those entered for drama achieved grade A*-C, well above national averages. A smaller entry in 2000, performed less well, but that year's results appear to be an exception caused by very poor results by a small group of boys. In contrast, in 2001 boys overall achieved better than girls, although there were five girls who achieved grade A* and six boys and three girls who achieved grade A. This is impressive. Results in music are also very good. Nine of ten pupils entered in 2000 achieved grades A*-C, with five obtaining grade A. From a larger entry of 20 in 2001, which is unusually high for a school of this size, 75 per

cent achieved grades A*-C. This is still above average. Whilst in most years results of girls and boys are similar, those of boys were disappointing in 2001, whilst girls' results remained very high. Results in physical education have varied significantly between year groups. In 2000, results were very good with 70 per cent achieving grades A*-C and all three girls entered achieving grade A, as well as five boys achieving grade A* or A. Results dropped to below national averages in 2001, with only 44 per cent achieving grades A*-C, with girls achieving less well than boys. However, when the ability of the entry is taken into account, their results in physical education compare favourably with the results of the same pupils in other subjects.

10. As with the arts, some excellent results have been achieved in the humanities. Results in history are consistently excellent, although in some years the entry is small. In 2000, five of 11 entered achieved grade A*. This is exceptional. In 2001, from a much larger entry 86 per cent achieved grades A*-C and 43 per cent grades A* or A. Results are very high compared to national averages and similar for boys and girls. Results in geography, in 2001, were similar with 86 per cent grades A*-C, with just under half achieving grades A* or A. Again, these are exceptional results, with boys achieving slightly better than girls. Results in previous years had been well above average, but around 70 per cent A*-C grades. In 2000, in contrast to 2001, girls achieved significantly better than boys. All pupils enter a short course GCSE in religious education. Results in 2000 were sound, with 54 per cent achieving grades A*-C. In 2001, 57 per cent achieved grades A*-C. Girls achieved significantly better than boys in both years.

11. All pupils are entered for a design and technology subject. Overall results have been consistently above national averages, although have varied in some years between the different technology subjects. In 2001, the proportion achieving grades A*-C dropped to 55 per cent, although still above national averages. Results for girls improved in this year to 68 per cent, well above national averages, but those for boys dropped to 47 per cent, although this is above national figures for boys. Difficulties in staffing within the department may explain the slight drop in results. The department also enter some pupils for an examination in child development. Only a third of those entered in 2001 achieved grades A*-C. However, the course tends to attract less academic pupils. Pupils following a course in business education were entered for examinations in both business studies and information system. Results in business studies have consistently been below national averages. They improved slightly in 2001 to 51 per cent A*-C grades. Boys consistently achieve slightly better grades than girls. Results in information systems have been slightly more volatile, although in both 2000 and 2001 were just above national averages, with 55 per cent A*-C grades in 2001. In this year, boys achieved significantly better than girls with 61 per cent achieving the higher grades compared to 40 per cent.

12. Results in languages are poor. In 1998 and 1999, results were just above national averages but from small entries. In 2000, about four-fifths of the year group entered French, but only 29 per cent achieved grades A*-C, well below national averages. Whilst the results of boys were a little below those of boys nationally, girls results were very low and below those of boys. Results rose slightly to 31 per cent in 2001. Although girls achieved better than boys in this year group, when compared with national figures girls were further below girls results nationally than were boys. There are small entries for German each year. In 2000, the three boys entered achieved well, as did one of two girls. From a slightly higher entry of 12 in 2001, only a third achieved grades A*-C. Small entries in Spanish achieve much better than those in German and French. In 2000, 69 per cent achieved grades A*-C and this rose to 80 per cent of an entry of 15 in 2001. At the time of the inspection, the school was awaiting the result of appeals on some of the results in languages, including the three pupils in Spanish who had not attained a higher grade. In 2001, one pupil sat Latin and one their home language Polish.

13. In analysing results, the school has failed to investigate why the results of girls appear to be more volatile than those of boys from year to year and why comparatively girls appear to be achieving less well in some subjects, especially mathematics, science and French.

14. The school celebrates pupils' achievements in other areas. After many years with no success in sport, in the last year success was achieved in football, where Year 9 were Guildford and District champions, in basketball where Year 9 girls represented the borough in the Surrey Youth Games and came back as champions, in cricket where both Year 8 and 10 won championships and in rugby where Year 7 girls came third in a Surrey 7s tournament. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a range of musical and drama events and have raised substantial sums of money for charities. An annual awards evening has been introduced which celebrates the achievements of many pupils, including the achievements of those with special educational needs and of individual pupils who have previously caused concerns. Pupils have been successful in achieving gold Trident awards, a residential award for a pupil in science, success in the Surrey debating and a national mock trial competition.

Standards in lessons and in the work survey

15. At the time of the last inspection, standards achieved by pupils were described as very good. Results in 1996 at GCSE, with 57 per cent A*-C were substantially better than those achieved in the succeeding years, until the current good results in 2001. Pupils were described as literate, articulate and able to read and write fluently. Pupils were said to be good at using and applying mathematics, but to lack a good grasp of some of the key principles in science. Strengths were identified in 1996 in art, music, drama, history and geography and weaknesses in design and technology and physical education.

16. During the inspection, extensive studies of work completed during the last academic year were carried out, both through a general work survey and separate subject work surveys. Standards were also assessed through observation of lessons in all subjects. Both the work surveys and lessons observed reveal significant variations between subjects and between classes in some subjects. Inspectors found standards of work currently below the standards recorded in the last national tests, partly due to the inspection being early in the new academic year. As so many classes were being taught by new teachers who were seeing them for only the first or second time, pupils were not always given the opportunity to show fully the standards they were capable of achieving during lessons. Consequently standards seen in lessons did not always match those seen in last year's exercise books. The mixture of banding and setting arrangements, along with mixed ability teaching in some subjects impacts on the overall standards observed in a class. Overall standards in a mixed ability class would be expected to be average, with some achieving well below average in the class, some well below. Whilst a top set would be expected to be assessed as well above average. This was not always the case. In some mixed ability classes the majority of pupils achieve above or well above average, whilst in some higher sets the majority were observed to be only achieving at an average level. Overall, attainment was above average in 45 per cent of lessons observed and average in a further 41 per cent. It was only below average in 14 per cent, mainly but not entirely lower band groups. Fewer classes were achieving below average at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3, 16 per cent compared to 10 per cent, but the proportion achieving above average was similar at both key stages. This hides some significant differences between year groups. Standards observed were highest in Year 7, being above average in half the classes observed and below average in only 7 per cent. However, the proportion of above average lessons dropped to 39 per cent in Year 8, but returned to around 45 per cent in the other three years. Only 5 per cent of classes observed in Year 11 were working below average, all lower sets, but in Year 9 this was true of nearly a quarter of lessons observed. Reasons for the variations between year groups should be investigated, but evidence suggests pupils in Year 8 are challenged less than other years and that the negative impact of banding has greatest effect in Year 9. Standards were above average in all lessons observed in art, and over half in English, history, music, drama and science, and in Key Stage 4 in mathematics. Except in ICT, music and religious education, standards were better at Key Stage 4. Examples of excellence were observed in

top sets in science. Attainment was below average in nearly half the classes observed in mathematics at Key Stage 3 and in over a third of lessons in modern foreign languages and Key Stage 4 science.

17. Pupils on the register of special educational needs make good progress at both key stages, in line with their individual capabilities. Selected pupils in Year 7, with particular weaknesses in literacy, receive good extra help through the 'Power Readers' paired reading scheme. Pupils withdrawn from lessons at Key Stage 3 for additional help with reading and number make good progress as a result of their positive attitudes. They value very good relationships with learning support teachers and assistants. The pupils achieve well in many areas of the curriculum, including art, music, drama, science and French. In the best lessons, they are fully involved and interested, and the work is successfully targeted to their needs. At Key Stage 4, they are taught in smaller classes for many subjects. Those with statements receive effective additional help in the classroom, and to improve literacy and numeracy skills. Usually, learning tasks are suitably adjusted to match their abilities, though practice in this respect is not entirely consistent between teachers.

18. In 2000, pupils with special needs generally achieved satisfactory levels of attainment in National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations. In the last academic year, the Learning Support department provided additional guidance, to help pupils prepare for these, resulting in a further rise in standards. In the Key Stage 3 tests in 2001, with only one exception in mathematics, all SEN pupils gained Level 4 in English, mathematics and science. At Key Stage 4, all SEN pupils secured at least a G grade pass in every subject for which they were entered, unless they were absent on the day of the examination. This represents a good level of achievement for most.

19. There are effective strategies in place which help to reinforce good standards of attainment in reading and writing for the majority of pupils. Most are able to write well, using largely correct grammatical structures, appropriate punctuation and correct spelling by the end of Key Stage 3. Higher attaining pupils are able to write fluently, though in some subjects, including religious education and geography, more development of ideas in regular extended writing could be expected. Progress in writing continues through Key Stage 4, so that by the end of the key stage pupils take notes effectively and can write for a variety of audiences. Detailed, analytical accounts are well developed in English, art, drama, history and geography. Throughout the school, most pupils take pride in their writing and present work well.

20. Standards of speaking and listening for the great majority of pupils are also good. There are many opportunities for developing discussion across the range of subjects, in whole class, paired or small group work. Expressive speech is developed well in drama and through the use of role-play in history, for example. Effective use of questioning also encourages speaking and listening skills in many subjects. Good examples were noted in physical education, ICT, history, geography and English. By the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils can express themselves confidently, using appropriate vocabulary. In one Year 9 art lesson, on the philosophy of 20th century art, standards of discussion were impressively mature and thoughtful. By the end of Key Stage 4 the majority can put across their views clearly and articulately in discussion. However, a minority of pupils, particularly in lower band classes at Key Stage 4, do not listen to teachers or their peers well, showing lack of respect for others' views. This can detract significantly from the quality of learning for all pupils in those classes.

21. In mathematics, pupils are taught in ability groups. Overall, standards are average. Pupils apply their numerical skills well in subjects across the curriculum, when required. In history, pupils in Year 10 carry out statistical analysis in their work on the population of China. In Year 11, while researching the English Civil War, they carry out measuring tasks when examining the thickness of the walls of Farnham Castle and the positioning of the canons. In information and communications technology, pupils use spreadsheets, graphs and charts, and databases. In art, pupils have a strong awareness of spatial awareness in both 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional work. In music, pupils are familiar with the concepts

of rhythm and pulse. In science, the younger higher attaining pupils use experimentally generated graphs to predict how long candles in given containers would stay alight. Similarly, the older higher attaining pupils use their knowledge and understanding of number to balance chemical equations. In geography, pupils illustrate hypotheses and reach conclusions by using data, usually interpreting graphs and charts. However, numeracy is yet to be specifically programmed into the work schemes in most subjects and it lacks co-ordination, monitoring or evaluation.

22. Pupils' achievements across the curriculum in ICT are not assessed nor fully recognised. Training has been provided for staff so that they can use applications and access the network. Opportunities for the consistent application and development of computers are not sufficiently planned and co-ordinated across the curriculum and have still to achieve full coherence and progression. Computers are used in some subjects to good effect and the history, geography, English, art and design and design and technology departments make a contribution to developing pupils' skills in the use of computers. However, limited use of ICT in some other subjects, such as music and mathematics impacts negatively on the standards pupils can achieve.

23. Pupils' standards in English are above average on entry to the school and remain so. Within English, standards of reading are good, with pupils establishing sound habits of wider personal reading in Key Stage 3. Most pupils are beginning to come to grips effectively with written evaluations of texts studied in class. For example, one Year 9 group, studying the short story 'Enchanted Alley' by Michael Anthony, commented with some insight on the social implications of the setting of the story and were able to support their ideas with detailed textual evidence. Speaking skills are also good. For example one Year 11 group contributed thoughtfully to small group discussions on the poem 'Tractor' by Ted Hughes. They showed some insight into the themes and use of language in the poem and were able to summarise and present their ideas succinctly in feedback to the whole class. Standards in written work are also good. More extended personal and creative writing is a strength.

24. Standards in mathematics on entry to the school are above average and overall remain so. However, the standards seen during the inspection with many pupils in lower attaining sets was not as high as it should be. Some teachers seem unsure of the standards they should expect. Throughout the school standards are adversely affected by the way in which a minority respond to ineffective teaching. However, most pupils, including the majority of abler pupils, achieve as they should. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils of all abilities display gaps in knowledge, although abler pupils have good understanding of their work. Some of middle and lower ability lack confidence in their mathematical ability, as do some abler girls. Standards in science have been well above average on entry to the school in recent years. Work seen in Key Stage 3 suggests that virtually all pupils are attaining at or above expected levels. They can plan experiments to test hypotheses and use formulae for calculations. Work in books at Key Stage 4, shows very high levels of attainment, especially in top sets. Pupils can use the periodic table to make predictions about atomic structure and chemical reactions and also understand relationships between concepts such as current, voltage, power and energy. They are less effective at pursuing an investigative approach and, where teaching is less good, standards are not as high as they should be because pupils are not sufficiently challenged.

25. Standard in art and design are a strength of the school. There is a strong foundation at Key Stage 3 in observed drawing, and its effectiveness is shown by high quality figure drawing and painting at GCSE. Pupils have a good art vocabulary. Pupils in Year 11 using charcoal for the first time were already producing life drawings, which displayed control. Pupils of all ability, including those with special educational needs, are able to access the art curriculum and achieve high standards. The vast majority of pupils are at the extended level or above in music by the end of Key Stage 3. Many lessons observed in all years showed pupils working above the national average, although a small Year 10 group has a wide range of ability, with some experiencing difficulty with pulse, rhythm and fluency. The Year 11 group displayed good research skills. Some very good instrumental playing was heard. Pupils with special educational needs attain well in music. Standards in drama have been

high; although were difficult to judge during the inspection as a new teacher was meeting most classes for the first time. A year 7 class were learning a totally new set of skills very successfully. This was true with other years. For example, a Year 10 class using the W.H.Auden poem 'The night mail' as a stimulus, used choral speech, speech rhythm, sound layering and movement to produce very effective work in groups. In physical education, at both key stages, the majority of pupils were performing in line with national expectations. The few seen performing above expectations were mostly boys. At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are particularly good at applying skills accurately, and are also developing their knowledge and understanding of spatial awareness, as was seen in a mixed Year 9 football lesson, where pupils were moving into space well in order to receive accurate passes. These skills are successfully transferred to Key Stage 4, where pupils begin to select and combine skills well and appreciate tactics within the game situation, as for example in understanding tactics in badminton in using the 'overhead clear shot'. Some pupils achieve good standards in dance, but except for a few in Key Stage 4 who take lessons outside school, higher standards are only now being developed in the early stages of Key Stage 3.

26. Standards of work seen during the inspection in design and technology were generally sound, although mostly above average in Years 9 and 10. Standards in some aspects of technology have been affected by staffing shortages. For example, Year 11 food technology pupils displayed weaknesses in basic techniques in a practical lesson, but had had limited practical experiences because of a lack of specialist teacher. Standards in ICT are in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages. By the end of Year 9, pupils demonstrate skills in word processing, are familiar with spreadsheets and can use desktop publishing to a satisfactory level of competence. However, they have insufficient opportunity to develop skills in data logging, control technology and computer aided design. By the end of Year 11, they are confident enough to work independently, using a range of software. However, they have too few opportunities to apply their skills to solve more complex problems. During the inspection week, Year 11 business studies were concentrating on the ICT element of their course. Standards were at least sound in all classes. The Year 10 GNVQ classes were only just starting their courses, making it too early to assess standards.

27. Levels of attainment in geography are good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. High levels of achievement are found in the written work of pupils in all years. For example, Year 9 pupils successfully study more difficult concepts of development, comparing different countries. In Key Stage 4, work is enhanced by fieldwork and coursework of good quality. Work seen in lessons observed during the inspection did not match that of the written work in books, but this was because it was often the first meeting with the new geography teacher. Standards observed in history at both key stages were well above average, a noticeable improvement since the last inspection. In Year 9, pupils are able to talk about the topics they are studying and have an understanding of the major events of previous centuries. Their knowledge of key developments is often good and they are able to use a variety of resources to form conclusions about issues. For example, in work on slavery and the triangular trade, individual pupils show a high level of ability to grasp essential facts in order to develop an understanding of how the trade operated, whilst average attaining pupils understand that captives in West Africa were initially enslaved by local traders, who then sold them to the owners of the slave ships. Higher ability students understand that slaves were seen as a valuable commodity, whilst even the lowest attaining are able to understand that rebellious slaves might create problems. All have the ability to empathise with the slaves, with the most able to understand the complex issue of the meaning of freedom. By Year 11, pupils of all abilities are able to evaluate evidence and use it effectively. Standards observed in Key Stage 3 religious education were good in two-thirds of lessons and sound in the rest. For example, Year 9 pupils could define morality and good analysis of a number of contentious issues increased their awareness that moral issues are not necessarily clear. However, standards are slightly below the expectations of the Local Agreed Syllabus as they spend insufficient time developing in-depth knowledge of major religions. Standards at Key Stage 4 are sound. Top set Year 11 pupils have a good appreciation of the range of Christian viewpoints on issues such as euthanasia and can quote the appropriate scriptures. Pupils in lower sets have knowledge of the main points but

ideas are not always sufficiently extended. Grouping by ability, because the subject is set against others, precludes some pupils from experiencing more detailed discussions.

28. Work seen in lessons and books in modern foreign languages was often better than suggested by poor GCSE results. At the end of Key Stage 3, standards in all languages are above national expectations in all four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Consistent and extensive use of the foreign language by the teacher at normal speed supports development of skills, although there was little evidence of pupils themselves using the foreign language spontaneously. Reading skills are fairly well developed. In several lessons, pupils read out loud with confidence. All pupils make good progress at Key Stage 3. However, pupils' awareness of grammatical patterns, and their ability to manipulate structures is weak. The Year 9 Latin group, however, displayed an impressive understanding of the formation and use of a range of tenses and their meanings. By the end of Key Stage 4, the standards of many are above average in French and Spanish, but not German. Higher attaining pupils can use a range of tenses and structures and produce some impressive extended writing.

29. Overall standards observed were good at both key stages. However, whilst pupils were achieving well by the end of Key Stage 4, achievement at the end of Key Stage 3 is more variable and overall is only sound. Pupils' levels of achievement have been adversely affected in some classes by too frequent changes of teacher, the impact of the banding arrangements and ineffective strategies to deal with a minority of less motivated pupils. In some classes, particularly in the lower band but also in some mixed ability groups, too little challenge is provided for pupils and expectations are too low. In the middle years, in particular, too little homework is undertaken by many pupils. Many teachers willingly give much of their own time to support pupils in raising their attainment, both on an individual basis and through a range of homework classes. Most parents indicated that they felt their children were making good progress, although a small minority disagreed. However, parents rightly identified that students appear to be allowed to drift in Year 11. Parents held mixed views about the effects of banding, setting and mixed ability teaching on standards. However, there was a clear view expressed by many parents, that although some pupils succeed extremely well, overall standards were not high enough given the area in which most pupils live.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

30. The last inspection report noted that attitudes were positive and relationships were very good and that pupils in the main were attentive and well motivated. Where they worked in groups or pairs this had a significant impact on their progress.

31. Pupils enjoy coming to school and the vast majority approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm. They respond positively to their teachers, concentrating well in class and displaying high levels of perseverance when the tasks are difficult and challenging. Pupils work to the best of their ability and make an effort to complete their work in the time available. They participate fully and attentively in class discussions and are keen to share their ideas and opinions with others. Pupils are articulate and a great many display a maturity beyond their years. The younger pupils in the school have developed good independent learning skills and are confident about organising aspects of their learning. A small minority of pupils, especially at Key Stage 4, display negative attitudes towards school, although in most cases only in some lessons.

32. The last inspection report noted that behaviour for the majority of pupils was good in lessons and around the school. Where poor behaviour did occur this was as a result of the work provided not being appropriate.

33. The overall standard of behaviour is now satisfactory, although there are clear indications that it is better this term than last year. Behaviour was good in most lessons observed, although both pupils and parents consider that it has deteriorated since the previous inspection and inspection findings support this view. The quality of attitudes and behaviour was good or better in nearly three quarters of all lessons and satisfactory in most

of the rest. However, in seven per cent of lessons it was unsatisfactory including a couple where it was poor. Overall, unsatisfactory or poor attitudes and behaviour adversely affected four lessons in Year 8, three in Year 9, one in Year 10 and four in Year 11 of the 169 lessons seen. There were other lessons where a minority behaved unacceptably, but in these lessons they were dealt with effectively. Where behaviour is unsatisfactory, this is mainly due to the teacher failing to control or inspire the class. In such cases the teacher loses pupils' respect and the quality of the lesson deteriorates fast. Most teachers, however, maintain very good relationships with their pupils and have high expectations of behaviour in class and this leads to better progress and learning.

34. Behaviour around the school and at break and lunch times is normally good and these are pleasant, social occasions. Pupils clear away after finishing their lunch and generally co-operate with lunchtime arrangements and are respectful to catering staff. Most pupils co-operate effectively with each other in using the play spaces and many take the opportunities provided by clubs and the Youth Service at lunch times.

35. There have been instances of bullying recorded. Most incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively by the relevant staff, although evidence from pupils and parents suggests that this has not always been the case. Examples of oppressive behaviour round the school, or of racism or sexism, are rare. Respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs is satisfactory across the school and most pupils are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. A small number of pupils, however, lack understanding of the impact their actions have on others. For example, some boys and girls, particularly in Key Stage 4, are unaware or choose to disregard the consequences that their disruptive behaviour and conduct has on those around them. Although the most overt inappropriate behaviour occurs with boys, it is the attitudes of a minority of older girls, which undermines less effective teachers and impacts most on pupils' learning. In discussion, older pupils were able to give examples of, for instance, low level psychological bullying, particularly amongst girls, whilst being positive about the support received from most teachers in dealing with such instances.

