

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HORNSEY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

London, N8

LEA area: Haringey

Unique reference number: 102153

Headteacher: Ms Jean Lebrecht

Reporting inspector: Mrs Sylvia Richardson  
1038

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> February - 1<sup>st</sup> March 2002

Inspection number: 194369

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 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Girls
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Lucy Moy-Thomas
Date of previous inspection:	25 <sup>th</sup> November 1996

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1038	Mrs Sylvia Richardson	Registered inspector		The school's results and how well pupils and students achieve How well are pupils and students taught? How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils and students?
9163	Mr Geoffrey Humphrey	Lay inspector		Pupils' and students' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils and students? How good is the partnership with parents?
19530	Ms Jennifer Bray	Team inspector; Co-ordinating the inspection of the sixth form	Geography	How well is the school led and managed?
20629	Mr John Bryson	Team inspector	English Drama Literacy	
12630	Mr David Naylor	Team inspector	Mathematics Numeracy	
23188	Mrs Virginia Maunder	Team inspector	Science Chemistry Biology	
15406	Mrs Jennifer Adey	Team inspector	Art and design	
14522	Mr Ian Smith	Team inspector	Design and technology	
15576	Mr David Nebesnuick	Team inspector	History	
17985	Mr Hugh Magee	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
13054	Mr Michael Pennington	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages – French and German	
8696	Mr Abul Maula	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages – Bengali and Turkish	
11672	Mr Peter Harle	Team inspector	Music	
18888	Ms Jan Boulton	Team inspector	Physical education	
30317	Mrs Elizabeth Barthaud	Team inspector	Religious education	
2480	Mrs Christine Gilder	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
22957	Mr Avtar Sherri	Team inspector	Equality of opportunity English as an additional language	



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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Hornsey School for Girls is larger than the average secondary school, with 1389 girls on roll. It serves an ethnically and socially diverse neighbourhood, with many pupils coming from homes with no tradition of extended secondary education. Over 60 per cent of pupils have English as an additional language and 85 per cent are from ethnic minorities. One hundred and fifty-one pupils are recent refugees. Three hundred and twelve pupils are on the register of special educational need, well above average. The relatively small number of girls with statements of special educational need does not accurately reflect the large numbers with significant special needs. Attainment on entry was below average until 1999, but is now improving and in 2001 was average. There is a significant minority of pupils who do not complete their secondary education at Hornsey and others who enter later than the beginning of Year 7. Many of these girls are just beginning to learn English and some have special educational needs. Each year group consequently changes its profile over the five years of compulsory secondary education. The school was recognised as a beacon for the quality of its examination results in 2000. It has just been awarded specialist college status for the performing arts. It shares its sixth form with Highgate Wood School.

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

This is a good school with some very good features. The girls' achievements and progress are good as a result of mainly good teaching and their positive attitudes to learning. Results in national tests and examinations are good and show significant improvement on the standards with which the girls enter the school. Leadership is very good. The school has below average attendance, especially in the sixth form, which increases the unit costs and reduces the value for money, which is nonetheless satisfactory.

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

- Many girls achieve well. Examination and test results are above average in comparison with similar schools, and in the case of English, they are well above average.
- Teaching is good in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form and in much of Key Stage 3.
- The progress made by pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language is very good, especially when supported by specialist teaching.
- The atmosphere in the school is very good, with evident respect for each others' values and beliefs. Relationships are very good, supporting personal development and learning very well.
- Equality of access and opportunity to all aspects of the life of the school is very good, as is provision for girls' cultural and social development.
- There are very good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development.
- The headteacher and key senior staff provide very good leadership and the governing body is very effective. They all contribute well to the school's clear values and sense of direction.

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

- Poor attendance impairs the progress of some girls and limits the standards they finally reach. Checking has not been sufficiently rigorous, especially when absences are first noted.
- The National Numeracy Strategy is not fully in place, as there is no school-wide policy and few contributions by subjects to improving pupils' numeracy.
- Provision for teaching ICT (information and communication technology) is inadequate in Years 8 and 9 and in the planning of some subjects.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Improvement since the last inspection in 1997 has been good. Almost all the issues raised in the last



report have been addressed at least satisfactorily and, in many cases, well. Behaviour has improved and is now good overall. A carefully applied policy on behaviour, including one-day exclusions, has contributed to the improvements in behaviour but it has kept the levels of short, fixed-term exclusions disproportionately high, especially for African Caribbean girls. There have been virtually no permanent exclusions. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is now generally very good. Standards have risen since the last inspection, particularly in English. There has been significant investment in computers for teaching, learning and administration and senior staff set a good example to staff and pupils in the use of computers. However, not all teachers use the data generated about pupils' needs and progress well enough, and some teachers do not yet incorporate the use of computers into their lessons. The school has participated in projects to raise the attainment of students of African Caribbean and Turkish heritage and has put considerable effort into its support for pupils of ethnic minorities. This has resulted in improvement in their attainment.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