36. Last year, the number of exclusions recorded, was high and ranked in the top third of the country, when comparing with schools containing 500-800 pupils. All 58 exclusions were for fixed periods and related to 31 pupils. These figures are, however, a significant improvement on the previous year when there had been 292 fixed term exclusions, which involved 47 pupils, 26 boys and 21 girls, and one permanent exclusion. Most exclusions last a day or two and pupils are re-integrated unobtrusively. However, the high number of exclusions in both years suggests that exclusion has been used as an inappropriate sanction too early, rather than dealing appropriately with the underlying reasons for poor behaviour. The school has addressed this and a new policy has been adopted this which is having a positive impact in reducing exclusions and enabling pupils to make better progress in a calmer environment.

37. Pupils' personal development is good and their relationships with one another and most adults are very good. Pupils respond warmly to visitors and co-operate well when working in pairs and small groups. The older pupils can be relied upon to carry out prefect duties sensibly around the school and some pupils are given the opportunity to perform mentoring tasks and organising the lending of books in the library. There is a suggestion among the pupils and parents, however, that these opportunities are limited to those more able pupils. The older pupils in Years 8 and 9 support the younger ones in Year 7 with reading and their induction into the school and this enhances their personal development. Around 50 pupils from all year groups are able to show initiative and take responsibility when undertaking duties on the School Council. A wide range of issues are discussed and action taken, on behalf of the remainder of the pupils in the school. Whilst prefects and representatives spoken to on the School Council displayed a clear understanding of their roles, they spoke of the prefect system having been ineffective over the last couple of years, dependent on the quality of support provided by the respective head of year and Year 11 tutors. Some spoke of frustration when ignored by younger pupils and then not being supported effectively by staff in carrying out their roles, whilst some younger pupils expressed concern that some prefects in the past had been allowed to abuse their powers.

The current Year 11 prefects are seen to be more effective, supported appropriately by their head of year.

38. There is a good response to the additional help provided for pupils with special educational needs. Good relationships exist amongst pupils and with teachers and, in particular, with the learning support assistants who help them in a range of lessons across the curriculum. The staff has successfully created a very supportive learning environment which is clearly valued by pupils. As a consequence, the behaviour of some more challenging pupils is often markedly better in the Learning Support room than elsewhere in the school and has a positive affect on learning. In lessons, most pupils with special educational needs show interest and sound motivation to learn. The majority are well focused on the tasks in hand. They also take care with their work and make a considerable effort to present it as neatly and accurately as possible.

39. The school's attendance rate remains good as it was at the time of the last inspection. Attendance, at around 93 per cent, is above the national average. The current unauthorised absence rate, however, at 1.3 per cent, is above the national average, but can be attributed to a small number of pupils. The good attendance has a positive effect on the attainment and progress of pupils and the completion of registers meet statutory requirements, although some registers were stolen last year. Punctuality for the vast majority of pupils is very good and lessons start and finish on time. However, a minority of pupils do arrive late for lessons where they have new or less effective teachers.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

40. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching was a weakness with nearly one fifth of teaching unsatisfactory. About a third of teaching was then judged as being good or better. Whilst some strengths were identified, such as excellent discussion in English, effective planning, good rapport with pupils, good questioning in a range of subjects and high expectations of the more able, there were many weaknesses. Subject knowledge was a weakness in a range of subjects; too many lessons took the form of teacher introduction followed by individual worksheets, with emphasis placed on completion rather than understanding; and expectations, particularly of middle and lower ability pupils, were not high enough.

41. As a consequence, raising 'the quality of teaching by sharing good practice and ensuring systematic monitoring' was identified as a key issue in the last report. In this, the school has been very successful. Systematic monitoring has led to improvements, with less effective teachers supported through staff development. Some teachers had their responsibilities redefined, whilst most whose teaching was identified as unsatisfactory have since left. The previous head indicated pride in, for example, the quality of teaching in the performing arts and in the improvements in teaching in subjects, such as science and modern languages. Interviews with pupils and parents, confirmed the view that there is much good teaching in the school, but some inconsistency in practice, particularly with lower band classes. Over a fifth of parents, who returned questionnaires, disagreed with the statement that 'teaching is good'. Some of these parental concerns relate to significant changes in staff, which have resulted in the school starting both last and this year with a high proportion of temporary or supply teachers. There were six such teachers in place at the time of the inspection.

42. Despite these staffing difficulties, the quality of teaching observed during this inspection showed a marked improvement since the last inspection. Overall, both the quality of teaching and the quality of pupils' learning are now good. In general, pupils are enthusiastic learners and receive good quality teaching in most lessons. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons observed, including 40 per cent where it was good and 25 per cent where it was very good or excellent. These are substantially better than average figures for secondary schools. Some very good teaching was seen in all National Curriculum subjects and in all year groups. The quality of learning, in general, matched that of teaching, although there was slightly less very good or excellent learning, 19

per cent, and slightly more that was satisfactory, 37 per cent. Overall, there was little variation in the quality of teaching and learning between key stages. However, whilst there was no unsatisfactory teaching or learning seen in Year 11, this year group experienced the lowest amount of good or better teaching and learning, 55 and 53 per cent respectively, and the lowest proportion of very good or excellent teaching, 16 per cent. In contrast, the highest proportion of good or better teaching occurred in Year 10, 71 per cent, although it was with this year group that there was the largest variation between the quality of teaching and that of learning, where only 60 per cent was good or better. At Key Stage 3, all teaching and learning in Year 7 was at least satisfactory, with two-thirds good or better. Despite one poor lesson, Year 9 experienced the highest proportion of very good or excellent teaching, 35 per cent, whilst the highest proportion of unsatisfactory or poor teaching occurred in Year 8, a fact concurring with the views parents of last year's Year 8. Excellent teaching was observed in all year groups, twice in Year 9, and in art, history, music and Latin. The best teaching and learning generally occurs within mixed ability or upper band classes. Teaching and learning within lower band groups is much more varied. Overall teaching was very good or better in most lessons in art and Key Stage 4 history and in more than half in drama and Key Stage 3 modern foreign languages. It was good or better in all lessons in art and ICT, and in most in drama, history, music, physical education and Key Stage 3 languages and Key Stage 4 mathematics. It was also good or better in around two thirds of lessons in English and geography and half in religious education, Key Stage 3 science and Key Stage 4 design and technology.

43. In general, the school is succeeding in improving the quality of teaching and learning. There is a significant amount of good teaching in the school, much of which could become very good if the best practices were adopted more consistently. Current proposals for changes in the structure of senior management will support subject leaders in improving teaching and learning still further. There is a teaching and learning policy. This is sound, but is essentially a theoretical set of principles rather than a practical document to help teachers improve their practice. Some departments, such as science, have made significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection, but others, such as mathematics still display too many weaknesses.

44. Across the curriculum, teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects, and how best to teach them, are good. However, the nature of being a small school and staffing difficulties over the last few years in some subjects has resulted in some classes being taught by non-specialists or, in a few cases, a succession of temporary teachers. Personal and social education is taught by form tutors rather than a specialist team. Whilst this has benefits, two of the careers lessons observed as part of this programme were deemed unsatisfactory. In contrast, however, the quality of teaching in English was creditable, given the high proportion of new and temporary teachers. In the best lessons, teachers' enthusiasm for their subject inspires pupils. For example, in art and design a firm belief in the value of art for all and a passion for the subject results in effective learning and high standards. In geography, teachers' very good command of their subject is used well in question and answer sessions to develop pupils' knowledge and to improve their understanding, and in religious education it is used to promote relevant discussions. The languages department has some excellent linguists, including three native French speakers, which enables them to use the foreign language extensively and to great effect. However, in some lessons, where the teacher was teaching their second language, they did not always have the linguistic competence to deliver the lesson with the confidence and fluency necessary.

45. Lesson planning is generally good at both key stages and in the better lessons is based upon the needs of individual students. In geography and physical education, careful planning and use of strategies provides structure for pupils' progression in learning. All languages lessons are very well prepared, enabling most to be delivered enthusiastically and at pace. In music and drama, good quality planning, preparation and target setting lays a firm foundation for learning. In contrast, planning in mathematics is only sound and many lessons do not routinely challenge pupils. Teachers' expectations across most subjects are generally good at Key Stage 4, but at Key Stage 3 are only satisfactory with too many of all

abilities insufficiently challenged. In mathematics, low expectations, linked to poor class control, de-motivates a significant proportion of pupils and leads to underachievement. In contrast, expectations in many subjects, such as art and physical education, are high, and in specialist ICT, well-planned lessons provide suitable challenge.

46. Across the curriculum, the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Nevertheless, good strategies for teaching literacy skills were observed in a range of subjects during the inspection. Their impact would be greater if applied consistently across the school. Some subjects, amongst others science, physical education and history, provide glossaries of specialist words which help to reinforce correct spelling and promote an interest in language. Effective displays of key words and pupils' written work in many subject departments, including English, modern foreign languages, physical education and geography, serve to create a good literacy environment. In most subjects, pupils read from a range of texts, with an increasing emphasis on developing research skills through the use of the Internet and CD-ROM in many areas including ICT, history and art. Pupils are also given regular opportunities to write for different purposes. Note making and report writing are required in most subjects. Writing frames are also used to help pupils develop and structure different types of written work effectively in English, modern foreign languages and history. Teachers also mark written work regularly, but practice over the correction of spelling errors is not fully consistent. Additional support for the development of literacy skills for pupils with special educational needs is good, including a paired reading scheme, 'Power Readers', for those in Year 7. A literacy summer school for selected pupils who are about to join the school was held this year for the first time.

47. Numeracy skills are used well in history and geography, amongst other subjects. However, numeracy is yet to be specifically programmed into the work schemes in most subjects and it lacks co-ordination, monitoring or evaluation. Information and communication technology is used effectively in history and geography to carry out research and develop computer literacy. Training has been provided for staff so that they can use applications and access the network. Opportunities for the consistent application and development of computers are not sufficiently planned and co-ordinated across the curriculum and have still to achieve full coherence and progression.

48. In the best lessons, teachers adopt a range of teaching strategies and actively involve pupils in their learning. Overall, the effectiveness of teaching methods is good at both key stages. In many subjects, as in science and history, a time plan and the use of objectives shared with pupils generates good pace. In English, a range of organisational strategies is used to engender interest. A Year 9 lesson, for example, introducing Shakespeare, was particularly well paced and varied with a mixture of whole class and paired discussions, individual reflection and writing which clearly engaged pupils. In Year 9 design and technology, pupils were developing design ideas for a balancing toy based on animal shapes. Pupils were required to research endangered species before choosing an animal with the reasons for the research carefully explained by the teacher. Most science lessons move at a good pace and involve practical work. For example, a Year 7 mixed ability lesson on cell structure enabled pupils to develop skills in making microscope slides, using a microscope and understanding the differences between plant and animal cells. As a result there was evidence of good learning by all pupils. Teachers' expositions at the start of most lessons are generally clear, and in the best lessons, skilful questioning is used both to review previous learning and to develop understanding. In art, for example, questioning is tightly focussed, and reinforces learning, ensures the participation of all and enables pupils to understand and internalise difficult concepts, such as those of abstract art. However, in a few lessons, such as in science and geography, the introduction involved pupils in extended listening, missing opportunities for more active engagement in learning. Most geography lessons, however, employ methods, which encourage pupils to take an active part and make use of an extensive range of resource materials. In both geography and history, fieldwork is used both extensively and effectively. In music pupils were observed learning by listening, observing, analysing, using prior experience, drawing parallels with other music, questioning, from each other and, above all, by doing. In one Year 8 class working on triads, pupils not

only learnt the nature of a triad, but put them into a historical context and understood the concept of harmonic use.

49. In most lessons, pupils are enthusiastic and their energies are channelled constructively into learning. There is generally a positive working atmosphere in lessons, which supports good learning. In art and design, for example, attention is rapt and concentration is deep, producing an excellent working ethos. Their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is good, as is their intellectual, physical and creative effort when given the opportunity. In both science and mathematics there is scope for a more experimental approach to the acquisition of knowledge and conceptual understanding. Where given the opportunity, as with a top set in Year 9 science, where they were asked to find the proportion of oxygen in the air, they rose to the challenge, completing the activity quickly and accurately. Across the curriculum pupils work with interest and concentration, and where given the opportunity, as in English, history, geography, physical education and the arts, are developing independence. In physical education, for example, lessons generally allow pupils to plan, perform and evaluate their performance. This enables pupils to develop their independent learning skills as well as improve standards. In geography, teachers generally actively involve pupils, which creates interest and encourages quality learning, as with a Year 8 lesson which required pupils to place different types of employment into the appropriate economic activities. There is, however, a significant variation in the quality of learning, according to the grouping of pupils used in the subject. Across the school, learning is generally good or very good in upper band and mixed ability classes. The quality of learning in some lower band classes is less satisfactory. In Year 11, however, although the quality of learning overall was always at least satisfactory, a few disaffected pupils of all abilities influenced lessons such that learning was only good in about half, significantly less than in other years.

50. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers' classroom management is good. Sometimes, where it is less skilled, a small number of less motivated pupils have a disproportionate effect on the lesson and, on a few occasions the rest of the class becomes uncooperative. In mathematics, for example, both pupils and parents provided evidence of inadequacies in classroom management in some lessons. Some mathematics teaching lacks the strategies to control and motivate lower attaining pupils. In Year 8 design and technology, poor attitudes and behaviour meant pupils failed to appreciate the objectives of the lesson. In contrast in most subjects relationships are good and the vast majority of pupils respond appropriately. In ICT, for example, pupils enjoy their work and persevere to achieve their best. Frequent changes of teacher and long term use of temporary staff in a few subjects, has clearly had some effect on pupils' attitudes and resulted in more challenging behaviour in some classes. However, in most cases, with both new and experienced staff, the small number of pupils presenting challenging behaviour is dealt with effectively. Most staff make good use of the time available in lessons, especially where they plan for a variety of activities to be completed at pace.

51. The quality and use of ongoing assessment to inform both teachers and learners of the effectiveness of pupils' learning was part of a key issue for action in the last inspection report. This aspect of assessment is now satisfactory at both key stages, although remains an area for further development. Across the curriculum, pupils' own knowledge of their learning is satisfactory, although good in the arts. In English, for example, whilst pupils try hard to improve their work, teachers could help them by ensuring all understand the process of assessment more clearly, and by using assessment criteria more explicitly to inform lessons. Setting of subject specific targets for improved attainment would also help pupils understand their own learning better. In art and music, pupils are given very clear targets and a variety of routes, which may be used to attain success. In languages, the content of most lessons is carefully graded and matched to the needs and interests of the age group. In physical education, the department is developing assessment procedures. Here, teachers assess pupils' performance and understanding of skills and tactics and plan accordingly, both within lessons and long term, but need to develop this further into setting pupils targets and learning goals and familiarise them with National Curriculum expectations.

52. The setting of homework was raised as an issue by parents at the pre-inspection meeting and over a third of those who completed the questionnaire indicated that their child was not set the right amount. Discussion with pupils suggested that many, especially from Year 8 to 10, do not do an adequate amount most evenings. Whilst some pupils are very diligent and spend ample time on research, and in Year 11 many spend a significant amount of time completing coursework, most suggested that homework set could be completed very quickly. This was confirmed by students from last year's Year 11, currently at college. They indicated that how long you took was in most cases up to individual pupils, although some lessons, such as higher sets in mathematics, received regular substantial pieces of work. Discussions with current and ex-pupils, suggest that the management of coursework is handled well within some departments, but poorly by others, with many pupils having to have deadlines extended. The setting of homework during the inspection was sound, with some examples of good practice. In history, for example, tasks set for homework link well with work in class. However, too often the task set in most subjects could be completed fairly quickly by most pupils and lacked challenge for the most able. Across the curriculum sound use is made of educational resources, including computers. There is very good use of ICT in history and geography, but a lack of up to date resources in music makes it impossible to meet legal requirements and denies pupils access to an important resource for composition work at GCSE.

53. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good in withdrawal sessions, and satisfactory overall in mainstream classes. In the latter, most teachers have some awareness of individual needs and work is usually adapted appropriately to suit pupils who learn at different rates or have specific difficulties. Learning support teachers and assistants provide good guidance and interact well with pupils in lessons. There should be more planning with class teachers to use their time and expertise to best effect, however. There could also be more shared evaluation of progress made by pupils in lessons. In some classes in the lower ability band, poor behaviour is not always managed well. This may affect learning for special needs pupils, even if they are not directly involved. Overall, pupils with special educational needs learn well. The Learning Support department focuses on teaching basic literacy and numeracy skills throughout the school, and offers some help with science at Key Stage 3. Pupils also develop ICT skills through use of the 'Successmaker' software programme. Strengths in the teaching observed in withdrawal sessions were in planning for lessons, with tasks broken down into logical steps leading to clear overall objectives, and very good pupil management. Staff members have a calm and fair approach to managing behaviour which helps to promote friendly relationships and good attitudes. A good deal of individual help is given, focusing on specific needs. An introductory session for a Year 7 pupil with a statement provided a very good example. The learning support teacher sensitively explored possible strategies for helping the pupil come to terms with the new school, constantly checking that requirements for a number of subjects were understood. No specific provision is made for teaching the few pupils for whom English is an additional language, as currently all speak English well.

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

54. The quality and range of the curriculum is sound at both key stages. The curriculum has sufficient breadth and balance. It is enriched by extra language provision, German, Spanish and Latin, and by the recently introduced GNVQ courses in business and leisure and tourism in Key Stage 4. Statistics is now available as a GCSE course. Arts provision is strong in the school and sculpture is available as an extra GCSE enabling pupils to gain double certification. However, as yet dance is not offered as a GCSE subject, although it is being developed in the lower school. The Central Council for Physical Recreation sports leadership award has recently been introduced. Pupils can now enter for the Certificate of Achievement alongside their GCSE if this is deemed appropriate. The school governors are actively involved in reviewing and developing the curriculum and receive regular reports on different subject areas.

55. The provision of ICT at Key Stages 3 and 4 is not consistent. The most able pupils are not taught ICT in Year 9 and they are not able to take the certificate taken by other pupils at the end of the key stage. In Key Stage 4 pupils are not given specific lessons, although over the last few years those opting for business studies also take an information studies examination. Some coverage of skills is provided within other subjects but within the curriculum as a whole the provision lacks consistency and coherence.

56. The requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education are met and pupils take either the full or the GCSE short course in religious education. However, limited time allocated for the subject in Key Stage 3 and the fact that GCSE full course has to be taken after school has an adverse impact on the learning experience of pupils.

57. There are timetable issues that result in too few choosing Latin GCSE. Lessons have to be taken out of school in Key Stage 4, which prevents many pupils taking the subject although they have enjoyed it and achieved well in Key Stage 3. Business studies has suffered from an insufficient allocation of time, given that pupils are also entered for information studies, and this is reflected in the results in that subject. The change to a vocational course in Year 10 has remedied this.

58. Although the curriculum contains the full range of subjects and has some enrichment, there is no clear curriculum rationale and issues related to planning and time allocation have been insufficiently addressed. The school recognizes that it is in a period of change and development and that the curriculum is evolving to meet the changing requirements of its pupils. However, there are anomalies in timetabling and within the setting and banding of pupils in relation to their ability, which impact on both curriculum planning and equal opportunities. Pupils do not have full and equal access to the curriculum. For example, a second language is not available to all pupils and only upper band pupils are able to sit a GCSE in English Literature.

59. An aim of the school is to ensure that all students reach their full intellectual potential. The school bands pupils into two cohorts according to ability. They are taught in these bands in subjects such as English, languages and mathematics, and any others blocked against these subjects. Within the bands, subjects are able to further set according to ability and science is set by ability across each year group. Pupils' choice of options at GCSE also means that they are often taught with others of similar potential attainment. They are taught in mixed ability groups elsewhere. This policy is ensuring that most students of average and higher potential do achieve appropriately. Pupils with special educational needs are identified and supported well and there is now a coordinator whose role is to develop provision for the most able and the gifted and talented. The school has experimented with the banding system over the last few years, moving to a higher proportion of mixed ability teaching in recent years with improved results. Whilst a mix of setting by ability and mixed ability teaching is appropriate, the current banding arrangement was raised as an issue by pupils, parents and teachers that seriously impacts on access to an appropriate curriculum for some pupils. Since the inspection week, the decision has been taken to remove banding from Year 7.

60. There is a sound equal opportunities policy and provision in place to ensure that pupils are not disadvantaged by gender, race or disability and also that they are aware of these issues in a wider context. Boys in the school achieve well, in comparison with the national trend, and show their real potential and ability in all areas of the curriculum including the humanities subjects. Unusually, it is the performance of girls in some subjects, which is a cause for some concern.

61. The grouping of pupils by ability has an adverse effect on the achievement of some pupils in the lower ability groups and they fail to reach their full potential. This is partly because the behaviour of some in those groups creates problems but also because it is clear that they are noticeably more affected by staffing problems and are more frequently taught by temporary and supply teachers in some subjects, for example mathematics. It is possible for a pupil to be placed in a lower ability band on criteria that are not related to their

ability in that subject because of timetable difficulties. There is sometimes insufficient opportunity for pupils to move between sets as they make progress, for example again in mathematics.

62. Only the more able pupils are able to take an extra language or to take English literature at GCSE. The School Council has noted that of the forty prefects appointed only four were from the lower band and feel that this is a matter of concern. Parents have also expressed concern about the lack of opportunities for lower band pupils to become mentors or prefects. They feel that this promotes an unhelpful culture of low attainment and underachievement. The issues related to the noticeable underachievement of some girls have also not been addressed.

63. In contrast, the support given to pupils with special educational needs enables them to have the maximum possible access to the curriculum. Pupils may be withdrawn from some lessons for individual help or small group work. In this respect, there are good opportunities at Key Stage 3 to extend and reinforce the individual teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills for those pupils who have greater difficulty in this area. The school also has a special arrangement with the Helen Arkell Dyslexia Institute, whereby qualified teachers who are working to gain a specialist diploma in specific learning difficulties give additional tuition to targeted pupils. In other subjects, for example art, music and drama, special needs pupils are working at their own level in lessons with full equality of access to an inclusive curriculum. Appropriate adjustments are also made for specific learning needs in smaller classes in the core subjects and modern foreign languages throughout the school. Outside the curriculum, some special needs pupils benefit from Youth Club activities, organised in school on three days a week by the Haslemere Youth Service.

64. The school's literacy policy was developed by a cross-curricular working party two years ago. It sets out the importance of literacy in aiding learning across all subjects and suggests some strategies for developing reading skills and improving spelling. A record of pupils' reading ages is kept and monitored by the English and, where appropriate, the Learning Support departments. But the school currently has no literacy co-ordinator. It is left to individual subject departments to implement the policy as they see fit. In the absence of any centrally co-ordinated initiative, or regular monitoring and evaluation of the policy, practice is variable. Strategies for teaching numeracy skills are less well developed, although there is a policy. There is good practice in subjects, such as history, geography and science but no overall leadership of numeracy across the curriculum.

65. The programme of extra curricular activities provided by the school is good. It includes sport, music and drama. Many pupils join in lunchtime activities on a regular basis and some of these are in the form of extra classes to support work in academic subjects. Individuals learn to play a variety of musical instruments and many are involved in creative arts activities for example the drama production. Pupils go on a variety of visits in the local area and further a field. They go to theatrical productions and on residential visits in each year. However, the range of clubs and activities is quite limited and the lunchtime now provides limited time. There are plans to arrange late buses so that the range of after school activities can be extended. This is a good initiative.

66. The curriculum is enhanced by a highly structured programme of personal, social and health education. It covers all the required elements and is taught by form teachers, using materials provided. The programme is taught soundly overall, but falls below a satisfactory level when material is not handled confidently, the activities require discussion and much input from the pupils, where materials are not suitable for all, and where pupils are not managed effectively. Provision is not as successful as it was reported at the last inspection.

67. Provision for careers education and guidance is satisfactory. A coherent programme of careers education commencing in Year 8 through to the end of Key Stage 4 is provided with the support of a committed and well-qualified co-ordinator. The 5-week careers modules are delivered within the personal and social health education (PSHE) programme by the form tutors. However, both lessons observed during the inspection given by

experienced staff involved unsatisfactory teaching.

68. In Year 8, pupils study the local labour market and have an introduction through the careers library with its Internet access and its ICT aided careers programmes. In Year 9, support is given to pupils when choosing Key Stage 4 options. The Year 10 and 11 careers modules are further supplemented by weekly visits from the schools career advisor. All Key Stage 4 pupils are offered a careers interview and Year 11 attend a careers evening. This provision has a positive impact on pupils' ability to make sensible career and further education choices.

69. Pupils undertake a two-week work experience placement in Year 10. Preparation for work experience takes place during the careers module immediately prior to the placement. The programme is well monitored and all pupils receive a debriefing. However, Trident who organise the work experience placements have experienced great difficulties placing all pupils and 30 per cent of pupils were found places by the careers co-ordinator. Pupils are encouraged to find their own placements through family and friends. Pupils report having no placement arranged in some cases until the very last minute, with some of these being unsatisfactory. This is an unacceptable at a crucial period of pupils' education. As a consequence, a good number of pupils question the value of such experiences.

70. At Key Stage 4, the school has taken advantage of new flexibilities to introduce more work-related learning for pupils who are less motivated by traditional academic subjects. The introduction of the Skillway initiative addresses the needs of 18 Year 10 pupils who are experiencing academic and/or social difficulties. The initiative embraces an issue of inclusion. Six pupils per term on a one day a week placement benefit from working with tradesmen at an off-site location on work-related activities. The initiative aims to raise self-esteem, self-confidence and re-engage pupils more positively in their academic studies. The programme enhances the pupils' work experience preparation. It may also lead to an extended one day a week work experience trial in Year 11, providing a good addition to the offer for less motivated pupils.

71. The school has introduced two GNVQ courses in response to a curriculum audit that highlighted that it was not meeting the needs of all of its pupils. They have used a specific funding allocation to introduce, from September 2001, GNVQ courses in business education and leisure and tourism. Pupils can take either the foundation or the intermediate course. The funding has been effectively used to train two teachers and to buy appropriate resources. There were opportunities for teachers to have work placements. Both courses have proved popular with pupils, who are appreciative of the new GNVQ base. A good start has been made in teaching, with a focus on instilling the basic ideas in order to underpin pupils' individual research. Unfortunately, the teacher trained to be the GNVQ co-ordinator has left the school and there are some aspects of the delivery of the course not yet embedded. For example, links with industry and the creation of opportunities for active learning are not detailed in planning. Senior management are working hard to remedy this. Most pupils are reacting positively to the new style course and appear to be making good progress in the first two weeks of the course.

72. In the last inspection, it was reported that the school enjoyed strong business links and pupils were encouraged to help in the local and wider community.

73. The school enjoys close links with both the feeder primary schools and the Colleges of Further Education. Visits are undertaken by teachers to the primary sector to carry out teaching tasks and at the same time to get to know prospective pupils. Regular meetings take place with the major feeder schools to exchange pupil information and best assess their academic and personal needs. Meetings are held to familiarise pupils and parents with the expectations and pattern of work of secondary education before they are on the roll. Relationships with partner institutions are, therefore, good. However, governors and senior managers are aware of the need to develop these further as part of their action to market the school more successfully in a move to becoming fully subscribed.

74. The community makes a sound contribution to pupils' learning, although the main business link has been severed since the previous inspection and this area now needs to be re-developed. Also the opportunity to access the Internet, and link with others all around the world to enrich pupils' learning is under developed. Pupils do, however, raise large amounts of money for internationally recognised charities, such as the 'Rhino' Appeal and take great interest in events such as Chernobyl, from where pupils attended the school for a week. Pupils from Years 8 and 9 go on a French exchange each year to Bernay. This is a joint venture with the Royal School and Wispers, two local independent schools.

75. The school has developed close links with Fulham Football Club and a number of pupils have benefited from the experience that has resulted in the school receiving the Football Association Charter. Some Year 11 pupils attended a meeting at Farnham Castle to discuss the Haslemere Town Centre Strategy and members of the School Council took part in a conference to look at the services provided by Surrey County Council. These experiences make a positive contribution to the intellectual and personal development of those pupils concerned. The impact of the provision in the school and community is not, however, systematically monitored and analysed to meet the needs of all pupils.

76. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. All departments include statements on provision in their policy documentation. However, senior management has not monitored the execution of these ideas and implementation has been patchy, with practice ranging from very good to satisfactory. The previous report had suggested that the school should develop agreed criteria as a basis for evaluation of the work in this area, but this has not happened. Provision could easily be very good.

77. The last report stated that spiritual education was good, whereas it is now satisfactory. Some departments make a positive contribution to this aspect of personal development. The religious education GCSE syllabus is studied by nearly all Key Stage 4 pupils has a focus on the quest of man for meaning, purpose and identity. Key Stage 4 historians study the spiritual life of the Aborigines and the native Americans. Art, drama and music frequently promote 'magic moments' that allow pupils to experience feelings and thoughts beyond the mundane. For example, pupils at a prize giving responded with spontaneous applause to the playing of a Chopin Nocturne. Year 7 pupils understand the spiritual significance of paintings and sculptures in churches used by pilgrims. They use this knowledge when designing religious artefacts. Other departments, such as geography, science and English, miss opportunities for spiritual enrichment. Collective worship does not enhance provision, as does not always involve a spiritual element Year and form assemblies give little opportunity for meaningful reflection or participation in experiences where awe and wonder might feature. As at the time of the last inspection, the school is not meeting its statutory obligation to provide a daily act of worship.

78. In contrast, provision for the pupils' moral development is good. The personal, social and health education programme explores a number of issues, as does religion education which contemplates moral dilemmas such as euthanasia. Many subjects are good at promoting considerations of right and wrong. For example, a Year 8 art and design class had to design a costume that depicted good and evil and justify their actions. Older pupils investigate and discuss moral issues when studying English literature. Geography makes a strong contribution to this area of the curriculum with, for instance, coursework about the implications of deforestation. There are very good opportunities for moral development in history lessons, as pupils study the causes and consequences of war and slavery. The school has a code of conduct that highlights right and wrong attitudes and behaviour. The discipline for learning policy, that seeks to reinforce this code, has been a major initiative, although it is not yet consistently implemented. Teachers reinforce moral values by their attitudes and responses. For example, a physical education teacher reacted immediately when confronted with the possibility that equipment was missing, carefully explaining the moral implications.

79. Provision for social education is good. There are many opportunities to collaborate in the music and sporting activities, which are strengths of the school. Pupils learn to react as part of a group and to rely on each other. Pupils take part in the National Mathematics Challenge and mock trials. Year 11 prefects have a range of duties and mentors are carefully trained to fulfil their role. The School Council, which has been highly praised by the LEA, enables pupils to play a mature role in the life of the school. For example, they raised the issue that the current prefects do not include many pupils from the lower academic band. As mentors are currently only recruited from the prefects, a group of pupils are excluded from taking responsibility in two important areas of school life. This raises the question of what the school is doing to ensure that future participation is wider. All Year 9 pupils take responsibility for welcoming visitors to the school. Residential trips promote social development, as does group work and activities in subjects such as religious education, physical education, modern foreign languages and science. The English syllabus looks at racism and stereotyping as part of a broad approach to relationships within society. Pupils' participation in raising money for charities allows them to extend their sense of social involvement and care. Pupils appreciate of the helpfulness of teachers and that they generally seem to know them well. They like being part of a small community. These factors help the school promote good social development.

80. The provision for the development of cultural awareness is good. Various trips and visits contribute to broadening cultural horizons. Subject areas organise visits and activities related to their work. An ICT class used the Internet to investigate leisure patterns in nineteenth century Britain and a French Exchange is well established. There are visits to museums and galleries. The school has a definite commitment to enhancing understanding of other cultures, and giving pupils an insight into the life and work of a range of ethnic groups. For example, the head of physical education engaged a Year 8 assembly by his own experience of what it was like to be a refugee, without hope, and a stranger in a country. Year 9 pupils worked with visiting African artists to learn about artefacts and dress codes. Key Stage 3 pupils read short stories that highlight Indian values. Religious education in the school offers a good programme that teaches the basic religious beliefs of the main faith communities in Britain, with due attention to the range of views held and their influence on culture.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

81. The last inspection report identified the welfare arrangements for pupils as strengths of the school and child protection arrangements as good. There were good anti-bullying procedures in place, although these were reported as not always being consistently applied by staff. Health and safety arrangements were reported as not receiving high enough profile.

82. The school's procedures for child protection remain good but those for ensuring the health and safety of the pupils are unsatisfactory. Whilst there is a clear policy on the subject this has not been successfully co-ordinated by an individual member of staff. Formal written risk assessments are not carried out for the school's premises, some school trips or in lessons such as design and technology. Fire exits signs and evacuation notices are in classrooms but lacking in the corridors in the main school building. Security of the school site is poor. A number of health and safety concerns were reported to the school during the inspection.

83. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. The recent appointment of an attendance officer ensures absences are quickly identified and followed up. A daily check is carried out of all registers and punctuality problems identified and appropriate action taken with regards to the small proportion of the school population who arrive late. The work of the education welfare service supplements that done by the school. Despite the good practice now in place, there are concerns. Year 11 registers were lost or stolen during the last year and insufficient records of what they contained were kept centrally. As a result, no complete information of the attendance of the last Year 11 was available. Whilst good attendance is promoted and monitored effectively by form tutors,

although subject teachers keep registers limited crosschecking occurs against class registers.

84. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating oppressive conduct are currently unsatisfactory. There is a policy in place and it has been subject of consultation with parents and pupils but it is not as yet embedded deeply enough with staff to ensure a consistent approach. The result is that there is inappropriate and sometimes disruptive behaviour not being dealt with effectively, leading to a high exclusion rate of about 5 per cent of the school population last year and significantly more the previous year. The strategies currently employed to deal with poor behaviour do not always include setting suitable targets to which pupils and their parents could aspire. There is no restraint of pupils' policy in place as required and no incident book to accompany it. There is a clear policy on substance abuse. However, the automatic suspension of those found smoking, or using other substances, does not address the issue. There is little in the policy about curricular provision to educate pupils about the relevant issues.

85. Good child protection procedures continue to be in place. The school has an appropriate policy and teachers have undertaken training to ensure they are aware of the issues. A number of staff is trained in first-aid and good procedures are in place for dealing with illness, accidents and the administering medicines. The school nurse is a regular visitor.

86. Although teachers provide satisfactory levels of support and guidance in class, there are few systems in place to ensure that pupils' personal development is formally recorded. The procedures for monitoring and supporting this development therefore remain mainly informal and no consistent records are kept to enable teachers to track and check pupils' progress. A substantial amount of time in personal and social education is used to support pupils in producing records of achievement. However, ex-pupils report that practice varies between tutors and the emphasis placed on their production is not reflected in their use, either for employment or college entry.

87. Several subject departments now have effective schemes for the assessment of the progress made by pupils and the recording of information from the marking of pupils' work. Most departments use effort grades as directed by the school's assessment and marking policy. Levels of the National Curriculum and GCSE grades are more widely used than at the time of the previous inspection. Departments are making greater use of information provided by the recently appointed assessment co-ordinator to measure and track the progress of pupils and to make comparisons of attainment with national averages, previous performance and with that of pupils in similar schools. In these respects there has been an improvement since the previous inspection.

88. The monitoring of progress across the full range of subjects for each pupil remains unsatisfactory and there are no effective procedures to set targets for the future. There is, therefore, insufficient monitoring of the attainment of pupils which, if in place, would help to raise levels of achievement across the school. Insufficient monitoring has been undertaken by form tutors, with some mentoring in Key Stage 4, but practice is varied and some pupils interviewed are unaware that anyone is monitoring closely their overall progress. Departmental monitoring, however, is beginning to provide information that could be used to assist teaching and curricular planning but this is seldom the case and there is only limited data to assist these processes across the whole school. Some detailed information on the tracking of pupils is provided for teachers, but this is not in an easily accessible format. Thus the key issue of the last inspection, to further develop assessment procedures has been only partially addressed. In order to address this weakness, the role of heads of year and of form tutors needs to be thoroughly reviewed. The head is aware of this and discussions had already taken place at senior management, during and before the inspection, to start to address this by new appointments at middle and senior management levels.

89. The school looks after pupils with special educational needs well. There is a friendly and caring atmosphere, with good levels of additional support and encouragement. Staff in

the learning support department, in particular, show much sensitivity to individual pupils' needs. Teaching staff and learning support assistants demonstrate high levels of commitment to the work and expend considerable energy in dealing with day-to-day problems of pupils. Two qualified, part-time teachers support statemented pupils well in their work. A number of visiting teachers also provide good specialist tuition, where this is specified in a pupil's statement. Three full-time learning support assistants work very effectively with other pupils with special educational needs, across the range of subjects. Some of the latter also provide valuable help with administrative tasks.

90. Monitoring and assessment procedures are good for pupils with special educational needs. The staff maintains comprehensive records of progress based on a range of tests, in reading and number, and National Curriculum assessment. Good use is made of the range of information in monitoring progress. The outcomes of assessment could be used more consistently in planning mainstream lessons, however, and deciding work to meet individual needs.

91. Statutory procedures for producing statements, and for annual reviews of statements, are observed closely. Review meetings are well documented and clear targets for further progress are identified. There are very good links with a wide range of outside agencies who may be involved. Sound Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are in place for all relevant pupils. There is clear evidence of monitoring and regular evaluation of progress against them. Other teaching staff are well informed about special needs and have copies of all relevant IEPs. Pupils themselves are constructively involved in the process.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

92. The last inspection report noted that the school worked well with parents and communication between the school and parents was good. However, it indicated that the school could do more to use parents' knowledge and expertise. Some weaknesses were identified with annual reports, which tended to concentrate on pupils' attitudes rather than their strengths and weaknesses in subjects. There were no issues raised by any significant minority of parents.

93. A significant number of parents are now dissatisfied with a number of areas of school life. 31 parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and 107 returned questionnaires. Whilst the latter number appears low, the timing of the inspection may have influenced the number of questionnaires returned. Discussions with parents and some governors during the inspection confirmed the views expressed at the pre-inspection meeting and in the questionnaire and mirrored concerns expressed by pupils and staff. Many consider the partnership they have had with school to be unsatisfactory, although some voiced optimism about the future. Forty four per cent of those parents who returned their questionnaire consider that behaviour among the pupils is not good. Whilst most pupils behaved well during the inspection, evidence from staff and pupils and the high exclusion rate support parents' views. Thirty six per cent consider the amount of homework given to their child to be inconsistent and the inspection findings confirm this. Thirty one per cent do not consider that the school works closely with parents and those spoken to during inspection week confirmed this. They do not feel encouraged to participate in the life of the school and the knowledge and expertise of parents highlighted in the last inspection report remains untapped. Twenty nine per cent do not feel they are kept well informed. A newsletter is circulated twice each term and parents do receive an excellently presented governors' annual report. In addition, there has been a formal meeting with staff to supplement the annual academic report. Some weaknesses remain in the quality of reports. Planners, which should provide regular weekly contact between teachers and parents, are used inconsistently by parents, pupils and staff. Very few instances were noted during inspection week where staff met informally with parents. A high proportion, 28 per cent, of parents do not consider the school to be well led and managed. Inspection findings confirm that there have been weaknesses in leadership and management, but share the optimism expressed by some parents about the future direction of the school. Twenty one per cent of parents do

not consider the teaching to be good. Whilst this would have been true at the time of the last inspection, current inspection findings repudiate this.

94. However, there have been significant changes in staffing since the questionnaire was issued and many pupils have experienced many changes in teachers because of staff shortages, which may explain parental perceptions. During inspection week very little unsatisfactory teaching was observed, with teaching in the majority of lessons being at least good or better. Despite their concerns about teaching, many parents expressed the view that most teachers were dedicated and hard working. Twenty two per cent of parents do not consider that there is an interesting range of extra- curricular activities. Some complained that if there were, then they were not informed. Whilst there a number of lunchtime and after-school clubs, including soccer, netball, basketball, computer access, choir and orchestra, the school readily admits that these activities could have been more widely circulated to parents. Between 14 and 19 per cent of parents responded negatively to all other questions on the questionnaire. At the parents' meeting, many concerns were expressed, although parents did emphasise that whilst they had concentrated on concerns, the school had many strengths. Some parents expressed confidence in the new head and many that their children were happy in the school. Parents also praised work with feeder primary schools and the general ethos of the school. Working with parents to change their perceptions and those of the local community is clearly a key issue for the school.

95. Meetings are held to keep parents informed about the curriculum but these are not particularly well attended. The prospectus and annual governors' report to parents are both informative and attractively presented. They lack certain legally required detail such as the costs for special educational needs and attendance rates in percentage terms. Parents are kept informed on their child's progress through meetings with staff. There was only one such meeting for each year group last year because of industrial action by teachers but an interim report is to be provided this coming year. End of year reports, whilst helpful, are not sufficiently diagnostic and most do not contain statements as to what a pupil can do to improve. There is a lack of notice boards strategically placed around arrival areas for parents to view up to date information, which may be helpful to them in helping both the school and their individual child. Whilst there is a pleasant entrance to the school, it has not the one used by most parents when they visit for parents' meetings, so many gain the wrong impression about the welcome provided by the school.

96. Parents' involvement in their children's learning is unsatisfactory. Parents are not encouraged to help out in school and there is no register of those who wish to be considered. Whilst homework diaries are sent home with pupils those scrutinised during inspection week show very little dialogue between parents and individual teachers. Parents state, and pupils confirm, that if homework remains uncompleted, little or no action is taken by the majority of staff. This undermines the need for or importance of homework in the first place. There is an active 'Friends of Woolmer Hill School' association. They have raised funds by organising several social events and the money has been used to purchase resources such as computer equipment and lighting for the drama room, and provide good support to the school and also act as a consultative group.

97. Although the format of reports to parents remains the same as at the time of the last inspection, both interim and annual reports now show the levels of the National Curriculum reached by pupils in Years 7 to 9 and give an indication of GCSE grades being achieved by pupils in Years 10 and 11. However, the school requirement to indicate what pupils know, understand and can do is not adhered to across all subject departments or by all teachers. Comments on annual reports are often too general and do not always indicate strengths and weaknesses or what pupils should do to improve. There are few subject specific targets for pupils to reach and there is no indication of attainment in ICT for pupils who do not experience the subject as part of a discrete course. Consequently reports do not give parents sufficient, detailed information about the progress pupils are making or what needs to be done to improve levels of attainment.

98. The active involvement of parents in the work of the learning support department is limited. However, staff members are always available for guidance and consultation if this is required. Parents are regularly informed of special educational needs issues and of learning targets set, some of which are for parents to carry out. They are closely involved in procedures for producing statements of SEN and invited to attend annual review meetings. Both at the parents' meeting and on the questionnaire, some parents spoke positively of the support their children had received.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

99. At the time of the last inspection, the school was described as having a strong ethos based upon care of pupils. Recent recognition by Investors in People had identified the quality of relationships within the school. Leadership was described as strong, with the head regarded as having brought about significant improvements since the previous inspection. The senior management team was said to provide strong direction. There was strong commitment from governors and the Governing Body had appropriate committees, but the governors and senior management were said to have not yet established longer-term plans for the direction of the school. This was identified as a key issue in the report. The school had appropriate policies, but statutory requirements in curriculum and assessment, collective worship and the prospectus were not in place. This, including some health and safety issues was another key issue. A third key issue identified was the need for middle managers to monitor departments. The budget was said to be well managed, although too little was spent on curriculum development. Despite three key issues being identified, management and efficiency of the school was judged to be good.