The trend of improvement by the age of 14 has been above the national trend, when judged by the average points score achieved in national tests. Girls achieve well in English by the age of 14. In 2001, they significantly exceeded the national average and the average for similar schools. The results in mathematics were well below national averages but in line with the results achieved in similar schools. Pupils' results in mathematics are below those achieved in science, and are well below the results achieved in English. Attainment in science in 2001 was below the national average, but average when compared with similar schools.

In 2001 pupils aged 16 attained standards in line with the national average in GCSE English. Results are well above average when compared with similar schools. Pupils' achievement is good in relation to their starting points but is affected by the high proportion of pupils whose knowledge of English is not good enough for them to achieve higher grade passes. Results for all girls, whatever their previous educational history or language of the home, were higher in English than in several other subjects. A high percentage of girls gained A\* or A grades. The number of pupils in Year 11 who achieved grades A\* to C in GCSE mathematics was well below the national averages. There was no A\* grade awarded in 2001 to any pupil in Year 11. In 2001, results as measured by the percentage of A\* to C grades fell slightly from the previous two years. These results and the results in the previous two years were well above those achieved by similar schools. The average mathematics points score in GCSE is below science, and well below English. However, the school enters virtually all pupils for the GCSE mathematics examinations. Results in science were broadly in line with the national average, but were well above average when compared with similar schools. Results in the sixth form are in line with the national average overall, with considerable variation between subjects, and this variation is dependent upon the particular groups of students who choose a subject. In the light of their previous learning and results, for most girls, the standards reached represent good progress and good achievement.

Pupils' and students' current work indicates that standards are slightly better than the picture provided by the test and examination results, as they are being stretched by the good teaching in most subjects. The school did not meet all of its very challenging targets last year, but is better placed to do so in 2002.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	<b>Good.</b> The majority of pupils show interest in and commitment to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	<b>Good.</b> The majority of pupils show consideration towards each other and to adults. Their good behaviour contributes well to their learning.
Personal development and relationships	<b>Very good.</b> Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and they support each other well. Relationships throughout the whole school community are very good, and inter-ethnic friendships have a positive influence on the atmosphere of the school.
Attendance	<b>Unsatisfactory</b> in the main school and <b>poor</b> in the sixth form. Punctuality is also a weakness. Procedures for checking attendance lack rigour. There is a lack of clarity about responsibilities, causing delays in contacting the home.

The ethos of the school is a particular strength, because it provides a secure and supportive learning environment in which the vast majority of pupils and students respond very well. The poor attenders also receive good support despite their inability to attend on a regular basis.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good in Years 7 and 8, unsatisfactory in Year 9	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.*

Reading, writing, listening and speaking are well taught and the National Literacy Strategy is making a real impact in Years 7 and 8. The National Numeracy Strategy has not yet influenced the teaching of number in subjects other than mathematics, where it has been beneficial. Teaching meets pupils' needs well. Expert learning support helps pupils with special educational needs to learn and many departments have effective strategies to support pupils' learning. Pupils with English as an additional language are well taught and make good progress. Teaching is variable in some subjects, adversely affecting pupils' commitment in French and religious education in particular. Some of the teaching of Year 9 is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons, including dependency on temporary teachers who did not know the classes very well, and the very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and at the early stages of learning English. Teachers do not always take sufficient action to meet these pupils' learning needs. Some over-direction of their work resulted in pupils losing interest and misbehaving. Learning is generally good. Pupils and students are keen to learn and pay attention to their teachers and to each other. They respond well to stimulating teaching and make good progress. Achievement improves the longer they are in the school.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	<b>Good.</b> A good range of options, and open access to all courses provides very good equality of opportunity. The curriculum review is taking all relevant national factors and girls' needs into account.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	<b>Very good.</b> Pupils are very well supported by the specialist teachers and make very good progress. They are not consistently well supported by all subject teachers.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	<b>Good.</b> Early identification of pupils' language learning needs helps them to develop their English and tackle their learning. However, insufficient specialist support limits pupils' progress towards the success in national tests and examinations of which they are capable.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>Very good.</b> The school's careful fostering of social and cultural development results in an ethos in which these characteristics are strong. There are good opportunities for spiritual development. Moral development is also good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	<b>Good.</b> The school has excellent support structures for pupils who have individual problems. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good.