100. This inspection has taken place at a time of significant change in the school. The previous headteacher, who had been in post at the time of the last inspection, retired at the end of the Summer Term. The new head was appointed in May 2001, but only took up her post at the start of this term. Over a third of other teaching staff, including one of the assistant heads, also left the school during the last year. Except for the assistant head, who was also head of geography, a head of year and the teacher in charge of drama, all other middle and senior managers remain the same as last year. In judging how well the school is led and managed, the perceptions of pupils, parents and staff are considered alongside the strengths and weaknesses identified in every aspect of the school, including progress that has been made on each of the key issues identified in the last inspection report. 28 per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire disagreed with the statement that 'the school is well led and managed', although a number of these expressed optimism for the future. Discussions with pupils and staff, and observations and analysis of all aspects of school life, support the perceptions of these parents that there have been weaknesses in some areas of leadership and management, including management of behaviour and the curriculum, whilst there have also been some strengths. Progress on the three key issues in the last report, specifically related to management, has been unsatisfactory, although improvement in pupils' performance and in the quality of teaching, another key issue, has been good. Thus, whilst some clear strengths can be identified, the quality of leadership and management overall has been unsatisfactory.

101. There are some advantages in being a small school, not least in those related to the school's ethos. Woolmer Hill has, in general, a positive ethos for learning. Relationships between staff and pupils, as identified by Investors in People, remain good. Communication can be easier than in a large school and pupils on the School Council, expressed the opinion that they felt they were able to influence some decisions in school and were given much more say than would occur in many schools. Some aspects of school management can successfully remain more informal than would be possible in a larger establishment and it is possible for senior managers to know all pupils, at least by name. These strengths are countered by some disadvantages. There are fewer staff to carry out aspects of management and many of those in management positions, because of the incentive allowance attached to the post, are relatively inexperienced teachers. For example, heads of year, because of the size of each year group, receive only two incentive points, compared to three or four in larger schools. The current senior management is made up of the head,

two deputies and two assistant heads. Last year, both assistant heads had subject responsibilities, although a new appointment for next term only has whole school responsibilities. Across the school, it has been necessary for some teachers to fulfil more than one management role. For this to work, it needs to be carefully planned. There are some advantages in having at least one senior manager with subject responsibility, as observed in a senior management meeting, where the assistant head was clearly able to put forward the views of other staff. The new head has rightly identified the need for a thorough review of the management structure. It currently has some strengths; a line management system has been developed and used successfully in performance management, but there are clear weaknesses which have not helped the school in recruiting and retaining staff.

102. Although there are arts and technology faculties, curriculum leadership is generally on a subject basis, with sometimes only one teacher in the department and over half the staff attending the school's curriculum management group. Heads of year perform a traditionally pastoral role, dealing regularly with the social and behavioural problems related to individual pupils, despite some heads of department being more senior and experienced staff and the difficulties relating to the teaching occurring in their department. Whilst there has been a move to involve tutors in an academic tutoring role, heads of year are not fulfilling an academic monitoring role and therefore cannot fully support pupils' personal development. A thorough review of the management structure in the school is needed, with clear opportunities for career development built in. Whilst this may not necessarily reduce staff turnover, which is currently high, it could help attract ambitious staff to perform specific roles in moving the school forward, before they move to more senior posts either within the school, if the opportunity arises, or elsewhere. Whilst the contribution of staff within management responsibilities with the school is currently sound, it could be good given the quality of many middle and senior managers if there was a more clearly identified direction for the school and more coherent leadership.

103. The new head has a clear vision for the school. She has had considerable experience as a deputy in a large comprehensive school in an adjoining LEA. Her style is open and consensual, but clearly focused. She recognises the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has identified some strategies to build both on the strengths and address the areas for development. Even, at the time of the inspection, in the second week of term, pupils, parents and staff spoke optimistically about the future of the school and could point to changes that were already affecting learning. The head was seen as being around the school and being very accessible to staff, pupils and parents. She has adopted a management style very different from the previous head. The school can point to a number of important improvements since the last inspection. Not least, there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching and, in 2001, in standards achieved by pupils in external assessments. The previous head played an important role, after many set backs, in bringing about the building of the adjoining sports centre, which has significantly improved the facilities available for pupils' education. However, some other areas appear less successful. Some aspects of the site appear neglected, the effect of a small number of more challenging pupils has been handled ineffectively and, whilst there have been positive changes made to the curriculum, its management has lacked a clear direction. In common with others, the school has experienced difficulties in recruiting staff, but has not addressed this in a strategic manner. There are many strong members of staff, at all levels, including support staff. The head meets weekly with her deputies and with the wider leadership team. There is a clear programme of meetings. In addressing the management structure of the school, that of support staff also needs reviewing to ensure that the many able members of staff are used in the most efficient and effective manner. Staff members have job descriptions, but, in reviewing the management structure, these need to be revised.

104. The school has a fairly comprehensive and appropriate set of aims and goals. They are fairly broad and all encompassing, although not explicitly centred on teaching, learning and raising attainment. They lack any set of objectives indicating how each aim will be met. The section in the staff handbook on the curriculum is very brief and does not include any statement of curriculum philosophy or rationale for the curriculum offer or its organisation. The handbook contains a detailed pastoral section, as well as administrative arrangements

and lists of responsibilities. There is a comprehensive set of school policies. All policies follow a similar format and are reviewed regularly by the school and governors. Policies range in depth and usefulness. Following the same format has advantages, but some appear too brief to be useful working documents. Although senior management have carried out some exercises in monitoring policies, such as homework, in practice, inconsistencies in carrying these out were described anecdotally by pupils, parents and staff. Policies are made available to parents who ask for them, but there are no parental or pupil versions of policies available. Pupils receive some mixed messages as to what the school values. They know it values them as individuals and academic achievements, but also feel that the school is concerned about image. Some in the lower band feel their achievements are less valued. Pupils felt that not all received a sound education in all subjects and that school was not always well ordered. However, most felt they were happy, confident and given opportunities to take responsibility. Not all felt they had worked as hard as they should to fulfil their potential, but felt that the school had helped them develop social skills and, particularly through the arts and sports, some felt they had developed individuality. They felt that pupils do achieve good results, but that too often the school was satisfied with second best. They instanced doing badly in sports competitions, caused by the size of the school, but which pupils put down to inadequate preparation. This view was also supported by parents. In preparation for the new prospectus, the head and senior managers have reviewed the school aims. The head wishes to carry out a thorough review of the school's aims and values involving all staff, teaching and non-teaching, pupils and parents.

105. The school is fortunate in having a good, committed and supportive governing body. They are well informed and have an effective committee structure and visit subject departments regularly. The curriculum committee, for example, receives regular presentations from departments, enabling them to effectively participate in departmental reviews. They also carry out a regular review of school policies. Governors have been willing to challenge the school's management. For example, some governors questioned the very high incidence of exclusions that was occurring over the last two years. The ability of the governors to question what was happening in school is dependent on the quality of information provided to them by the school. Whilst information has been given, it has not always been provided in a form that is truly transparent, particularly in the financial area. In consequence governors have sometimes been led to supporting decisions rather than making the strategic decisions themselves. However, very detailed minutes do indicate changes made to school policies suggested by governors, as with the performance management policy. Governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and welcome the appointment of the new head, whose appointment they feel will allow them to address areas, which they have identified as being of concern. Governors receive detailed presentations on the school's examination results and on the school budget, but these have not always been expressed in an easily accessible manner. The governing body is very effectively fulfilling most of its statutory duties, but has not fully addressed those identified as a key issue in the last inspection. Information and communication technology levels are not reported at the end of Key Stage 4, except for those sitting a GCSE in the subject, there has little improvement in issues related to health and safety, and, although not a key issue last time, little has been done to address the requirement for collective worship. Governors have been involved in the past in curriculum decisions, as, for example, in the decision to offer four languages. However, greater clarity in curriculum philosophy would support them in making decisions about the curriculum and its organisation to ensure issues of inclusion are effectively considered. The governors produce an attractively presented annual report to parents, which covers all areas required.

106. The school has a good system of performance management for teachers, which has been built upon a successful system of teacher appraisal. There is supposed to be systematic monitoring of teaching, although anecdotal evidence suggests that this varies between subject areas. All senior managers have been involved in monitoring lessons and plans as part of departmental reviews. Senior managers have carried out some joint monitoring to confirm that they use the agreed set of criteria in a common manner. However, this has not extended to joint monitoring with middle managers. Advisors from the LEA have been used to support monitoring, although the most recent assessment by the

LEA of self-evaluating schools has identified Woolmer Hill as needing the minimum amount of external support available. This monitoring identifies behaviour management, the motivation of disaffected pupils and the quality of teaching as the main areas of weakness. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching within the school is now sound, with some good staff development provided on training days. This has meant that progress on the first key issue of the last inspection, to raise the quality of teaching by sharing good practice and ensuring systematic monitoring, has been good. However, progress on the key issue, to enable middle managers to monitor effectively, has been unsatisfactory. The role of heads of department has been strengthened, with monitoring a clear part of their role. However, practice varies between departments, not least because some are too small for the monitoring to be effective. Scrutiny of pupils' work makes it clear that marking varies greatly in quality, that pupils perform differently for different teachers and that, for example, homework and class work is left unfinished by many pupils. Some target setting for departments is now occurring, but this is at an early stage of development. Alongside this, heads of year are not carrying out a systematic role of monitoring academic performance. Only now, are strategies beginning to be developed to monitor pupils' progress throughout the school. Although the head has analysed results effectively, with the help more recently of an assessment co-ordinator, this has not been undertaken in a way, which is easily digestible by teachers, pupils and their parents.

107. There is a good programme of professional development in the school, including good induction for newly qualified teachers, new teachers to the school and temporary supply teachers. Communication within the school is generally good. The site is small and most staff meet informally on a regular basis. The new head has introduced more morning briefings to ensure that all staff feel fully appraised of what is happening in school. The size of the school and high turnover of staff make provision for initial teacher training more difficult, as this provides another change in teacher for a class. However, carefully developed links with training institutions will support staff development. It is encouraging that five members of staff have put themselves forward to start on a Masters' degree course in conjunction with staff from another local school. The school has a good range of support staff, including administrative staff, learning support assistants, technicians, a site managers, cleaners and lunchtime staff. Some of these staff feel under-valued. They have not been provided with the same quality of staff development or performance management as teaching staff and have not been included fully in school developments. There is amongst staff, pupils and parents a shared commitment to improvement and with the vision of the new head and confidence expressed by the school community in her, there is the capacity within the school to succeed. Success will be measured not just by continuing improvements in results, but also increased recruitment, showing that the community at large has confidence in their local school.

108. A key issue in the last report was to improve planning and establish a longer-term strategic plan for school development. Although the current plan now has a heading implying that it is a three-year plan, detail is only given for the current year, with a few minor exceptions. Thus planning is no more long term than it was at the time of the last inspection. Priorities identified for development are sound, as are most of the actions taken to meet the school's targets. However, the school development plan is an extremely brief and ineffective document which does little more than give a list of tasks to be completed in the next academic year. There is a development planning cycle, which involves the governors in a day of discussion in July reviewing the previous year's plan and agreeing tasks produced by the senior management team for the next plan. Staff members have the opportunity to be involved in planning. The link with departmental development plans lacks clarity. Although the plan is costed, because it runs on an academic year and discussions on the next year's plan take place after the budget has been set, development planning and budget setting are insufficiently linked. Examples of more detailed plans could be obtained from other schools and used to agree a format and planning cycle which supports more effectively strategic planning. The whole school plan should be augmented by departmental plans and a range of longer term, site, financial, staff development and ICT plans. Success criteria should relate specifically to each target, not just the completion of tasks, and evaluations of

progress should involve the whole school community, including pupils and parents, and be reported to these groups on a regular basis.

109. There is good commitment to the integration of students with special educational needs in the school. Management of special educational needs is very good, in terms of attention to individual needs and effective help provided for pupils by the learning support department. Procedures are efficiently organised, in line with developing best practice. The special needs co-ordinator takes a very strong lead in the school in raising awareness of special needs issues, for example in leading a training day for the whole staff at the end of last summer term. She has created very good working relationships with feeder and special schools and a range of outside agencies.

110. A sound SEN policy is in place, which is subject to regular review. For the most part, it reflects closely the recommendations in the Code of Practice on SEN. There is, however, a lack of information on funding for SEN: how much money is available and the specific ways in which it is spent. There is no record of spending on SEN, as required by law in the Governors' Annual Report to Parents. Monies provided by the LEA for students with statements of special educational need are used to provide support staff, resources and to maintain reduced class size through investment in subject teachers. Financial resources are in general used to good effect, though there is a lack of clarity and accountability over finance in both the school's SEN Policy and the Governors' Annual Report to parents.

111. Financial planning is sound, although as the planning cycle for the school development plan does not link closely with the budget cycle, initial plans have to be altered if developments are to be funded effectively. The previous head had successfully moved the school from a position of a deficit budget prior to the previous inspection, to a period of stable budgeting. However, although the budget is agreed each year by the finance committee and all necessary information has been given to this committee, the budget has remained very much an area dealt with by the headteacher. During last year, the finance officer played a significant part in setting the budget as well as providing regular monitoring statements for the head, governors and budget holders. Although summary figures are, as required, published in the governors' annual report to parents, a more transparent budget setting exercise, ensuring the principles of best value inform decisions and that the budget is understood fully by staff and governors, should be implemented. Initial figures provided for the inspection, suggested the school had a significant under spend. In practice, this is not the case. Some earmarked funding carried forward from one year to the next and a drop in pupil numbers means that some monies will need to be repaid to the LEA. A significant amount of money appears to be raised from donations. In practice, most of this large sum in the School Fund is collected for specific school journeys and trips. A minority of parents pay the annual contribution to the school fund. As a result, there are no funds to pay, for example, for ingredients in food technology for those who forget to bring them or cannot afford to do so. Budget expenditure increased substantially by over £260,000 from the last academic year to the current one, whilst income only rose by £120,000, with some of that due to be returned to the LEA. Consequently, whilst last year's budget showed an under spend of over £70,000, this year's shows an expected overspend of the same amount. The proportions spent on teaching staff are not high, whilst those on learning resources are. In order to plan effectively for the future, the finance officer and head have sensibly arranged meetings with appropriate officers in the LEA to ensure that issues related to the budget are fully understood. A clear statement on the current situation and implications for the future should be shared with the full governing body.

112. The finance officer has good budget monitoring systems. The school fund is administered efficiently by another member of the office staff. Both accounts are audited regularly. Limited income is raised by the school through selling school uniforms, lettings and donations from parents. Vending machines, which used to provide income, have been removed because of the litter that resulted from misuse by pupils. The standards fund and other specific grants are administered effectively. The social inclusion grant, for example, has been used to pay for the pupils undertaking the Skillways course and for the school counsellor. Reported expenditure on books and ICT equipment was not high, although staff

were given the opportunity to bid for extra resources late in the last financial year. Some governors appear unsure about the principles of best value, and others indicated that there had been a tendency to accept the head's recommendation to remain with LEA for the provision of most services. The overall income and expenditure per pupil is higher than average. In part this is explained by being a small school, but there are other factors such as the large amount collected for school journeys and trips appearing in the figures. Despite this, given the improvement in results and the quality of teaching, but also taking into account the well above average socio-economic circumstances of pupils' families and their above average attainment on entry, the school provides sound value for money.

113. The school has experienced considerable difficulty in recruiting staff to teaching posts over the last couple of years. The size of the school has some effect on the level of allowance that can be attached to some posts, but as with other schools in the area, the cost of housing can make it difficult to attract younger teachers into the school. Turnover has been high over the last two years. This summer, the head and almost a third of staff left. Most of these were staff who did not hold middle or senior management roles, although there was a mix of experienced and fairly inexperienced staff. Some left for promotion, others left teaching in the state sector. At the time of the inspection there were six supply teachers covering timetables, a significant proportion of lessons. One of these posts had been filled, but the teacher was yet to arrive in the country. It was planned to advertise two of the more senior posts, an assistant head teacher and a year head, early in the term to start after Christmas. This September, the English department has been heavily hit, with only the head of department remaining from the successful department of last year. There have been difficulties in recruiting design and technology teachers over both the last two years and vacancies exist in science and mathematics. Changes in staff have impacted on the curriculum offer and quality of teaching. For example, practical work in food technology and textiles has not been possible for some classes. However, the school has been fortunate in many of its new appointments, as shown by the proportion of good teaching seen during the inspection. The governors have looked at ways of recruiting staff. Imaginative methods will need to be adopted, alongside a review of the staffing structure. Greater stability will also occur if the school can move to a position where it is fully subscribed with pupils. The size of the school impacts on the deployment of teachers. There is, for example, only one full time history teacher, with some classes having to be taught by non-specialists. Whilst some non-specialists very effectively teach their second subject, this is not always the case. For example, not all language teachers are as effective teaching what is, in fact, their third language as they are their first or second. Whilst there is no doubt a rationale, the allocation of non-contact time varies significantly. The amount taught by the head and deputies last year, and again this year, is low for a small school experiencing difficulties in recruiting staff. However, the new head has timetabled herself to fill crucial vacancies at Key Stage 4 in the science and technology departments. There are adequate support staff, both curriculum and office based, to meet the needs of the school. The day-to-day administration of the school is effective. The office staff is welcoming and efficient.

114. At the time of the last inspection the accommodation was seen as an attractive site with well-maintained grounds. There were good outdoor facilities for physical education and a good environmental area. The building was well maintained and clean. The accommodation was sufficient to allow the National Curriculum to be taught effectively, although there was a lack of storage in art and the music room was considered too small.

115. Since the last inspection some refurbishment has taken place in the main entrance hall and the school office has been re-designed. Whilst these changes have provided more dedicated space for the school secretary it has done nothing to help monitor school security. The opportunity to apply for funds to introduce CCTV to the site was not taken up. A new purpose built sports complex, including sports hall, dance studio and fitness suite, has been constructed in a joint enterprise with the community through a Sports Association, funded by lottery money. This excellent facility has added to and significantly enhanced the provision being made for the pupils' physical activities and is beginning to improve standards.

116. The art and design area remains unsatisfactory since the last inspection. Its limited size hinders the development of aspects of the art curriculum. The main music room is also insufficient in size to facilitate the range of musical activities that exist at the school. The history teaching area lacks window blinds that prohibit good overhead projections being given for the benefit of pupils. Accommodation for the learning support department is barely adequate, housed in an old, temporary building, which is not in a good state of repair. The staff do their best to make the teaching space welcoming. There are plans to move the accommodation to a more central area of the school.

117. A number of classrooms, including that for the teaching of religious education and some science laboratories, appear neglected and are in need of urgent refurbishment. However, there has been a programme of refurbishment of laboratories and some are now attractive. Some demountable rooms remain unused and are in need of removal, although some are used effectively to provide social spaces for pupils at lunchtimes, with some support from the Youth Service in organising their use. However, they make areas of the school premises and grounds appear scruffy and therefore difficult to keep clean. Staff report some improvements in the cleanliness of the school and pupils have been involved through the School Council in the redecoration of some areas, including toilets. This is a positive move. However, for an attractive site some areas of the school look neglected.

118. Although the quality of displays in the entrance area to the main building is of a high standard, those in other parts of the building and some departments are not sufficiently good to enthuse and inspire pupils with the subjects. Litter was a problem but has been almost eradicated by the removal of machines providing wrapped consumable products. Pupils generally attempt to look after their environment and equipment and have recently purchased new seats that have enhanced the recreation areas of the school grounds. Pupils on the School Council and Year Councils have many good ideas about ways to improve the site and have been given the opportunity to influence some of the improvements.

119. The last inspection report considered learning resources to be sufficient overall, accessible, of good quality and well used, although there were deficiencies in some subject areas. The position has now improved in that science now has sufficient texts and there are now updated texts for design and technology. Where there was a limited range of resources in history this has now been addressed. There is a satisfactory range of resources in both key stages and good use is made of the local area for visits, especially castles. There is a good amount of 'in house' resources provided by staff. Religious education is now satisfactorily resourced and has developed schemes of work since the last inspection. Modern foreign languages, physical education, design and technology and geography are all subjects that are well resourced. In other subjects resources remain satisfactory with an adequate supply of reasonable quality. Resources for students with special educational needs are adequate.

120. Good use is made of information computer technology in lessons for English, science, modern foreign languages, geography, history and design and technology but is limited for other subjects. Computer areas have been provided within most subject suites. However, the lack of ICT facilities within music seriously impacts on the department's ability to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and GCSE examinations. Access to computer equipment is limited within the learning support department. Available equipment is outdated and does not allow for technological advances in SEN administration. ICT is used effectively in school administration but not as yet for monitoring pupils' attendance, for instance. Overall, the number of computers available in school is good and above what might be expected nationally. The use of newer technology to enhance the delivery of ICT is available for departments to use.

121. The library is used on a class rota basis by pupils and is a popular resource with about 10,500 books; this works out at about 15 books per pupil, which is slightly below the recommended level of 18. Its annual budget is about £2,100, which has been steadily reducing since 1997 and is well below the level recommended by the Library Association.

The library is well stocked for fiction books and English generally but in other subjects the librarian gets very little guidance on stock selection and does not possess all the current subject syllabuses. The library takes one local newspaper and has a small stock of videos, CD'S and CD-ROM's. The eight computers are insufficient to meet the research needs of pupils. Whilst the library is part of the whole school information computer technology network and has access to the Internet, the librarian's personal workstation is not. Pupils are also prevented from access to the catalogue independently. The last inspection report considered that the fiction stock in the library was insufficient. This has now been successfully addressed and there is a good and varied selection for both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. There is now a senior reading area for the more able pupils and an improved selection of non-fiction stock. Both are improvements since the previous inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

122. In order to improve the school further, governors, senior managers and staff should:

- Address aspects of curriculum provision so that all pupils are able to learn effectively and make best possible progress by:
 - * review the organisation of the curriculum and the curriculum offer to ensure a broad and balanced offer is available to pupils irrespective of their ability;
 - * addressing weaknesses in behaviour management, seeking alternatives to exclusion;
 - * developing strategies to address underachievement by particular groups, especially girls in mathematics, science and French.
- Address weaknesses in leadership and management by:
 - * developing longer term strategic development planning;
 - * reviewing the staffing structure and roles and responsibilities of middle and senior managers;
 - * improving the quality of curricular and behaviour management;
 - * ensuring that all staff, whatever their role, are valued;
 - * implementing fully the principles of best value in making spending decisions.
- Review procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' academic performance and personal development, including:
 - * developing the role of tutors and heads of year in tracking pupils' progress;
 - * reviewing procedures and roles related to behaviour management;
 - * ensuring that assessments are used to inform planning and are shared with pupils to enable them to improve.
- Review thoroughly the school's partnership with parents and the local community by:
 - * addressing the concerns expressed by parents to the inspection team;
 - * improving the quality of reports in order that parents can effectively judge progress and pupils are enabled to improve their standards;
 - * developing further opportunities for parental and community involvement in the school.
- Continue to address issues related to staffing, including:
 - * strategies to improve recruitment and retention of teachers, including a review of the staffing structure;
 - * reviewing the role of support staff to ensure that they are included more fully within the school.
- Exploit more fully the potential of the site by:

- * continuing the programme of refurbishment and addressing shortcomings in the accommodation;
- * improving the areas which are neglected;
- * considering security implications of the site, including school entrances;
- * improving the quality of display in all areas of the school, to match the best practice that exists in some areas.

123. There are some other issues identified in the report, which the governors should include in their action plan. These include:

- * meeting statutory requirements related to collective worship, reporting of ICT at the end of Key Stage 4, providing attendance figures in the prospectus and report on special educational needs in the governors' annual report;
- * reviewing the management of ICT;
- * addressing health and safety concerns.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	169
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	102

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	35	67	53	5	1	1
Percentage	4	21	40	31	3	1	1

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7–Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	659
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	38

Special educational needs	Y7–Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	13
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	160

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	32

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.3
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	68	66	134

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	50	53	54
	Girls	44	44	39
	Total	94	97	93
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	70 (85)	72 (74)	69 (74)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	31 (55)	50 (58)	43 (43)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	50	52	43
	Girls	41	45	28
	Total	91	97	71
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	69 (76)	73 (74)	55 (71)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	30 (51)	52 (58)	28 (40)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	65	47	112

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	32	54	59
	Girls	27	45	45
	Total	59	99	104
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	53 (50)	88 (95)	93 (97)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	41
	National	38.4

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	5
Indian	4
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	5
White	636
Any other minority ethnic group	4

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	8	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	284	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes:****Y7–Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	36.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.0

Education support staff:**Y7– Y11**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	252

Deployment of teachers:**Y7–Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	73.7
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Average teaching group size:**Y7–Y11**

Key Stage 2	N/A
Key Stage 3	25.6
Key Stage 4	23.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	1,840,051.00
Total expenditure	1,766,415.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,680.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	38,107.00
Balance carried forward to next year	111,743.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	18.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	6
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

659
107

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	33	53	12	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	27	54	12	3	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	5	41	26	18	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	10	50	25	11	3
The teaching is good.	16	55	17	4	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	19	50	20	9	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	37	49	9	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	29	55	8	6	2
The school works closely with parents.	12	50	25	6	7
The school is well led and managed.	10	47	21	7	15
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	18	60	15	4	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	46	17	5	12

Other issues raised by parents

Questionnaires were returned by 107 parents and 31 attended the pre-inspection parents' meeting. Some other parents were interviewed during the inspection. Some parents expressed confidence in the new head. Parents also praised the work of the learning support department, mentoring systems and transition from primary schools. Concerns, apart from those identified in the table above, included the response of some teachers to bullying, the effect of teacher action, banding arrangements, low emphasis on team sport and internal truancy. The major concern was the high turnover of staff, although there was praise for many of the new staff.

ENGLISH

124. Overall, the quality of provision in English is good.

Strengths:

- Above average levels of attainment, which have risen significantly since the last inspection.
- Good teaching, with high expectations of the amount and range of written work.
- Pupils respond well in lessons and make good contributions to discussion.

Areas for improvement:

- Widening the offer of English literature at GCSE to all pupils.
- There is no detailed scheme of work to support pupils' progress if staffing difficulties continue.
- Teachers could use information from assessments better to help pupils learn.
- Behaviour in some lower band classes is not always well managed.

125. The profile of attainment in English when pupils enter the school is above the national average. With the current Year 8, for example, nearly nine-tenths of pupils were at the expected Level 4 or better and nearly four-tenths achieved Level 5. In 2000, the results of the national tests taken at the end of Key Stage 3 were above the national average for pupils reaching Level 5 and above, the expected level. They were below average for similar schools, however. At the higher levels, Level 6 and above, results were above the national average and in line with the average for pupils in similar schools. Over a three-year period, results have improved from around the national average, with a further marked rise at all levels in the 2001 results. Within the school, results in English are similar to those in mathematics up until 2000, though pupils generally do better in science. Girls outperform boys, but the difference is significantly less than that seen nationally.

126. At the end of Key Stage 4 in 2000, the proportion of higher grade passes in GCSE English was above the national average, and above the average for similar schools. All pupils gained passes at A*-G grades, which is again above the national average. The results at higher grades in English Literature were well above the national average, and above average for similar schools. Only higher attaining pupils are entered for the literature examination, however. The proportion of candidates for the course has fallen over the last three years, to only just over half of all pupils in 2000. Within the school, pupils do better in GCSE English than in most other subjects. The proportion of pupils gaining higher grade passes has improved consistently over the last three years in English, considerably faster than the national rate. There was a further rise in 2001. Girls again do better than boys, but the difference is broadly in line with national figures. Results have remained constant in English Literature, though in 2001 the proportion of candidates gaining the highest A* and A grades almost doubled. In literature, boys achieve as well as girls.

127. Given that standards in English on entry to the school are above average, achievement by individual pupils is satisfactory at Key Stage 3. In 2000, comparison with national value-added analyses of Key Stage 3 test results show that higher and middle attaining pupils match or exceed rates of progress seen in similar schools. There is some under-achievement in lower attaining bands, however. Achievement is good at Key Stage 4. National statistics show that pupils make above average progress compared with others who start their GCSE course at broadly the same level of attainment. This is particularly marked for higher attaining pupils, where the proportion gaining A*-B grades is much higher than that seen in comparable schools. Again, there is some under-achievement in lower attaining bands. However, pupils with special educational needs make good progress

throughout the school. They are well supported by allocated special needs staff during lessons and clearly benefit from the help provided. At Key Stage 3 in 2001, all special needs pupils gained Level 4 in the English tests. At Key Stage 4, all pupils gained at least a G grade pass in GCSE English. This represents a good level of achievement overall.

128. The English department currently faces considerable difficulties over staffing. Following a high turnover of staff at the end of the last academic year, the school has not been able to replace two permanent members of the department, out of a total staff of four. At the time of the inspection, two temporary members of staff were in post. Despite being new to the school, and the need for last minute rearrangement of the timetable at the beginning of the inspection, they both made a very effective contribution to the work of the department. There was no evidence of any adverse impact on pupils' learning. But the future position was uncertain at the end of the inspection. The school needs to find a satisfactory solution urgently, if pupil progress and improvements in levels of attainment are to be maintained.

129. Pupils' attitudes in English lessons are good. The great majority pay close attention to teachers and are clearly interested and engaged by tasks set. This makes an important contribution to learning in the subject. Teachers, in turn, emphasise the need to respect others and to listen carefully to views expressed. With the exception of a minority of lower attaining pupils, particularly at Key Stage 4, listening skills are good throughout the school. Pupils are also willing to make constructive contributions to discussions in a range of contexts, including whole class, paired and small group work. Speaking skills are good. At Key Stage 3, in several lessons observed in Year 9, pupils co-operated well in whole class discussions on the use of language in Shakespeare. They were able to put forward and develop ideas about the impact of vocabulary chosen in selected speeches, justifying their opinions when challenged. At Key Stage 4, pupils across the ability range speak clearly and are willing to express opinions. One Year 11 group contributed thoughtfully to small group discussions on the poem 'Tractor' by Ted Hughes. They showed good insight into the themes and use of language in the poem and were able to summarise and present their ideas succinctly in feedback to the whole class.

130. Standards of reading are good at both key stages. Throughout the school, pupils are given the opportunity to study a range of high quality literature by major authors, poets and dramatists. At Key Stage 3, time allowed for private reading and the use of reading logs help to establish sound habits of wider personal reading. There is a good range of fiction for this age group in the school library. By the end of the key stage, the great majority of pupils are secure, independent readers. Most are beginning to come to grips effectively with written evaluations of texts studied in class. One Year 9 group, studying the short story 'Enchanted Alley' by Michael Anthony, commented with some insight on the social implications of the setting of the story and were well able to support their ideas with detailed textual evidence. At Key Stage 4, reading skills are developed further through the study of novels, plays and poetry in preparation for the GCSE. Higher and middle attaining pupils in particular make significant progress in developing analytical, close-reading skills. These are demonstrated to a high level in many GCSE coursework essays.

131. Standards in written work are also good through the school. At Key Stage 3, pupils are provided with regular opportunities to write for a range of purposes and audiences: narrative essays, poems, autobiography, letters and writing for information. More extended personal and creative writing is a strength, with imaginative use of vocabulary and appropriate development of ideas evident in the work of higher and middle attaining pupils. Spelling and punctuation are generally accurate since teachers use a good range of strategies to improve basic skills. These include displays of key words in teaching rooms, written grammar exercises and insistence that corrections are made to written work. Proof reading and redrafting is encouraged from Year 7 onwards. Writing frames also help pupils to structure and develop their ideas. Work is marked regularly, using National Curriculum Levels to assess attainment on key pieces of work. By the end of Key Stage 4, all pupils make further progress. Skills in personal and imaginative writing are consolidated and developed. Higher attaining pupils write intelligently about literature studied. Essays are

usually developed in sufficient depth, with good use of textual detail to substantiate arguments. Throughout the school, handwriting and presentation skills are good. Most pupils take considerable trouble to present work neatly and carefully, especially GCSE coursework. There are many examples of word-processed and some desktop published work which show that new technologies are used effectively to aid work in the subject, though no use of ICT in lessons in English was seen during the inspection.

132. Teaching is good throughout the school. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. This was particularly creditable, given the staffing difficulties faced by the department. Some very good lessons were seen at Key Stage 3. Teachers manage pupils well in most classes, and constructive relationships are forged. This is less true of some lower band classes at Key Stage 4, however. Behaviour here is more challenging, particularly if lesson content is not pitched at the right level or expectations of behaviour are not consistently observed. Teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully and are prepared to give additional personal help and guidance where it is needed. Hard work in this respect has played an important part in higher levels of attainment seen in recent years. Strengths are also seen in teachers' good subject knowledge and use of a range of organisational strategies to generate interest. One Year 9 lesson, introducing the class to Shakespeare, was particularly well paced and varied with a mixture of whole class and paired discussions, individual reflection and writing. Pupils were clearly engaged by the work, and helped by the variety of approach. Some effective teaching to develop writing skills was also seen. A Year 7 lesson on letter writing focused specifically on differences between formal and informal use of language and the importance of clear presentation. Pupils showed good levels of understanding, and were able to write with some fluency and accuracy.

133. Overall, good teaching in the school helps promote good levels of learning. Most pupils are conscientious and try hard to improve their work. Teachers could help them by ensuring that all understand the process of assessment more clearly, and by using assessment criteria more explicitly to inform lessons. This would focus pupils' efforts more clearly and improve evaluation of their own achievement. Setting of subject-specific targets for improved attainment would also help pupils to understand their own learning better.

134. Leadership and management of English in the school are satisfactory. The strength of the management style is in encouraging informal team working and sharing of best practice. This worked well in the past, with a strong team of permanent staff established in post. There is a good emphasis on improving levels of attainment, in particular through demanding work for more able pupils. The head of department also managed the difficult staffing position at the beginning of this year very well. New and temporary members of staff felt well supported. Long term planning to ensure curriculum coverage is effective and in place, but detailed schemes of work have not been finalised. Given the uncertainty faced over future staffing, completion of this work must be a priority to ensure that lesson planning is not disrupted and pupils continue to make progress. Whilst the curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements, at Key Stage 4 there is not equal access to the English Literature course for all pupils. Lower band groups do not have the opportunity to begin the course, nor the option to attempt it. Given good results in English overall, many may have the ability to benefit from it. Currently, there are no plans for extra-curricular activities in English. Opportunities to involve and interest pupils will also be lost if this situation continues.

135. Nevertheless, the department has made good progress since the last inspection. Standards of attainment have risen at both Key Stages 3 and 4, with further significant improvements in 2001. A number of issues for action, which were identified in the last report have also been addressed. Monitoring of teaching and learning has been introduced on a formal basis, in part through arrangements for the new performance management system. The process proved supportive and affirmative. Some joint working with the Drama department was also introduced with preparation for presentations on 'Macbeth'. Standards of spelling have improved overall in the school. If a solution can be found to the current unsatisfactory position in staffing, the department is well placed to make further improvements in standards of teaching and learning in future. Key issues include the use of assessment to inform teaching more clearly and so improve learning. Management of more

challenging behaviour from a minority of pupils in lower band groups is a second main area for development.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths:

- Standards attained are consistently above national averages at both key stages.
- There is much good and some very good teaching.
- The majority of pupils try hard and behave well in lessons.
- There is a strong commitment to improve.

Areas for improvement:

- There is some poor teaching, with shortcomings in classroom management and expectations of pupils.
- The organisation of teaching groups, so that pupils develop confidence and do not become disaffected with the subject.
- Better use of pupils' prior attainments to plan challenging work for all of them.
- A more focused management plan for the subject so that priorities are clearly set out.

137. Standards of attainment in mathematics on entry to the school are above national averages and remain so when measured by the Key Stage 3 national tests taken when pupils are aged 14. In the current Year 8, for example, less than a fifth of pupils had failed to reach the expected Level 4 on entry and two fifths had achieved an above average Level 5. At Key Stage 3, in both 2000 and 2001, the proportion reaching the expected level was above average, as was the proportion achieving beyond that level. Nationally, boys do slightly better than girls and this is the trend in this school, although in 2001, slightly more girls achieved Level 5 or better, more boys achieved Levels 6 and 7. Pupils' overall performance in mathematics has been broadly in line with English and science, although in 2001 the improvement in results in these two subjects was not repeated in mathematics. Results are below the expected averages for similar schools, based on the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. At the time of the last inspection standards, when pupils are aged 14, were reported as being well above national averages. This is no longer the case. Whilst still above average, the trend of improvement has been below that nationally.

138. Pupils make satisfactory progress between the ages of 14 and 16, and consequently GCSE results are always above the national average. The 2000 results are broadly comparable to those reported at the time of the last inspection. The proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades in 2000 at 57 per cent was 10 per cent above the average for all schools and is comparable with similar schools. Pupils' performance in mathematics in 2000 was not significantly different to the average attained in the other subjects they entered. Both boys and girls performed above the respective national averages. The proportion of pupils achieving the highest grades, A* and A, was nearly twice the national average. Almost all pupils gained a grade within the A*-G range. There was an improvement in 2001 to 62 per cent attaining grades A*-C, with boys improving significantly to 67 per cent compared to 57 per cent for girls.

139. In contrast, the standard of work seen during the inspection with many of the lower-attaining pupils was not as high as it could be. For example, too many are going through the motions since some teachers are not at all sure about the standards of work they should be expecting. Throughout the school standards are affected adversely by the way in which a minority of the pupils respond to ineffective teaching. They are slow to settle, easily distracted, and sometimes poorly behaved, usually because they feel frustrated. They make insufficient effort and are disenchanted with their lot. Some teachers are too easily satisfied with low levels of achievement. There are unacceptable shortcomings in too many lessons, with some experienced teachers failing to establish and maintain control. On the other hand, this is in marked contrast with the majority of teachers who enjoy good relationships with pupils, plan appropriately and manage the classroom effectively. In these lessons most

pupils, including the higher attaining pupils, achieve as they should. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress as a result of the provision made for them, as do those identified by the school as the ablest. Some pupils have successfully entered the National Mathematics Challenge, with some of the ablest doing very well, with one boy chosen to participate in the International Mathematics Olympiad.

140. During the inspection many classes were beginning the year with work consolidating and reinforcing their knowledge and understanding of numbers. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 9 write fractions as decimals and percentages, but are not sure about finding patterns, such as $0.20=20\%$. This is because these gaps in the knowledge have not been identified early enough. It is not because they are not capable of understanding the work. Average attaining pupils in the same year add and subtract simple fractions, but are only confident working with common denominators, because they have not been taught rigorously enough. Lower-attaining pupils find fractions of whole numbers, but are not able to explain how to add fractions with different denominators. This is because they are not involved enough in the lessons. Teachers lack the skills to use many of the newer methods of teaching numeracy, and training for this is needed.

141. By the age of 16, the lower-attaining pupils are able to write percentages, such as 45% and 60%, as fractions. Average attaining pupils in Year 11 know how to change fractions to percentages by first changing the fraction to a decimal and then multiplying by 100, but are not sure when multiplying improper fractions. The higher-attaining pupils find, in cuboids and square based pyramids, lengths and angles using Pythagoras' theorem and trigonometry. The quality of teaching is usually better at Key Stage 4 and this impacts positively on standards.

142. The teaching of mathematics varies significantly in quality and is consequently unsatisfactory. Whilst about half of lessons observed were judged to be good or better, one in five was unsatisfactory, poor or very poor. The overall quality is about the same as was reported at the last inspection, but the shortcomings identified then still remain, even though there have been several changes in staff since then. This is unsatisfactory. Low expectations and poor control still de-motivates a significant proportion of pupils and leads to underachievement. The teaching reflects the ability levels of the different classes, with some teachers lacking strategies to control and motivate the lower attaining girls and boys, of all ages. At the time of the inspection, some classes were taught by a temporary teacher. However, both pupils and parents provided evidence of inadequacies in classroom management in some mathematics lessons during the previous school year.

143. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding of the way they develop basic skills are usually satisfactory. Lesson planning is sound but many lessons do not routinely challenge the pupils. For example, while average attaining Year 8 pupils comfortably add $40+50$ or $70+80$ they do not use mental strategies when tackling problems such as $50-70+60$. Teachers usually enjoy satisfactory relationships with pupils, and when they engage the pupils in purposeful, clear and imaginative tasks, they respond well. For example, a higher attaining Year 11 class enjoyed making and using models in their trigonometry, and required merely the odd intervention by the teacher. The management of pupils' behaviour is still a weakness in too many lessons. Some teachers are too tolerant, lacking the strategies to deal effectively with inattention and indifference to work. For example, in several lessons teachers did nothing other than repeatedly ask some pupils to be quiet and behave. Eventually, and too late, further action was taken.

144. Satisfactory use is made of ICT. Standards of literacy are generally satisfactory, though teachers' expectations in this are inconsistent, especially regarding the presentation of written work. There are few planned opportunities to develop pupil's oracy. Formal assessment, including for those with special educational needs, is sound. Marking is satisfactory and usually informs pupils of what they need to do to improve. Teachers respect pupils' efforts, especially the higher-attaining ones. Pupils value homework, when set. The organisation of classrooms, so that all pupils are able to work well, is often unsatisfactory,

with pupils deciding where and with whom they will sit, usually so that they can talk through the lesson. The general housekeeping in rooms is poor, even though they are quite spacious and suitably furnished.

145. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are usually satisfactory, but a minority, both boys and girls, have become disenchanted with the subject. Some lessons are not characterised by an atmosphere of purposeful activity. Some pupils are not confident to put forward their own ideas and to ask for help. There are few opportunities for collaborative work and many pupils are over-reliant on the teacher. The department makes good provision for the older pupils to catch up on work they have missed or are finding difficult.

146. The leadership and management of the subject are sound. The newly appointed head of department is now in a good position to move the subject forward. Currently, departmental documentation does not give clear guidance to teachers about what they need to teach and, most vitally, what methods they need to use. The effective aspects of assessment are countered by inaccurate estimation by some teachers of pupils' levels of achievement, and lack of awareness of their prior attainment.

147. Since the last inspection not enough progress has been made in raising standards in mathematics. The overall quality of teaching has not improved. Nonetheless, many building bricks are in place. Resources are satisfactory and accommodation is good. There is a clear commitment to improvement by subject teachers and managers. For example, this year, for the first time, the higher attaining pupils will be entered for the GCSE statistics examination and the teachers are beginning to implement the National Numeracy Strategy.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths:

- Improving examination results, both at Key Stage 3 and GCSE, which are now well above national averages, especially for boys.
- Good pace and structure in lessons, promoting learning of knowledge.
- Attitudes to the subject, especially from the more able pupils.
- Systems for assessment and monitoring of pupil progress against expectations.

Areas for improvement:

- Strategies to promote the progress of girls, particularly during Key Stage 3.
- The development of a greater variety of teaching methods, including the use of ICT and the further development of investigative activities as a routine part of normal lessons.
- More effective use of the data from assessment systems, especially to inform curricular and lesson planning.
- Provision of extension activities in and beyond lessons for the most able.