Parents believe that the school is doing a good job and they appreciate the efforts made on behalf of their daughters. The partnership with parents is developing well. The curriculum meets almost all statutory requirements, except for the time available for religious education and information and communication technology. Planning for curriculum change is good. The care and support for pupils and students are good overall and are very well managed. However, there is insufficient co-ordination of staff efforts and follow-up of absences is too slow to tackle effectively the problem of poor attendance. Some parents condone their daughters' absences.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	<b>Very good.</b> The headteacher provides clear educational direction and a strong framework of values for the school. She is very well supported by her leadership team, who provide wide ranging expertise and high levels of commitment to school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	<b>Very well.</b> They have brought specific expertise and vision to the school. They are strongly committed to the school's effective development and have taken an active part in planning changes in accommodation.
The school's evaluation of its performance	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There are some recent developments of high quality, such as the departmental self-reviews in English and mathematics. In general, self-evaluation is satisfactory and improving.
The strategic use of resources	<b>Good overall.</b> Resources are adequate in all subject areas. Accommodation is unsatisfactory in some subjects and insufficient in many.

Leadership is very good overall and very good at the most senior levels. The effectiveness of most heads of department is an important factor in the school's improved results. Plans for a Public Finance Initiative

will transform the poor and inadequate accommodation. The school has become extremely well versed in applying the principles of best value to its budget planning.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school promotes high expectations of what their daughters can achieve.</li> <li>• Their daughters make good progress and achieve well.</li> <li>• The school promotes positive attitudes and the standards of behaviour are good.</li> <li>• The school is approachable and listens to what parents have to say.</li> <li>• Their daughters enjoy school.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of the 314 parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a minority (15 per cent) did not feel that the school kept parents well informed about their daughters' progress.</li> <li>• A minority (16 per cent) did not feel that the school promoted a close partnership with parents.</li> <li>• A minority (13 per cent) did not feel that their child gets the right amount of homework.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with the positive views held by parents. The school works very hard to keep parents well informed about pupils' and students' progress. The school is very active in promoting a close working relationship with parents. The amount of homework set is generally appropriate.

**INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM**

The sixth form of this large 11-18 comprehensive school has 203 students and has expanded from 120 students five years ago. Most students are from ethnic minorities and many speak English as an additional language. A significant minority require special educational needs support. Well over half of the students from Year 11 continue into the sixth form and some students attend courses at Hornsey from the consortium partner school. Students embark either on a two-year programme leading to A level examinations or on a range of foundation, intermediate and advanced vocational courses.

**HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS**

The sixth form caters well for its students through a wide range of courses and provides a very supportive environment for their personal development. Teaching in the sixth form is good in most subjects and there is some very good teaching.

**Strengths**

- The very good leadership with a clear vision for the future.
- The open access policy which encourages students to pursue sixth form studies.
- The range of AS and A level and vocational courses offered.
- The good quality of teaching, so that students are challenged to learn independently.
- The very good quality of personal support for students and their positive attitude to the sixth form.

**What could be improved**

- The low level of attendance and punctuality.
- The provision of statutory religious education.
- Enrichment courses do not include sufficient opportunities for physical education.

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

**THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS**

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
<b>Art</b>	<b>Good:</b> results were well above the national average in 2001. Students are achieving well as the result of good teaching.
<b>Biology</b>	<b>Satisfactory:</b> attainment is below average but standards have improved slightly over the last year. Teaching is satisfactory but marking does not sufficiently enable students to enhance their performance. Students work hard to compensate for low attainment at the age of 16, and this gives a momentum to their learning.
<b>Chemistry</b>	<b>Good:</b> results are below the national average but have improved. Good subject knowledge, expertise and commitment are key factors in the good teaching. High expectations promote positive student attitudes.
<b>English</b>	<b>Good:</b> results are in line with national averages in A level and AS examinations. Students taking GCSE re-sits do well. Teaching is very good. Students are intellectually challenged and supported.
<b>Geography</b>	<b>Good:</b> there was no A level group in 2001. Staff have good subject knowledge and their enthusiasm motivates students of a wide range of abilities to succeed. Teaching is good.
<b>History</b>	<b>Good:</b> results at both AS and A2 level are above the national average. Attainment is improving. Staff have strong subject knowledge and teaching is good.
<b>Information Technology</b>	<b>Satisfactory:</b> results meet the national average in both A level IT and IT Key Skills. Teaching is good in A level classes and satisfactory in IT skills classes.
<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Satisfactory:</b> standards were in line with the national expectations in 2001. Results of students re-sitting the GCSE examinations are below the school's expectations, mainly due to unsatisfactory attendance. Staff have very good subject knowledge and teaching is good.
<b>French</b>	<b>Satisfactory:</b> there is now no A level group in French this year. Results in French have been below average, and there were small numbers in each year group.