149. On entry to the school, pupils' standards in science have been well above the national average in recent years. In the current Year 8, for example, over 95 per cent had achieved Level 4, the expected level, or better and over 60 per cent Level 5 on entry. In 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3, the average point score and the proportion achieving Level 6 or better were well above the national averages, and the proportion achieving Level 5 or better was above national figures and close to LEA averages. Results for boys were very high, whilst those for girls were below LEA averages but above national averages. The average point score has fluctuated, but has always been above national averages for boys. These fluctuations mean results are sometimes better and sometimes less good than the other core subjects. Comparison with similar schools based the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals shows progress slightly below that expected. LEA value-added data using standardised tests in Year 7 shows progress as expected during Key Stage 3, with middle and low ability girls making slightly less good progress than in other LEA schools, while boys make slightly better progress. Provisional results for 2001 show further improvements in Key Stage 3 results, in line with the improved

ability profile on entry in 1998. Eighty four per cent of pupils achieved Level 5 or better. Results were similar overall for boys and girls, but with 21 per cent of boys achieving Level 7 compared to only 8 per cent of girls.

150. At Key Stage 4, the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C in dual award GCSE science in 2000 was well above the national average. Over 20 per cent of pupils achieved grades A or A*, well above national and LEA averages. Boys again significantly outperform girls, in line with their higher Key Stage 3 results, and comparison with other schools shows progress from Key Stage 3 to GCSE close to LEA and national averages. Results in 2001 were even better, in line with improved Key Stage 3 results in 1999, with 66 per cent achieving grades A*-C. The gap between boys and girls widened, with 71 per cent of boys achieving grades A*-C compared to only 57 per cent of girls. Overall, progress in science across the school is satisfactory.

151. Work observed, and answers given by pupils, in Key Stage 3 suggest that virtually all are attaining at or above expected levels. They can plan experiments to test hypotheses and use formulae for calculations. The work in books in Key Stage 4 shows very high levels of attainment, especially in top sets. Pupils can use the periodic table to make predictions about atomic structure and chemical reactions and also understand relationships between concepts such as current, voltage, power and energy. They are less effective at pursuing an investigative approach unless this is part of a structured coursework assessment. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress. In one lesson, with the support of a learning assistant, a statemented pupil successfully developed an understanding of flotation.

152. Behaviour and attitudes are good within the department. Pupils show respect for each other and the equipment provided, paying good attention to health and safety. Relationships between pupils and staff and among pupils are positive and constructive in most lessons. Pupils are confident and articulate with visitors and most talk positively about their experiences in science. They listen attentively and learn productively as individuals, in groups and through demonstrations. In some lessons, there is a degree of restlessness, and in one low ability Key Stage 4 lesson, pupils were rude and disrespectful to the teacher. When work is pitched at too low a level, as when an able year 10 group were asked to check the current at several points in simple series circuits, pupils lose interest and can exhibit challenging behaviour.

153. Teaching is good overall with only one observed lesson less than satisfactory and half good or very good. Teachers show adequate subject knowledge and a good understanding of the requirements of the Key Stage 3 programmes of study and the GCSE modular examination syllabus. Methodology in lessons is generally good. Lessons have a highly structured approach targeted at specific objectives from the National Curriculum and GCSE syllabuses, with time for recap and review activities and a plenary. A time plan and the use of objectives shared with pupils engenders good pace, and maintains a high proportion of time on task in most lessons. A Year 7 mixed ability lesson on cell structure enabled pupils to develop skills in making microscope slides, using a microscope and understanding the differences between plant and animal cells. The lesson time was fully used and there was evidence of good learning by all pupils. In a few lessons, the introduction involved pupils in extended listening, missing opportunities for more active engagement in learning. In one, upper ability, Year 10 lesson, half the lesson was devoted to recap of simple circuits from Key Stage 3 using simple closed questions and giving little challenge. The practical activity also lacked challenge, so that learning opportunities were greatly reduced.

154. The opportunities for pupils to apply their understanding of concepts in a less structured environment are unsatisfactory. Programmed sessions on Attainment Target 1 of the National Curriculum take place, during both key stages, but there is scope for a more experimental approach to the acquisition of knowledge and conceptual understanding. In a top set Year 9 lesson, finding the proportion of oxygen in the air was approached by setting pupils the challenge of planning it themselves. They rose to the challenge, completing the

activity quickly and sufficiently accurately. This approach allowed time for them to reflect on sources of error, and to repeat the experiment, improving on their own initial methods. Similarly, in a low ability Year 8 lesson, pupils were challenged to make a boat to carry a cargo of marbles using a small piece of 'blue tack'. They approached this task with considerable enthusiasm, and developed a good understanding of upthrust, weight and flotation. There is scope to encourage this approach in more lessons addressing objectives from the other National Curriculum attainment targets.

155. Schemes of work are satisfactory and cover the programme of study at Key Stage 3 and the examination syllabus at Key Stage 4. Key Stage 3 schemes are based on the QCA scheme and a published programme. The schemes for Years 7, 8 and 10 are new this year and have not yet been sufficiently customised to suit the department. Due attention is paid to health and safety, and hazard cards are routinely provided with equipment and chemicals. Insufficient attention is paid to planning for the use of ICT, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the development of numeracy as part of the national Key Stage 3 strategy. Word walls and vocabulary lists are used in lessons, which contribute to the development of literacy skills. Greater attention could be paid to primary liaison and Key Stage 2/3 continuity. The department has appropriate strategies for the least able and those with special educational needs. There are differentiated resources to assist them and support in some lessons from learning support teachers and assistants. Extra-curricular activities include visits to Guildford Discovery Centre, the local zoo and the National Science Museum. However, the science club is no longer running and the opportunities presented by Science Year have not yet been taken up, and this limits the extension activities available to the considerable number of gifted pupils.

156. Accommodation is adequate with six laboratories, three recently refurbished and one due to be refurbished this year. The chemical store is poorly lit, and a potential health and safety hazard. Resources are sufficient to support the curriculum. A number of textbooks have recently been purchased to support the new schemes of work in Years 7, 8 and 10. The permanent teachers are adequately qualified. The school has experienced considerable difficulty in recruiting science specialists to fill two vacancies. At the time of the inspection, temporary or supply teachers taught more than one third of lessons. The supply teachers were in some cases non-specialists. Two laboratory technicians are well deployed to support the work of the department and ensure that resources are available in all lessons. An efficient booking system makes best use of what is available. Location of all six laboratories in a single block is an asset and helps timely resource provision.

157. Overall departmental management is satisfactory. Day to day arrangements are good, resources are well-used, new teachers and supply teachers are well supported and monitoring of data and classroom practice takes place. Performance management arrangements have been adequately implemented. Systems for assessment and monitoring progress against expectations are in place, but are not always used effectively by teachers to inform the planning of schemes of work, individual lessons and differentiated materials for individual pupils.

158. Considerable progress has been made since the last inspection in standards of attainment especially at GCSE, improved consistency in pupil progress, systems for assessment and monitoring of pupil progress and performance management of staff. Motivation in lower sets, progress of girls and varied teaching methodology remain issues for continuing attention.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths:

- Teaching and learning in art at all levels.
- Management at faculty and departmental levels.
- Examination results and the overall high quality of work.

- Relationships
- The use of language and ICT to help develop concepts in art
- The multi-cultural input, highlighted by the African art project and the impact of visits, such as that to Covent Garden.

Areas for improvement:

- Accommodation, with rooms too small as reported by the last inspection
- The establishment of clearer criteria for success in each project.
- Refinement of exemplars for attainment targets at the end of Key Stage 3 and moderation of definitions of levels at the age of transfer to secondary school.

160. Art and design is a significant strength of the school. GCSE results in art and design are consistently well above the national average for grades A*-C and the percentage of grades A* and A are twice the national average. In 2000, all pupils entered achieved grades A*-C. Whilst this dropped to 85 per cent in 2001, this was from a larger entry, and was still significantly above the national average and a third of pupils attained grades A* and A. The vast majority of pupils are assessed as being at Level 5 or above at the end of Key Stage 3, with about a third assessed as working beyond national expectations. There is a strong foundation in observed drawing, and its effectiveness is shown by the high quality figure drawing and painting at GCSE Level. Pupils develop a very good art vocabulary. In one Year 8 class, pupils were seen using language very effectively to help them define the concept and purpose of abstract art with clear parallels in music; they were able to express abstraction in visual, aural and verbal terms. Year 10 work on perspective showed equally high understanding and practice. Year 11 group were using charcoal for the first time, and their life drawings were already showing control, and producing good results. There is totality of access for all, and some very high quality work was seen from pupils with special needs; those with high ability set very high standards for themselves, and attainment levels are very high. The department has open access at lunchtimes and after school, and as many as forty pupils at a time avail themselves of the opportunity.

161. Teaching and learning are both very good at all levels, as is pupil response. Attention is rapt, and concentration is deep. There is an excellent working ethos. The Year 8 group grappling with the difficult concept of abstraction showed total commitment and fascination. By the time pupils reach GCSE Level, they are self-analytical and self-questioning. The level of concentration from Year 10 pupils working on perspective was impressive, and Year 11 pupils coped very well with the very intensive pace of a charcoal figure drawing exercise. Language is particularly well used to develop pupil understanding of artistic concepts, in particular the nature and purpose of abstract art. Teaching in art is very good at Key Stage 3 and very good or excellent at Key Stage 4. The very effective learning and high standards are a direct result of the teaching, which is founded on enthusiasm, even passion, and a firm belief in the value of art for all. Relationships are excellent, and planning and preparation detailed and thorough but with flexibility built in. Pupils are given very clear targets and a variety of routes, which may be used to attain success. Questioning is tightly focussed, and both re-enforces learning, ensures the participation of all and enables pupils to understand and internalised difficult concepts, as in the lessons involving abstract art. Teacher feedback within the art-making process ensures that pupils make maximum individual progress.

162. Display in the department and across the school is excellent. The department has exhibited in the Surrey LEA central offices. Visits, such as to Covent Garden, lead to very high quality work, and ICT is used to produce very good work – ICT for art's sake.

163. Relationships and management are also strengths. The creative arts faculty and the department are very well led, with all staff involved being fully integrated into decision making. The head of the faculty, and of art, has been an assistant head teacher for the last year. Her whole school duties have not detracted from her leadership of the arts. The monitoring of teaching and learning in the faculty is very good, and links into performance management. The regular reviews are based on department development planning, feeding into faculty and school systems very effectively. The option system works well for the arts,

and it is possible for a pupil to take two arts subjects at GCSE. From this year sculpture is being offered as an extra subject, so that abler pupils can attain dual certification. The curriculum is excellent, and balanced between skill development, understanding, and above all on expression through practical artwork. The assessment system is good, with self-assessment built in, but could be further refined by having more detailed criteria for success. Attainment target levelling needs further refinement at both the end of Key Stage 3 and at the age of transfer from Key Stage 2.

164. The issue of accommodation mentioned at the last inspection, with the art rooms being too small for the numbers in groups, is still an issue. The issues concerning drawing and painting refinement have been fully resolved, and the ablest are certainly now stretched. There are now two art lessons a week in Year 7, thus resolving the time issue.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

165. Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is satisfactory.

Strengths:

- An able, highly committed and extremely hard working head of department.
- Well-equipped teaching rooms that are appropriate to the demands of the subject.
- A scheme of work, which, whilst some updating is needed, meets the main National Curriculum requirements.
- The attitude and potential of pupils.

Areas for improvement:

- Shortage of staff represents a major inhibiting factor in the progress that the department is able to make and has had a significant effect on standards in both key stages.
- The scheme of work requires some updating to take account of the new requirements for design and technology.
- Assessment of pupils' work at the end of Year 9, and within Key Stage 3, needs to take account of the changes in level descriptions.

166. Standards of work in design and technology, seen during the inspection, were generally sound, although mostly above average in Years 9 and 10. At Key Stage 3, teacher assessment results in 2001 show that the majority of pupils are working at Level 5 or above, with half assessed as Level 6 or above, about twice as many as in previous years. Assessments in 2000 and earlier years were in line with national standards. For GCSE, in 2000, 60 per cent of pupils entered achieved grades A*-C as compared to a national average of 50 per cent. These are the total for all the design and technology subjects offered by the department. Provisional results for 2001 show a drop, with 55 per cent of those entered gaining grades A*-C. A shortage of staff in the department has been the major contributing factor in the drop in results, especially in food technology and child development. In the latter, only a third of pupils attained grades A*-C in 2001. Whilst results in design and technology were similar for boys and girls in 2000, with girls a little above their respective national average and boys well above theirs, results for girls improved in 2001 and those for boys dropped significantly. A good proportion of pupils achieved the highest grades A* and A.

167. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' achievements in relation to standards on entry to the school are good, as judged by Key Stage 3 assessments and evidence from a work survey and standards seen at the start of Year 10. However, some of the teacher assessments seem generous. Whilst standards have been affected by staffing shortages it is less marked in Key Stage 3 since pupils are taught by more than one teacher across the range of technology subjects. Work seen during the course of the inspection indicated that the majority of pupils in Key Stage 4 will attain standards in line with those achieved by the department in the past. Pupils generally make good progress as they move through the school, although progress in all years has been, and continues to be, inhibited by the lack of staff in the department.

168. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory in about two thirds and good or very good in the other third. Characteristics of good teaching seen included careful preparation, a good range of teaching styles and a positive working relationship with the pupils. A particularly effective lesson was seen where pupils in Year 9 were developing design ideas for a balancing toy based on animal shapes. The theme for the task was 'Balance of Nature' and pupils were required to research endangered species before choosing an animal on which designs would be based. The teacher took particular trouble to explain the need for research and how design ideas could be developed as a result.

169. The quality of learning was satisfactory or better in about half of the lessons seen, and good or better in just over half. In two lessons in Year 8, the quality of learning was just satisfactory, but pupils' attitudes and behaviour were unsatisfactory. In these instances, pupils failed to appreciate the objectives of the lesson, in spite of efforts by the teacher to make these clear. The vast majority of pupils, however, show a positive attitude to the content of lessons and to the subject as a whole. In many lessons seen there was a real desire to learn new things and to make progress, particularly in Year 10 examination groups. In a resistant materials lesson, pupils were asked to design simple methods of joining wood, which had a decorative as well as a constructional purpose. All made a good effort and produced a range of imaginative ideas. Similarly, a graphics group worked very hard to develop sketching techniques using the 'crating' techniques and made good progress. A similar desire to learn was evident in the vast majority of lessons seen in Key Stage 3.

170. The last inspection referred to the need to amend the scheme of work, especially in food technology. Staff members have made considerable efforts since that time to improve the scheme of work in all areas. The scheme of work covers all of the major aspects of design and technology and the tasks planned in all areas of the subject are appropriate to the needs of the pupils. There is a good balance of work in all material areas but the scheme of work does require some updating to meet the requirements of the current Programme of Study for the subject. In particular the requirement for pupils to consider the needs of the user and to design for themselves and for other people, needs more emphasis than is evident at present. In addition pupils in both key stages should do more on evaluation of existing products and to make greater use of ICT in all aspects of designing and making. Provision for homework is patchy and often appears to consist of finishing off work.

171. The implementation of the scheme of work needs closer attention. From a review of the sample of work, and from lesson observation, the teaching of work in Key Stage 3 does not always cover the need for a design brief, a design specification and some type of drawing which includes constructional details, and from which products can be made. Whilst the work, which is planned, is totally appropriate, and may be in the form of focussed tasks, where design work may be limited, these aspects of the subject could be included. Marking of work is mainly in the form of marks out of ten and a very brief comment. More detailed comments on how well pupils have responded to tasks, and what they need to do to make further progress would improve standards of work, especially at Key Stage 3.

172. Resources in the department are generally good, although there is a need to update textbooks for examination courses. Whilst the range of ICT provision is good, many of the resources are located in one room and consideration should be given to expanding the provision in other rooms. The equipment for computer aided designing and making is limited and somewhat dated and again consideration should be given to expanding this area in order to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum programme of study. The last inspection report expressed concerns about the condition of the food technology room. Since that time the room has been totally refurbished and now presents a very good learning environment.

173. Provision for health and safety within the department is sound. All equipment and machines are guarded and pupils are instructed to wear aprons and to use eye protection. However, many of the groups seen exceed the number for which the rooms have been designed and equipped. Such overcrowding can present a health and safety hazard.

Strategies to address this should be sought. The department has yet to carry out risk assessments of pupil activities.

174. The department is managed in a very effective manner. The department handbook includes all key areas and these are clearly set out. Some further consideration needs to be given to educational inclusion especially in the question of providing ingredients for practical lessons in food technology. Pupils who fail to bring in ingredients cannot then take part in practical work. Technician support is provided, but this is limited in the time available, and does not normally contribute to food technology. The permanent staff in the department are well qualified and work hard to provide a good learning experience for all pupils. However the major shortage of staff in the department has clearly adversely affected standards and has placed a vast amount of pressure on the head of department to maintain a coherent programme of work for pupils, and to maintain standards.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths:

- High and improving levels of attainment at age 14 and in GCSE examinations.
- The involvement of pupils in their learning through fieldwork and other practical activities.
- A classroom environment that promotes interest and motivates pupils to learn.
- Good, well structured teaching.
- A wide range of resources for learning, including the use of ICT.
- The involvement of pupils in learning through fieldwork and other practical activities.

Areas for improvement:

- The use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress, to plan teaching and learning and to set subject specific targets for all pupils.
- The revision of schemes of work to incorporate all aspects of the National Curriculum.
- More emphasis on development of geographical skills, especially map work.

176. Levels of attainment in geography are above average in Years 7 to 9 and well above in Years 10 and 11. In teacher assessments at the end of Year 9, pupils are reaching standards above those expected nationally and above those achieved by pupils in other schools. The number of pupils assessed as reaching Level 6 of the National Curriculum, an above average level, was very high in 1998 and 1999 and, although lower in 2000 and 2001, was still well above the national average for all pupils. In both 1999 and 2001, over four-fifths of pupils were assessed as reaching Level 5 or better, nearly 20 per cent higher than nationally. Results for girls were slightly better than those for boys, but not significantly so. In GCSE examinations, results have been consistently above average since the last inspection and have risen from 1998, when 70 per cent of candidates achieved a grade C or above, to 2001, when the figure was 86 per cent. In 2000, 70 per cent of pupils entered gained at least a grade C compared to 54 per cent nationally. During this same period the average points scored by pupils rose from 4.5 to 5.5, a rise of a complete grade. Particularly significant is the number of pupils who attain the highest grades of A* or A in GCSE examinations. Since 1997 almost one third of pupils have been awarded these grades each year. In 2001, the figure rose to almost one half. Girls achieve slightly better than boys at this level. However, whilst in 2000 the proportion of girls achieving grades A*-C was significantly higher than boys, 82 per cent compared to 62 per cent, in 2001 boys surpassed girls with 87 achieving these grades compared to 83 per cent of girls. This is outstanding. Pupils do better in geography than in most other subjects in the school.

177. These high levels of achievement are found in the written work of pupils throughout the year groups. Schemes of work allow progression from topic to topic so that pupils' knowledge and understanding are built up from year to year. Studies of rivers and coastlines lead on to work on volcanoes and earthquakes in Years 7 and 8. By Year 9 pupils study successfully more difficult concepts of development, making comparisons between countries at different stages of development. They come to terms with problems

associated with human activities and conflicting demands on the environment. In Years 10 and 11 their work is enhanced by fieldwork and course work of good quality, by the use of a wider range of writing styles and an increasing use of computer skills for presentation and research. Learning and attainment is enhanced by the use of open-ended tasks and problem solving approaches which allow pupils to develop their knowledge. Presentation skills are very good, ensuring care is given to all work and knowledge and understanding are gained through care and attention to detail.

178. During the inspection, levels of attainment seen in lessons did not match those seen in the written work of pupils from the previous year. This was mainly because the lessons observed were often the first meeting of pupils and new teachers at the beginning of the school year and the nature of many lessons was exploratory in preparation for standards of behaviour and attainment to be expected in the future.

179. Overall, the quality of teaching in the department is good and pupils learn well. It is never less than satisfactory and occasionally very good. Lessons are carefully planned and use strategies that provide structure. Pupils are well managed so that there are few distractions and as a result they concentrate throughout lessons. Aims are clearly established at the beginning and a summary of what has been learned forms the conclusion to most lessons. Many actively involve pupils and this creates interest and encourages quality learning. During the inspection, this was particularly the case in a Year 11 lesson, which taught pupils to draw and analyse triangular graphs, a Year 8 lesson requiring pupils to place different types of employment into the appropriate economic activities and a Year 7 lesson, which used a team game to increase pupils' knowledge of Great Britain. Teachers have a very good command of their subject, which they use well in question and answer sessions to develop pupils' knowledge and improve their understanding. Occasionally these take up too much time in the lesson. The pace of lessons varies. It is often crisp but sometimes time management suffers.

180. Pupils behave well in lessons. They are attentive, listen well and respond willingly to questions and to set tasks. This helps them to learn. Pupils with special educational needs are often provided with tasks that are more suited to their needs so that they make progress at the same rate as their peers. Occasionally extension work is provided for more able pupils although the latter are not always challenged as much as they could be.

181. High levels of attainment are also the result of the good climate for learning that has been achieved in the department and a tradition of good management. Wall displays of pupils' work, especially those relating to coastal erosion, press cuttings of topical events with a geographical flavour such as floods in southern England, photographs and maps all stimulate the interest of pupils in geography and motivate them to learn well. Teaching methods which encourage pupils to take an active part in lessons and which make use of the extensive range of resource materials, with which the department is equipped, promote curiosity and develop skills of analysis, problem solving and debate. In particular, fieldwork in places such as Barton-on-Sea and Guildford and coursework that explores local issues such as the development of a new shopping supermarket and the need for a local by-pass, enhance what pupils know, understand and can do. They benefit from a wide selection of videotapes and the use of ICT to research topics is well developed. These make a significant contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject and to their computer literacy.

182. Recent changes in the management of the department have only just begun to take effect and their impact on pupils' learning is still to be realised. New proposals to monitor the work of pupils, when fully operative, will satisfy the concerns of the previous inspection to improve assessment at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Currently, however, although teachers keep extensive records from the marking of pupils' work, this information is not yet used to inform curricular planning or to set specific geographical targets for the future. Plans to improve literacy and numeracy show promise and a good start has been made by the use of word walls, glossaries of geographical terms and writing frames, to raise levels of literacy in geography. Schemes of work are to be re-written soon. This will help to ensure that pupils receive their full entitlement to all aspects of the programmes of study for geography at Key

Stage 3, provide more opportunities for the development of geographical skills and opportunities to assist the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The current department development plan has appropriate proposals for the future of the department but does not allocate responsibilities or indicate financial implications.

183. There have been significant improvements in the department since the last inspection. Levels of attainment have risen, the use of ICT is a main feature of teaching and learning, a new assessment scheme has been established and there is a better pace to many lessons.

HISTORY

184. Overall, the quality of provision in history is good.

Strengths:

- Standards are high, with attainment at the end of both key stages being well above the national average.
- The department is very well managed.
- There is a rich curriculum provision and very effective teaching of the skills necessary in the study of history.

Areas for improvement:

- Some classes are taught by non-specialists, some of whom have insufficiently developed skills, knowledge and understanding. This adversely affects the learning experience of a significant minority of pupils in Key Stage 3.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory and access to resources for developing skills in the use of computers is inadequate.
- Introductory lessons in Year 7 provide a useful interface between work in Key Stages 2 and 3, but there is insufficient focus on content and skills directly related to the subject.

185. Attainment at age 14, in the school's teacher assessments and as observed in lessons, is well above that expected of pupils of similar age nationally. The great majority of pupils show a level of knowledge and understanding well above that found in other schools. The numbers of pupils being assessed at National Curriculum Level 5 and above has increased from 68 per cent in 1998 to 79 per cent in 2001. Two pupils were assessed at Level 8 in 2001 and almost two-thirds achieved Level 6 or above.

186. At GCSE, attainment is well above the course requirement for the majority of pupils and results overall are well above those of other comprehensive schools. In 2000, of the eleven pupils entered 82 per cent were awarded grades A*-C. This clearly well above the national figure of 58 per cent, although the number entered was small. From a larger entry of 42 pupils in 2001, 86 per cent achieved grades A*-C and 43 per cent the highest grades A* and A. The results of boys and girls are similar and both well above that expected nationally. In 2000, boys achieved a little better than girls, but this was reversed in 2001.

187. The standards observed during the inspection reflect a similar picture and the trend is one of a noticeable improvement in standards since the last inspection. Standards are high because of the quality of teaching within the department, which has shown significant improvement since the last inspection, especially in the GCSE classes.

188. In year 9, pupils are able to talk about the topics that they are studying and they have an understanding of some of the major events of previous centuries. Their knowledge of key developments is often good and they are able to use a variety of resources, including photographs, to form conclusions about issues such as propaganda. Written work is usually good or better. More able pupils are able to fit their studies into a wider context and to show how events and economic and other factors link together. In work on slavery and the triangular trade, for example, individual pupils show a high level of ability to grasp essential facts in order to develop an understanding of how the trade operated. Average attaining pupils understand that captives in West Africa were initially enslaved by local traders, who then sold them to the owners of the slave ships. Higher attaining pupils question the fact that slaves would always be mistreated showing an understanding that they were seen as a valuable commodity that plantation owners would want to make profitable. Although some pupils show lack of understanding of cause and effect they are able to understand the categorization and pricing of slaves related to their tribal origins. Even lower attaining pupils are able to understand that rebellious slaves might create problems. All pupils have the ability to empathize with the slaves and the most able show an ability to understand the complex issue of the meaning of freedom. The approach to this topic makes a valuable contribution to the moral and cultural understanding of pupils. They later undertake a detailed study of prominent and successful Black Americans, using the analytical and research skills gained through the key stage.

189. By the end of their GCSE course, pupils have a very good knowledge of the topics that they have studied. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, understand about the development of medicine and the key contribution of earlier societies, such as Greek and Roman. Study of the life of aborigines provides a clear understanding of change over time but also of some of the universal and timeless approaches to treating illness and injury. The highest attaining pupils are able to use of documents and extracts very well and to undertake in depth research. Local studies of Farnham Castle show pupils' confidence in using computers for presenting work for assessment and the present Year 11 are able to use a museum visit and field trip for initial research. Pupils of all levels of attainment show the ability to evaluate evidence and use it effectively. The majority of pupils show the level of skills, knowledge and understanding to reach higher grade GCSEs.

190. Attitudes to the subject are good. The majority of pupils works hard and contributes well in lessons. They enjoy activities in class and find the work interesting and challenging. More pupils are now choosing to take the subject at GCSE. The response of pupils is often very good and they are very eager to take part in discussion and to use web sites for their own research. Where behaviour and response are less positive it is usually as a result of weaknesses in teaching.

191. Learning is very well managed in history. There is a consistent focus on providing the opportunity for the improvement of skills in literacy. The identification of subject specific vocabulary, a good variety of tasks and writing frames to help those of lower potential attainment are all key features of the best lessons. Numeracy skills are also used well. Pupils estimate heights of castle walls, gain understanding from the varied price of slaves and use statistics to track population growth in China. Tasks and resources are usually well matched to the attainment of pupils. Because of this, progress for the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good and they achieve well.

192. The majority of pupils are able to develop an understanding of chronology and the impact of change over time. Progress is good because pupils have the opportunity to develop skills in history as they progress through the school. The work of pupils at the beginning of Year 7 shows that they are learning to use a range of skills based on the 'History Detectives' approach. Although this discovery approach to learning provides a good link between Key Stage 2 and secondary school, the present planning does not provide enough history content because of the type of activity used. Pupils are often given the opportunity to work in pairs and groups for discussion and research and this is particularly effective. There are frequent opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own learning and that of others. By Year 11 they can work as a team and in a way that supports others who have learning difficulties. The tasks set for homework link well with work in class and information technology is also used to support learning. The use of laptops by those with learning difficulties is particularly good. However, the department has insufficient access to computers in the classroom to take full advantage of their potential in promoting effective learning. Targets are set and pupils are assessed effectively ensuring that progress is carefully monitored. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the quality of support available and the good use of appropriate resources. In Year 11, the support provided by pupils in the group makes a very real contribution to the work and learning experience of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with the highest level of ability are identified and extension work is provided.

193. The ethos of the department is one of inclusion and pupils of all abilities work together well. The history room is used for displays of pupils' work and this celebration of their success contributes to their enjoyment of the subject. However, the accommodation provided for teaching history is unsatisfactory. The main history room does not have blackout facilities or secure places for storage of pupils' work. In the other rooms used there are no displays. This has an adverse effect on the learning of some pupils and affects their access to the curriculum.

194. Because of its rich curriculum content and variety of opportunities for discussion, teaching in the subject makes a good contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The department is now soundly resourced and these resources are effectively used in lessons. Teaching is good overall and very good in GCSE classes. The quality of all teaching observed was usually good and often very good or excellent. Specialist teachers are using a variety of approaches to teaching and learning. They are knowledgeable about the subject and their lessons are well planned, managed and resourced. Lessons have focused objectives and there is a clear aim to encourage pupils to become active learners rather than passive listeners and to provide them with the confidence to take responsibility for their own learning. However, non-specialist teachers do not always have the same level of skills and knowledge. A few lessons lack focus, pace is slow, objectives are not met and some aspects of learning are unsatisfactory.

195. The department has many strengths and there has been a good level of improvement since the last inspection. It is very well managed, particularly in the development of resources and in the use made of assessment. Standards have improved considerably. This has been achieved by a head of department, who is not able to rely on support from other teachers of history. Others teach the subject infrequently and have other important responsibilities in the school. Careful planning and monitoring ensures that resources and assessment procedures are being effectively used to promote progression

and continuity and to ensure that pupils are provided with a really varied, relevant and interesting experience in studying history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

196. Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory.

Strengths:

- Pupils have a sound grasp of concepts, apply them well in class work and in answering routine questions, and overall are achieving well.
- Teaching is good; lessons are well structured with a range of activities, which effectively help pupils to build up their knowledge and understanding.
- When working in groups, pupils share ideas freely and work well together.
- A good range of learning resources is being built up.

Areas for improvement:

- Marking is not as thorough as it should be, with few comments about attainment and progress.
- The more able pupils in Year 9 are not challenged to develop their knowledge and understanding.
- The level of ICT skills is not reported at the end of Key Stage 4.
- The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is not used effectively to inform teachers' planning. The management of the subject, both within the department and across the curriculum.

197. The focus of the inspection was on both ICT as a discrete subject and its use across the curriculum. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 for 2000 show that the attainment of pupils was just above the standard expected nationally. The GCSE results for grades A*-C in 2000 were also just above the national average. The school results for 2001 show a similar pattern at both key stages. Those pupils taking GCSE achieved sound results. Whilst, in 2000, results for boys and girls were similar, in 2001 boys performed significantly better than girls, with 60 per cent, compared to 40 per cent, achieving the highest grades. A number of pupils were also examined in ICT skills at the end of Year 9 and Year 11, but some did not get a level acknowledging their achievements at the end of Year 11.

198. By the end of Year 9, the standards of work seen of current pupils in lessons and a work scrutiny were in line with the national expectation within a range of activities. In lessons, pupils demonstrate skills in word processing, helping to improve their spelling and presentation of work. They are familiar with spreadsheets to organise information. They can use desktop publishing to a satisfactory level of competence and developed the use of power point for presentations. The use of computers for most of strands of the National Curriculum programmes of study is in line with that expected for pupils of a similar age as they have sufficient opportunity to develop these aspects apart from data logging, control technology and computer aided design. Pupils have access to the Internet to carry out project research and they can download images and data.

199. By the end of Year 11, pupils' attainment is in line with the expected standard for 16 year olds. Pupils are confident enough to work independently, using a range of software. There are too few opportunities to apply their skills to solve more complex problems, particularly in handling information and data and the use of presentation software. The higher attaining pupils understand and can use applications to organise, refine and present information for different purposes and produce results of good quality.

200. Pupils make sound progress in their knowledge and application of a range of skills in the subject. There are opportunities for pupils to use computers and practice these skills in other subjects, which help their progress, particularly in English, history, geography, art and design and technology. In both key stages, the majority of pupils make progress through a

range of opportunities to develop aspects of information handling, desk top publishing, and the use of Power Point presentations, spreadsheets, digital cameras, computerised sewing machines in textiles lessons and word processing. Their progress in other strands specified in the National Curriculum programmes of study, is less satisfactory, as insufficient attention is paid to the aspects of control systems, data logging and computer aided drawing.

201. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and behave well in lessons. They treat equipment with care and, with few exceptions, work hard to master new skills. All lessons include much independent work, which pupils enjoy as their confidence grows. Pupils turn up promptly for lessons and are prepared to use their own time to complete work. They are co-operative and responsive, listen carefully to teachers' instructions, read the guidance material thoroughly and try to work accurately. They enjoy discussions about their work, set themselves suitable targets to achieve and try to meet them.

202. In the specialist lessons, the quality of teaching is good and this contributes to pupils' acquisition of subject knowledge and skills. Lessons are planned to a high standard and have suitable challenge. The management of classes is generally good. Objectives are set for pupils of similar levels of attainment. This careful matching of work motivates pupils and maintains their interest. Relationships are very good and the skilled support given to pupils in their work quickly builds their confidence. In the lessons seen, teachers motivated pupils and recognised their success. Projects are presented in a variety of contexts giving pupils an understanding of the world they live in. There are good relationships in the department and the department presents a good learning environment. The pupils enjoy their work and persevere to achieve their best.

203. Information and communication technology is a key area for development in the school development plan. The subject is managed by a non-specialist. There are schemes of work and policy statements to support the planning, teaching, monitoring and assessment of the subject. The assessment system is not used effectively to support teachers lesson planning and to set targets for individual pupils.

204. The school had responded well to the last inspection and improvements made include an improvement in the quality of resources, the expertise available and access for pupils. The competent use of ICT across the curriculum still needs to be addressed. The management and co-ordination of the subject is unsatisfactory. The role of the co-ordinator is not fully developed. The ratio of computers to pupils is in line with the national average but there needs to be continued investment in equipment and resources. Technical support is very good, the network manager and the technician also provide support for teachers and pupils during lessons. There are opportunities for pupils to use computers during the lunchtime where they can develop their computer skills and have access to the Internet. Overall, provision is satisfactory and covers the programmes of study, although there is insufficient use computer aided design, data logging and control systems.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

205. Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is sound.

Strengths:

- Results in Spanish in the 2000 and 2001 GCSE were well above average.
- The quality of the learning experience in Latin in Key Stage 3 is very high.

- Teaching is good with effective use of language and development of listening skills
- In most lessons, teachers effectively use the language being taught as the normal means of classroom interaction.
- The management of the department is good and a good bank of resources has been built up.
- Homework is used effectively to consolidate classroom learning.

Areas for improvement:

- The results in French and German GCSE in 2000 and 2001 were well below average and the achievement of girls in particular was very low. The GCSE board is currently reviewing results from 2001 and grades may be revised upwards.
- Pupils of all abilities do not use the foreign language sufficiently as a normal means of classroom communication.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity or encouragement to speak in an extended way.

206. The Year 9 teacher assessments in 2000 were well above the national average. 86 per cent of all pupils achieved Level 4 or higher. This included 82 per cent of the girls and 89 per cent of the boys. These standards are confirmed by what pupils achieved in lessons during the inspection and from a scrutiny of pupils' written work. Nearly two-thirds of pupils were assessed as having reached Level 5, above average in modern foreign languages. Results at both levels were slightly less good in 2001.

207. In GCSE in 2000, the percentage of pupils attaining A*-C grades in Spanish was also well above the national average. The small number of students taking Latin GCSE also achieved well. Standards in 2001 were similarly also above average in both subjects. The number of A*-C grades in German and French were substantially below the national average in 2000 and 2001. In both years, in French, only around 30 per cent of pupils achieved grades A*-C, as did pupils entered for German in 2001. The entry in 2000 in German was very small. In French in 2000, results of girls were particularly poor. They improved in 2001, but in both years a greater percentage of boys achieved the highest grades.

208. At the end of Key Stage 3, standards of attainment in all languages are above the national average in the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening skills are well developed in most lessons because of the extensive and consistent use of the foreign language at normal speed and the frequent exposure of pupils to recorded material. In a Year 8 low ability French class, for example, pupils were fully challenged by the teacher's excellent use of the foreign language for all classroom communication and probing questioning technique. In a Year 9 French class, pupils listened intently to an extended listening text about jobs and successfully recorded most of the details. In a few lessons, however, teachers switch between English and the foreign language and do not offer a substantial model of the foreign language as a natural means of communication. Most pupils can repeat words and phrases with good pronunciation and intonation. Many pupils can reply confidently with good accents to questions from the teacher and can initiate short dialogues in pairs. There was, however, little evidence of pupils themselves using the foreign language spontaneously with the teacher or to each other in groups. In a few lessons, teachers do insist, however, that pupils give reasons for absence or lateness or make requests, such as to ask for a new book, or give the results of marks in tests, in the foreign language. Reading skills are fairly well developed, with the use of worksheets to supplement the textbook. In several lessons, pupils read out loud with confidence, used dictionaries to look up words and many able pupils were able to deduce the meaning of unknown words from their context. All pupils make good progress in their writing skills through Key Stage 3. They start by copy writing in Year 7 and by Year 9 most pupils have good basic writing skills and higher ability and average pupils write accurate texts containing different tenses in French. More able learners in French are able to write dialogues and descriptive texts using present and past tenses, modal verbs, and adjectives. In general, however, pupils' awareness of grammatical patterns and their ability to manipulate structures is weak. The Year 9 Latin group, however, displayed an impressive understanding of the formation and use of a range of tenses and their meanings and one Year 8 French group demonstrated a clear grasp of the form and use of the perfect tense.

209. At the end of Key Stage 4, the standards of many learners are above average in French and Spanish. When given the opportunity, pupils are capable of understanding lessons delivered at normal speed in the foreign language and listen attentively to recorded and spoken texts to extract details. In one Year 10 Spanish group, pupils listened intently to several recordings of young people talking about school, took notes and reported back orally at considerable length. In lessons in these languages, teachers use the foreign language for nearly all classroom interaction. However, many pupils still find difficulty recognizing higher numbers and prices. In German lessons too much English is used. Many pupils are able to participate with fluency in role plays. There was, however, no evidence seen of pupils making presentations. At the end of Year 11, the higher attaining pupils can use a range of tenses and structures, state opinions and give reasons. They are capable of using previously learned material in new situations and can cope with the unexpected and unknown.

210. In writing, the least able produce shopping lists, menus, label pictures, short descriptive paragraphs and short letters. A few, lower attaining pupils do not always complete written homework assignments or course work. Higher attaining pupils produce some impressive extended writing, which is frequently redrafted using ICT. There are some particularly impressive examples of writing in the GCSE Spanish course work. They use subordinate clauses and all basic tenses in defined situations. They produce work, which is accurate and varied. They are also able to produce lengthy and fluent projects on a range of topics. Good use is made of writing frames to support accurate writing.

211. Most pupils are very enthusiastic language learners, eager to demonstrate their skills. In several classes, they were fully engaged by a range of language games and communicative activities. In a Year 7 French class, pupils enjoyed practising numbers by singing a numbers rap after listening to a cassette. Two classes of pupils of lower ability learning French in Key Stage 3, were totally absorbed and fully motivated by a competitive language game conducted entirely in French delivered at normal speed. Pupils show high levels of concentration and perseverance and consult dictionaries with confidence. Most pupils contribute fully to all lesson activities, settle down to work briskly and remain on task. Many pupils show interest in the subject by asking questions for clarification. However, in a few lessons some pupils are not well motivated. They do not always listen carefully and are not interested in improving their skills. In one lesson at Key Stage 3, two boys were deliberately disruptive. This was, however, dealt with effectively by the teacher.

212. Teaching at both key stages is at least sound and often better. It is good or better in about three quarters of all lessons. At Key Stage 3, teaching is good or better in nearly all lessons. It is very good or excellent in just over half of lessons. At Key Stage 4 teaching is good or very good in nearly half of lessons. The department has some excellent linguists and three native speakers of French. The department will also shortly benefit from the services of two foreign language assistants in French and Spanish. Some teachers use the foreign language extensively and exclusively in lessons and to great effect, both as a medium of instruction and for routine interaction, but this approach is not consistent within the department. All lessons are very well prepared and nearly always delivered enthusiastically and at a brisk pace, with good use of varied resources, including the overhead projector, cassette recorder and high quality resource sheets. Very good use is generally made of deadlines to motivate pupils and keep them on target. One teacher uses a kitchen timer to great effect! The content of most lessons is carefully graded and matched to the needs and interests of the age group, with frequent change of task and good coverage of the four skills. Most teachers make good use of pair and group work and have positive relationships with their pupils. Occasionally relationships are not secure, which makes appropriate progress difficult. There is generally a productive atmosphere in lessons, and effective teaching combined with good motivation, enables most pupils to progress in the acquisition of new skills. The very best lessons are delivered with skill and enthusiasm and consist of a wide variety of logically linked activities, which flow seamlessly from beginning to end. In the few lessons that were only satisfactory, the pace was slow and the teacher did

not have the linguistic competence to deliver the lesson with confidence and fluency in the particular foreign language.

213. Pupils study French from Year 7 and top band pupils can opt to take German, Spanish or Latin in Year 8 and 9. The amount of time available for the second language is low in Key Stage 3 and only the most able linguists can achieve the level required to gain a higher GCSE grade. The annual exchange with France ensures that the department makes a strong contribution to the cultural development of some pupils and also enhances their linguistic skills. The department benefits from good leadership, which ensures that the good quality of teaching and learning is maintained. The languages teachers work well together as a team, documentation is good, and schemes of work are in place. Assessment procedures ensure that pupils' progress is monitored satisfactorily. Teachers and most pupils are clear about National Curriculum Levels and GCSE grades.

214. There has been some improvement since the last inspection. The department has good accommodation and resources. Teachers use a wider repertoire of teaching strategies. The department makes some use of ICT to raise standards. Attainment at Key Stage 3 has increased considerably and standards in GCSE Spanish are higher. The department under its new leadership has the potential to make significant improvements over the next years.

MUSIC

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

Strengths:

- Teaching and learning are good at both key stages
- Relationships are good at all levels, and music integrates well into the Arts Faculty.
- The recently appointed head of music is already having significant impact

Areas for improvement:

- ICT in music is non-existent, making it impossible to fulfil National Curriculum requirements, or to provide appropriate opportunities for composition in the GCSE course.
- Tuned percussion equipment is very limited, further inhibiting access to musical opportunities and the raising of standards.
- The provision of detailed success criteria in every project to underpin assessment procedures and practices.

216. GCSE results have been consistently above the national average, and although numbers entered have been small, they are good taking account of the numbers in the year group. The percentage of A* and A grades is twice the national average. In 2000, all but one of ten entered achieved grade C or better. Whilst this dropped to 75 per cent in 2001, this was from a larger entry. In this year group, girls' results remained high but less than half of the boys entered achieved grade C or better. The vast majority of pupils are at Level 5 or above at the end of Key Stage 3, above the national average. In 2001, about a third were assessed as working beyond national expectations, about double the proportion from previous years. In many lessons, attainment was well above the national average; this was seen in Year 7 work on pulse, rhythm and pitch, and in Year 8 work on triads. However, the small Year 10 group has a very wide ability range, and some were experiencing problems in performance with pulse, rhythm and fluency. The Year 11 group, showed very good research skills, and used their own musical experience as a framework. Instrumental teaching is provided by the LEA service, and no teaching was seen during the inspection week because the system is being changed from after school to within the school day. Some very good instrumental playing was heard. Extra curricular music is strong, with between 10 to 15 per cent of pupils taking part regularly, depending on whether a production is taking place. The Chamber Choir sings unaccompanied in three parts, and the school has been invited to provide a choir for a professional production of a Janacek opera next term.

Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the music curriculum, and attain well; abler pupils have good opportunities to work at an appropriate level.

217. Teaching and learning are good at all levels. Teaching was characterised by very good relationships, with pupils' strengths and weaknesses being very well understood. In a Year 7 class, the learning of new concepts was turned into an intensive fun activity, which achieved the desired results. Good quality planning, preparation and target setting lay a firm foundation for learning. There is an excellent work ethos. Pupils were seen learning by listening, observing, analysing, prior experience, parallels with other music, questioning, each other and, above all, by doing. In one Year 8 class working on triads, pupils not only learnt the nature of a triad, but put them into a historical context and understood the concept of their harmonic use.

218. Pupil response was very good at all levels. They are open and positive and are keen to succeed. Listening is acute and concentration deep. Attitudes and behaviour were excellent in almost all lessons, and in the one lesson where this was not so, the small group of boys concerned were dealt with calmly and effectively. There was evidence of independent learning, especially in Year 11.

219. Music was strong at the last inspection, and the new Head of Department is very effectively rebuilding the department. The curriculum is under intensive development, but already satisfies most National Curriculum requirements. Links with the Local Authority are good, and a joint concert with the Music Service is planned soon. Literacy and numeracy provision is good, but the lack of resources make the fulfilment of legal requirements in ICT impossible, as well as denying access to an important resource for composition work at GCSE Level. Assessment is adequate, but is being developed alongside the curriculum, and there is a need for clear criteria for success in each project. Further refinement needs to be done with National Curriculum Levelling at both the end of Key Stage 3 and at transfer from Key Stage 2. As well as the lack of ICT resources, there is a need for tuned percussion instruments, which would increase opportunities to raise attainment further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths:

- The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well structured, challenging and enjoyable which effectively helps pupils develop their intellectual, physical and creative abilities.
- Pupils behave very well and are enthusiastic. Relationships are very good and pupils work co-operatively and positively together.
- GCSE results in 2000 were well above national averages and better than expected in 2001.
- Leadership of the department is good and ensures clear educational vision. Teachers are committed and enthusiastic.

Areas for improvement:

- Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress to set pupils targets and learning goals and familiarise pupils with National Curriculum Levels.
- The formulation of numeracy, spiritual, moral, social and cultural, and citizenship policies.
- The implementation of the ICT policy.

221. Examination success over the last two years has become a strong feature of the physical education curriculum. In 2000, 70 per cent of pupils gained an A*-C grade. This was well above the national average of 51 per cent. All pupils entered gained an A*-G grade. The three girls who were entered gained a grade A. In 2001, 44 per cent of pupils achieved an A*-C grade. Although this figure falls well below the previous year's results, most pupils who opted for physical education achieved their best grade in this subject. All pupils entered in 2001 achieved an A* - G grade. Results for boys were close to national averages with half achieving grades A*-C but only a quarter of girls did so.

222. At Key Stage 3, teacher assessment of pupil attainment at the end of the last academic year showed over three-quarters of pupils working in line with national expectations or better; a third were assessed as working beyond national standards. Boys and girls attained equally.

223. Almost all pupils observed at both key stages are attaining in line with their age, ability and national expectations. Of the few pupils seen who were performing above national expectations, the majority were boys. At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are particularly good at applying skills accurately. They are also developing their knowledge and understanding of 'spatial awareness'. This was observed in a Year 9 mixed football lesson, where pupils were moving into space well in order to receive accurate passes. They successfully transfer these skills into Key Stage 4. This was apparent in a Year 10 football lesson and Year 10 rugby lesson where accuracy of passing was good. At Key Stage 4, pupils begin to select and combine skills well and appreciate tactics within the game situation. This was evident in a Year 11 badminton lesson, where pupils showed understanding of tactics when using the 'overhead clear shot'. Pupils' achievements in relation to standards on entry to the school are good and they make good progress as they move through the school.

224. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good due to the department's well-implemented policy of inclusion. The department has successfully adopted a variety of teaching and learning styles appropriate to pupils of different abilities within groups. However, the impact of setting by ability in some years can slow the pace of learning. For example, in a Year 9 dance class, the presence of some more articulate and creative pupils would have provided greater challenge and enhanced the pace and quality of learning. More able pupils achieve appropriately in line with their higher levels of ability. This was clear in the same Year 10 rugby lesson, where the more able boys and girls demonstrated very good running and ball handling skills.

225. The quality of teaching and learning in the department is good. In 93 per cent of lessons observed teaching was good or better, including 21 per cent where it was very good. The quality of learning matched the quality of teaching. The high quality of teaching has a great impact on the pace and productivity in lessons. It enhances the learning environment and promotes pupils' success and progress. All teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subject and teaching of physical skills. This was well displayed in a Year 8 mixed rugby lesson, where pupils learnt the skills of running and passing very well. Teachers' management of pupils is very good. Relationships with pupils are also very good. This was noticeable in a Year 8 gymnastics lesson. A large number of pupils worked very well when balancing on various parts of the body. Teachers produce lessons of great enjoyment, which promote high levels of enthusiasm and participation. This was epitomised in a Year 7 dance lesson. All pupils engaged energetically in performing dance movements to the beat of eight.

226. Short term planning is very good; however, short and long term planning must indicate levels of attainment. Well-planned lessons create structured learning environments, which allow for progression in learning. This, combined with pupils' very good co-operation and behaviour, means that lesson aims are accomplished. This was seen in a Year 7 netball lesson, where pupils learnt the rudimentary skills of passing and receiving well. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and set challenging tasks. This, linked to pupils' enthusiasm and willingness to learn, generates lessons where pupils work hard and extend their physical, intellectual and creative skills.

227. The department has addressed all the concerns about teaching noted at the last inspection. All lessons allow the pupils to plan, perform and evaluate their performance. This enables pupils to develop their independent learning skills and has resulted in the improvements in standards.

228. The department is developing its assessment procedures appropriately. Teachers assess pupils' performance and understanding of skills and tactics and plan accordingly. This happens within lessons and is also apparent in the long term. All pupils are assessed at the end of each unit. This information is collated at the end of each year and is reported to parents. The department has taken the step to introduce a procedure to collate evidence of pupils' progression. This needs to be developed to set pupils targets and learning goals and familiarise them with National Curriculum Levels.

229. The curriculum is broad and balanced at both key stages and meets statutory requirements. Assessment of the curriculum has affected its long term planning. A Junior Sports Leadership Award (JSLA) has been introduced into Year 11 core lessons. This gives more pupils an opportunity to gain an accreditation at the end of Key Stage 4. The physical education curriculum now offers girls the opportunity to take part in sports such as basketball, football and rugby. By addressing this equal opportunity issue, and introducing the JSLA award, many girls have regained their interest in physical education. Consequently the number of girls opting for GCSE physical education is increasing. The school is achieving an even split between boys and girls, thus reversing the national trend. Dance modules at Key Stage 3 enrich the curriculum. The lack of a separate dance course at Key Stage 4 needs to be addressed.

230. The department promotes the development of literacy skills by projecting key words around the physical education environment and by providing high quality visual displays. The idea of word walls in the gymnasium for gymnastics is commendable. The department must, however, implement its ICT policy in accordance with Curriculum 2000.

231. The department is developing and increasing its extra curricular provision. Activities are open to all pupils. The department is achieving more sporting success for both teams and individuals. The introduction of girls' football teams supported the formation of a local girls football club, with the help of Fulham FC.

232. Leadership of the department is good and ensures a clear vision for the future. Documentation is sound, but needs to include policies for numeracy, citizenship and the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Staff members work very well together. They are very well deployed and qualified and are good role models, who give willingly of their time. They work with energy and enthusiasm to develop physical education within the school. Internal accommodation is now excellent due to the recent addition of a new sports centre. The school is surrounded by extensive playing fields, although some of these belong to the local sports club rather than the school. Some pitches are currently out of action whilst issues related to drainage are addressed. The department has successfully addressed all the issues from the last inspection. The department is worthy of its 'Sportsmark' and 'FA Charter' status and clearly has the acumen and capacity to progress and succeed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths:

- The number of higher grades obtained in half-course GCSE are improving each year, with a quarter of pupils achieving an A* or A grade in 2001.
- Two-thirds of the teaching observed in lessons was good or better.
- Pupils benefit from the teacher's enthusiasm and very good subject knowledge.
- Very good discussions occur in some classes; facilitated by good relationships and the teacher's belief in the pupils' academic potential.
- High achievement in the small class that is studying for a full GCSE.

Areas for improvement:

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory and assessment during the key stage is underdeveloped.
- Pupils throughout the school lack a consistent, structured and detailed set of notes from which to learn and revise.
- Pupils do not benefit from the setting of targets, based on the systematic monitoring of their performance.
- Continued development of a range of tasks and teaching strategies to meet the needs of all pupils.

234. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is slightly below the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus, although the standards reached in classes were always satisfactory and good in two thirds of the lessons seen. For example, Year 9 pupils knew the definition of morality. Good analysis of a number of contentious issues, such as the bombing of an enemy's city, increased their awareness that moral issues are not necessarily clear. However, Key Stage 3 pupils only receive two thirds of the teaching time suggested in the local Agreed Syllabus and this is a factor in limiting attainment. Although pupils have a basic understanding of Christianity and other major religions, there is not sufficient time to develop in-depth knowledge or to reinforce understanding.

235. Good teaching occurs in the majority of Key Stage 3 lessons, enabling pupils to achieve well. Well-planned activities interest pupils; a Year 7 class enjoyed studying optical illusions as an introduction to the idea that individual experiences underlie different perceptions. The teacher effectively used mid-way summaries to consolidate the points made by Year 9 pupils. However, a scrutiny of the pupils' work over time shows that they do not produce a coherent body of knowledge that builds on earlier learning. Many had gaps in their books and there was a lack of detail. For example, Judaism was not well

covered and there was little evidence that pupils really understood the historical relationship between Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

236. The half course GCSE, which is taken by nearly the whole year group in Years 10 and 11, is taught in a third of the time given to comparable subjects for a full GCSE.

Although there has been a persistent pattern of about 8 per cent of the pupils receiving unclassified grades, many pupils make good progress. The number of A*-C grades is in line with national expectations and a good proportion of pupils obtain the top A* and A grades. In 2000, just over half achieved grades A*-C, including 70 per cent of girls entered but only 41 per cent of boys. These results were mirrored in the work seen during the inspection week. For instance, pupils in the top Year 11 set have a good appreciation of the range of Christian viewpoints on issues such as euthanasia and could quote the appropriate scriptures. Pupils know about Hillel's teaching on behaviour towards others. Pupils in lower sets have knowledge of the main points but ideas are not always sufficiently extended with, for example, superficial answers to a question about how the family influences religious thought. Grouping by ability, because the subject is set against others precludes some pupils from experiencing more detailed discussions.

237. Progress in lessons was at least good in the majority of lessons. This is the result of good teaching and the pupils' positive attitudes. A top Year 10 set reacted positively to the teacher's prodding questions about the nature of belief and was involved in an interesting debate about faith and superstition. Another Year 10 class quickly learnt to define these terms. Many pupils respond well to the teacher's skills in promoting discussion, and his technique of focusing on one answer to challenge assumptions and extend understanding. For example, pupils made some pertinent remarks when discussing whether religious beliefs underpinned all other values. They went on to highlight situations where other precepts, conceived as morally valuable, could possibly be at variance with Christian teaching. This good level of achievement was not always reflected in written work. In a few lessons, progress and achievement were only satisfactory, reflecting a low level of misbehaviour by a minority of pupils. Although the teacher successfully contained this, it nevertheless disrupted the pattern of good teaching and learning that had occurred.

238. Achievement over time, as indicated by a scrutiny of the pupils' work in books, was often disappointing when compared to the good standard of oral work in many classes. Appropriate use was made of specialist vocabulary and most pupils could demonstrate a basic understanding of the main Christian teaching and its influence on society. The work of the more able pupils was often commendable. For example, they gave perceptive explanations of different views about the existence of God. Well-informed formal teaching laid good foundations for their learning. However, across the whole ability range, there were examples of gaps in pupils' notes, which were often sparse and not presented in a structured manner. Pupils said it was hard to revise, although the teacher's revision notes had been helpful.

239. A small group of pupils study the full GCSE course in after school classes. In 2000, the seven pupils obtained an A* or A grade but there was no entry for the 2001 examination. There is currently a class in both Years 10 and 11. Achievement in the Year 11 mixed ability class is high. Pupils have a detailed recall of the life of Buddha, and the religious significance of key events. By the end of the lesson pupils had reinforced their understanding of the four Noble Truths and had taken part in quite a profound argument that centred on the view that 'All life is suffering'. The teacher has high expectations of academic ability and all the class, including pupils with special educational needs, respond positively and achieve well. Very good relationships are a feature of this class, with spontaneous applause for a boy who had given a good answer. This lesson, which the pupils did not want to leave, was characterised by laughter and a shared partnership in the learning process.

240. The teacher's expert knowledge and ability to promote relevant discussions, results in good learning in both key stages. Well-planned question and answer sessions increase understanding. Pupils are appreciative of the teacher's sensitivity and his willingness to help individuals. However, on occasions, the tempo of teaching is too quick and there is little time to fully consolidate learning and the articulation of ideas. Pupils do not benefit from a range of teaching strategies that would help them to reinforce understanding through active learning, and tasks are not always clearly defined to meet particular needs. Essays and

other forms of extended writing are not common and opportunities for research are infrequent.

241. The head of department is the only teacher of religious education. He has other curriculum responsibilities and teaches 24 different classes each week and all the examination work in Key Stage 4. Marking is onerous and presents organisational problems. It is a mark of the teacher's commitment that good, detailed comments were seen. Some action on implementing Key Stage 3 assessment has occurred. Poor resources were an issue in 1997 and this has been addressed. Pupils now have a good understanding of specialist vocabulary and the main features of other religions. Whilst attainment at the end Key Stage 3 is no longer completely in line with national expectations, the number of top grades in the Key Stage 4 exams has improved. Overall, progress since the last report and the leadership of the department is satisfactory.

BUSINESS EDUCATION

242. Overall, the quality of provision in business education is satisfactory.

Strengths:

- The department's readiness to teach the Business and Information Studies (BIS) course, which offers two GCSEs, in single time and to obtain results in line with national averages.
- Popularity as an option amongst pupils.
- Willingness of the department to accept new challenges, such as becoming a moderator at GCSE and implementing a GNVQ in business education from this September.

Areas for improvement:

- Insufficient time has been provided to teach two subjects to the high standards achieved in other subjects.
- Pupils are not systematically taught business studies concepts and theories in sufficient depth and in a consistent and structured manner.
- To develop revision techniques and to review the time spent on course work.

243. This is the last year that pupils will be entered for the business and information studies option, which allows pupils to gain two GCSEs. This has been taught in the time normally given to the teaching of one GCSE. From September 2001, all Year 10 pupils who want to study business education take a GNVQ course at either foundation or intermediate level.

244. The proportion of A*-C grades obtained in the summer GCSE examinations were slightly below the national average. This has been a consistent pattern since the last report. Other aspects of the examination results change from one year to the next. For example, in 2001, very few pupils achieved the top A* and A grades although this had been a positive feature of the 2000 results, although in that year there had been slightly fewer A*-C grades and a large number of pupils were ungraded, reflecting the poor completion of coursework. Pupils generally perform less well in business studies than they do in their other subjects.

245. During the week of the inspection, teachers were concentrating on delivering the information studies aspect of the course. In these classes, achievement was always satisfactory and good in half of the lessons, reflecting the quality of the teaching. The satisfactory classes could have been good if there had been a more persistent focus on key learning points and continuous hard work. In the better lessons, the teacher's good knowledge of ICT was used to enhance pupils' computer skills and they benefited as the teacher continuously circulated, offering help and advice. Pupils increased their understanding of how to effectively apply ICT skills within a business environment. They were aided by well-structured tasks, such as setting up a database using an integrated software package. The teacher was good at establishing a fine balance between their input and the requirement that pupils find their own solutions. Pupils achieve well in such circumstances, including those with special educational needs. The teacher had good

knowledge of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and effectively used this to maintain interest.

246. Scrutiny of coursework and pupils' work files indicates that the teaching of the business studies paper is less successful. Coursework assignments are marked well, but too much time is spent on this aspect of the course, which is only worth 20 per cent of the final marks. Too little time is spent on teaching concepts and theories. Pupils' work in their files lacks a consistent structure, depth and detail. These files are not a good basis for revision and the department has responded by buying revision guides that are freely available to the pupils. Pupils lack the expertise to present a good overview of business activity and to stress the relationships between different aspects of business behaviour. For example, most pupils do not make substantial links between business finance and external factors, such as world interest rates or globalisation. There is little information gained from local businesses, visits and visitors. Pupils have discussed an article on e-commerce, but there are too few other references to the fact that business education is a living subject. These omissions limit pupils' ability to achieve the high grades that they obtain in other subjects, although the teaching is sufficiently strong to enable them to reach standards that are now broadly in line with those achieved nationally.

247. Members of staff in the department have recently been trained in the implementation of the new business education GNVQ. The course has only been in place for a week, so no evaluation of pupils' overall attainment or achievements can be made. However, the teaching seen was always satisfactory and often good, supporting pupils' achievement. The teacher has established good practice of a formal introduction to units, so that pupils have sufficient understanding of objectives to underpin their new learning. This helps them make good progress, as does mid-lesson summaries of the main features of their learning. Good question and answer sessions extend understanding about, for example, strategies for increasing profit. Teaching is less successful when pupils' concentration is allowed to waver and the teacher is slow to respond.

248. Management of the department is satisfactory. A sound handbook has some good features, such as an analysis of the potential contribution of business studies to spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Coursework is well marked and some effective decisions about resources have been made, such as buying half sets of texts in order to offer pupils a range of views. A commercial pack has been bought to help in the delivery of the GNVQ course, but there is no overview of the delivery of the whole course. There are no references to links with the local business community or to a wide range of teaching and learning styles. Work experience is not used to enhance business studies. Good targets have been set in the departmental development plan in the past but the review and evaluation of these targets has been tardy. Assessment is a strength of the department but the setting of specific targets for individual pupils is not well developed. The subject makes a good contribution to both literacy and numeracy.

249. Pupils no longer achieve above the national average in GCSE studies as they did at the time of the last report. To this extent, the department has not been an improving one, although the recent implementation of the GNVQ course indicates a readiness to accept change and provide new curriculum opportunities for pupils with a wide range of ability.

DRAMA

250. Overall, the quality of provision in drama is very good.

Strengths:

- Teaching and learning at both key stages.
- Relationships and the communication of enthusiasm from teachers to pupils.
- The integral role played by drama in the arts faculty.

Areas for improvement:

- Links with English are not fully developed, an issue at the last inspection.
- Development of drama specific ICT and of lighting resources, both of which currently limits access to improved standards especially at GCSE.
- Detailed criteria for success in each project as part of the assessment process.

251. GCSE results in drama vary from year to year, and are normally above the national average; however, in 2000, they were just below the national average, rising again to above in 2001. The percentage of A* and A grades is twice the national average, with nearly two-fifths of pupils achieving these grades in 2001. There is a strong tradition of extra curricular performances, and this is being carried on by the new Head of Department. One Year 7 class observed were receiving their first drama lesson, and learning a totally new set of skills; it was a steep learning curve and the class was very successful, and work was above the national average. At all levels new knowledge and new skills were being developed and reinforced very effectively. This was very well demonstrated in a Year 10 lesson using the W. H. Auden poem, 'The night mail', as a stimulus, and groups were using choral speech, speech rhythm, sound layering and movement to produce very effective work. Pupils in the school are verbally fluent and use language well. The nature of drama content and teaching methods is such as to give full equality of access to pupils of all abilities, from those with special needs to the abler pupil, and standards are high.

252. Teaching and learning is very good at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. The very small number of pupils presenting challenging behaviour is being very well dealt with, and this factor is unlikely to continue to be an issue as the new head of department consolidates his position in the school. The characteristics of this good teaching and learning included very good planning and target setting, with a clear overview of the course; pupils were observed to be learning through exposition, questioning, negotiation, experimentation, observation, discovery, trial and error, and whole class and group work. Assessment was linked to good quality teacher feedback based on very good relationships. Overall drama teaching ensures full access for all pupils.

253. Pupil response is good in most lessons. In the best lessons, there was commitment, hard work, concentration, fascination and a sense of fun. In one Year 7 class, there was already a tangible sense of corporate identity which supported their drama work. Those with special education needs are fully integrated. There is an excellent work ethos in a mutually supportive environment.

254. Comments concerning progress since the last inspection should be viewed in the context that there is a new teacher in charge. The need for further refinement in some aspects of drama work is in hand, and planning is now very detailed to ensure continuity. The issue concerning the lack of links with English is still in evidence, but has been partly addressed.

255. The curriculum is appropriate, but is being further developed by the new teacher in charge; full account needs to be taken of the requirements of the speaking and listening attainment target in English. Literacy is very strong in drama, and pupils use language very well. Drama makes a very good contribution to pupils' multi-cultural awareness. Assessment, based on teacher verbal feedback inside lessons, is on a firm foundation, but criteria for success need further refinement. Leadership is good, and a good foundation exists for further development. Although the new Head of Drama has been in post for less

than a week, he has already made a major impact, and working relationships are very good. Resources are generally good, but lighting needs to be upgraded to provide support for some aspects of the GCSE course, and thus to raise standards yet further. Similarly, provision of drama specific ICT would impact positively on standards.