The following additional subjects were sampled: AVCE Business, Business Studies, Bengali, Drama, Economics, German, Turkish, Health and Social Care, Key Skills, Media Studies, Physics and Psychology. Teaching was good overall and student attitudes were positive.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	There is very good quality personal support throughout Years 12 and 13 and students respond well. They are well inducted into the sixth form and information about available courses is good. They are well informed about career options and opportunities beyond the sixth form. Procedures for monitoring student progress are satisfactory.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good and very well supported by the school's leadership team and the governors. There is clear educational direction for the future. Strengths and weaknesses have been identified and development planning is good. The performance of all groups of students is analysed in detail although not yet used sufficiently to guide curricular planning in some subjects.



## STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They are well taught and challenged.</li><li>• They are helped to study independently.</li><li>• Work is thoroughly assessed.</li><li>• The choice of courses suits their talents and aspirations.</li><li>• They enjoy the sixth form and recommend it.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They were not always well advised about sixth form options.</li><li>• There is an insufficient range of additional activities.</li></ul>

Students are very positive about the sixth form and the guidance and support they receive. The strengths identified by students are well founded. The inspectors believe that students were well advised about courses available in the sixth form but less well about other options. The guidance has now been reviewed. The range of activities is satisfactory.

## COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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



## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards in comparison with all schools nationally are generally average. In comparison with schools with similar intakes, standards are well above average. The school was awarded Beacon Status in 2000/2001 for its examination results, its work and achievements. The award recognised that the school's results in National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations added considerable value to pupils' earlier attainment.
2. When pupils who were 14 or 16 in 2001 entered the school, their attainment was below the national average. A very high proportion had special educational needs (SEN). In relation to their prior attainment and learning difficulties, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and their standards of achievement are very good. They gain confidence as learners, developing their basic skills sufficiently well in most cases to be able to take advantage of the learning opportunities the school offers.
3. Factors that contribute to the school's ability to improve pupils' performance in examinations and to enable them to achieve well include the prompt action of the specialist teachers of English as an additional language and of special educational needs to identify needs. When students from refugee and minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who are new arrivals to the school and to this country, enter the school, their levels of English language needs are promptly identified and assessed. The assessment procedures are particularly well developed and are effective in gathering all the important background information to help teachers. There is a short withdrawal programme to support mid-phase admissions of students who require individual attention. This is in addition to the induction programme for Year 7 students. These pupils and students respond well to the good quality support they receive and many make very good progress, and make at least satisfactory progress compared to others across the subjects. There are, however, some pupils, often later entrants to the school, whose knowledge of English is insufficient to enable them to gain access to the higher grades of GCSE of which they are intellectually capable, as they cannot express themselves in writing sufficiently well. They have a significant impact on the school's overall results at the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.
4. At the age of 14, in National Curriculum tests, pupils' results in English were well above average in 2001. They were well below average in mathematics and below average in science. Overall, results are average when compared with all schools nationally for the last three years. When compared with schools with a similar intake, they are well above average, confirming that the school adds value to low prior attainment as pupils move through the school. The trend in the school's National Curriculum points score was above the national trend between 1997 and 2001. English has generally been above the national average. Mathematics has been well below and science below, although both have improved.
5. Attainment is average in information and communication technology only in Year 7, where pupils have a taught lesson in ICT once a week, and in the GNVQ IT courses for 14 to 16 year olds. The most recent teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 3 shows pupils achieving in line with national averages, but this was an overestimation based on incomplete evidence of attainment in a few subjects, and inconsistent application of national assessment criteria.
6. Over the last three years there has been fluctuation in examination results at the age of 16, reflecting the variability in the previous attainment of the pupils in each year group. In 2001, the percentage of pupils attaining five or more higher grade passes at GCSE was close to the national average, although the cohort had much lower than average attainment at the age of eleven. The very high proportion of girls who attained at least one GCSE pass puts this school's results in the top 5 per cent of performance in the country. The trend of improvement in the school's results when judged by the points awarded for all passes was better than the national trend over a three

year period up to and including 2001. When Hornsey's results are compared with schools with a similar intake, results are well above average.

7. Results in English at GCSE were slightly above the national average in 2001, with a very high proportion of A\* and A grades being achieved. A higher than average proportion of the pupils in Year 11 also studied English literature and attained results above the national average, with a good representation of A\* and A grades. Mathematics results were well below the national average, and few students obtained A grade passes. There were no passes at the highest grade of A\*. Results in science were in line with the national average but highest-grade passes were above average. Almost all girls in the year entered and at least obtained an A\* to G grade.
8. Results were above average in GCSE examinations in art and design, Bengali, Turkish and physical education. They were in line with national averages in drama, based on an unusually high proportion of the year entering the examinations, and below average in design and technology, French and German, geography and history. Music produced a significant number of A\* passes, although results overall were below average. There was no GCSE course in information and communication technology.
9. The work in lessons and in pupils' books confirms for the most part similar standards as those indicated by the results in 2001. However, it is clear that greater stability in staffing, good teaching and better course plans are having an impact on standards of work in many subjects, and the work seen was better than last year's results predict.
10. Pupils generally make good progress in lessons. Their motivation and good teaching assist and support them to overcome obstacles related to their prior learning, special educational needs and competence in writing English. Pupils' reading is generally developing well and most teachers, using the principles in the National Literacy Strategy, are supporting the development of pupils' writing, spelling and handwriting well, with the result that achievement is improving for all. There is no whole school numeracy policy to ensure that pupils' numerical skills and understanding are progressively developed across the school and this affects the rate of pupils' and students' progress in developing number skills. There are few examples of pupils using other than basic numerical skills effectively in other subjects. Pupils use only basic number work in their projects, such as occasional production of bar charts. Quantitative analysis is generally underdeveloped.
11. Pupils' and students' ICT (information and communication technology) capability as they move through the school does not develop sufficiently and attainment is unsatisfactory. Year 7 pupils make good progress in developing their keyboard skills and ICT vocabulary in their weekly specialist lesson. Apart from Year 7, the unsatisfactory achievement is due to the absence of a planned and integrated programme of work across the curriculum. There is no difference in the rate of progress of pupils from different backgrounds or of different abilities.

### **Sixth form**

12. Students study courses at a range of levels in the sixth form. As entry to the sixth form is open, many pupils begin their courses with lower results from their previous GCSE examinations than would be the case in other schools. This 'open access' policy results in below average overall results, but these results mask the good achievement in the sixth form, with many girls attaining better results, and going on to university and other further and higher education courses than might otherwise be expected.
13. The number of students choosing to study A Level English literature in Year 13 has increased and A level English literature examination results in 2001 were in line with the national average. Achievement is good when related to students' GCSE results. This is because teaching is very good. In the new AS examination, students' results were satisfactory, with the vast majority of students continuing on to A2 courses subsequently. GCSE English language results are good in the sixth form.
14. Results in mathematics at A level in 2001 were in line with national averages and were below

average in the previous year. The work of students currently in Year 13 is in line with course expectations. However, groups in Year 12, where there are students who are inadequately qualified for A Level work, are below national expectations. Results of students re-sitting GCSE are less than satisfactory. Many students in these groups do not attend regularly and this impacts on standards.

15. The A level examination results in biology in 2001 were well below the national average. No students were awarded the higher A and B grades. The proportion of students gaining A to E grades was down on the previous year. There was a corresponding drop in the average point score per student to 3.0 compared with the national average of 5.25. There has been a sharp decline in standards since 1998. However, when account is taken of students' GCSE grades at the start of the course, these results represent satisfactory achievement. In chemistry, A level examination results for 2001 were below the national average for all maintained schools. There was a decrease over the previous year in the proportion of students achieving higher grades A and B. Nonetheless, when account is taken of the students' GCSE grades at the start of the course, this represents satisfactory achievement.
16. Results in other subjects vary from year to year and some subjects have only small entries, which makes comparison with national average results unreliable. Art, for example, had a small entry but very good results. Results in computer studies and drama were well below the national average. All students who completed their courses passed the GNVQ course in Health and Social Care. Results were also good in the Business Studies and Leisure and Tourism courses.

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

17. The attitudes of pupils towards their learning in Years 7 to 11 are good. The vast majority demonstrate interest and enthusiasm for their work and make a positive contribution to lessons. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and returned questionnaires confirmed that their daughters are happy at school, behave well and show respect for adults and each other. They felt that the school promotes high expectations to which pupils and students respond in a positive way.
18. Pupils in Year 7, who are drawn from almost 60 feeder primary schools, settle quickly into the school routines and within weeks develop a close social cohesion. They demonstrate enthusiasm for their work and are keen to participate, particularly in practical activities. For example, in a music lesson, girls showed excellent attitudes and were bubbling with enthusiasm, responding very well to the teacher's instructions. In a physical education lesson, they showed high levels of interest and asked very perceptive questions. In a history lesson, they enjoyed taking part in role-play activities.
19. Pupils in Year 8 continue to develop their good attitudes to learning. There was an excellent example of both independent and co-operative learning in an English lesson on *Romeo and Juliet*. Girls work well in pairs on mapping exercises in geography. In Year 9, the same characteristics continue to develop: in an English lesson, pupils made an excellent contribution during discussion of poetry, expressing clear and informed opinions with confidence. In mathematics, they answered challenging questions, not being afraid to risk a wrong or partial answer.
20. As pupils progress through the school, the interest and enthusiasm for learning of those who attend on a regular basis continue to develop. In mathematics, for example, Year 10 pupils were very motivated and worked quickly and purposefully. In a PE lesson, where Year 11 girls were learning to play badminton, they were able to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their partners' game objectively but with mature sensitivity. In many lessons, older pupils show good respect and interest in the presentations of their peers, even on occasions with spontaneous applause.
21. Pupils and students with special educational needs are highly motivated to learn and generally concentrate well. They respond well to coaxing and challenge and the majority persevere to complete tasks. Attitudes to learning are very good and pupils show pride in their work and

progress. They value very highly the support they receive from the SEN department and do not regard withdrawal lessons as a stigma. For girls experiencing the most severe difficulties with their behaviour and relationships, the school's support and intervention enable them to make progress and move on. In many cases, the attendance of these pupils also improves markedly and is well sustained subsequently.

22. Behaviour overall is good, although there is extensive use of one-day exclusions to deal with poor behaviour. Pupils are generally polite and courteous to each other and towards adults, although there is some jostling and pushing, particularly around the two dining rooms at break time. Pupils and students show very good respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others and have a good understanding of the impact that their actions can have on their peers, teachers and support staff. Pupils are caring towards each other and demonstrate high levels of tolerance. They have the confidence to discuss any unacceptable events or behaviour with a member of staff. Pupils in the main school and students in the sixth form express complete faith that the school will respond positively and sensitively to any problems they discuss with a member of staff, irrespective of whether the problem emanates from within or outside school.
23. In the past year, there have been high levels of fixed period exclusions, particularly amongst pupils who are of African Caribbean heritage. These are mostly of one day's duration, allowing the school to involve parents in dealing with poor behaviour.
24. All pupils, including those who find learning, concentration and regular attendance difficult, those who come from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, those who are new to the United Kingdom and have limited use of the English language, are fully included in the life and work of the school. This results in very good cultural and racial integration and a sense of harmony throughout the school. Overall, relationships throughout the entire school are very good.
25. Pupils respond well to the opportunities provided for them to show initiative and take responsibility. There is a school council with elected representatives from all tutor groups in Years 7 to 11. The council is consulted by school management on issues associated with the amenities, lunchtime clubs, after-school activities, pupil welfare and school rules. During the inspection, the school council was preparing questions for selected councillors to put to a local Member of Parliament when he visits the school later in the term. The council also has control of its own budget. Year 10 pupils provide peer mentoring for Year 8 girls on health issues. All pupils and students benefit from the positive influence of a school ethos which encourages them to develop as mature individuals.
26. Attendance in Years 7 and 8 is satisfactory, but it is unsatisfactory for Years 9, 10 and 11. Overall attendance is unsatisfactory and below the national average for pupils in these years. Post-registration truancy occurs occasionally, but is mostly detected quickly and is not a major cause of this unsatisfactory position.
27. Morning punctuality for pupils and students in all years is poor: this is largely the result of poor and congested local transport. Pupils and students arriving late for the first lesson disrupt the learning in many classes. Punctuality through the day is satisfactory. The good learning attitudes and very good relationships have a positive impact on the quality of learning and achievement and these have, as a result, shown significant improvement since the last inspection. Attendance and punctuality have not improved since the last inspection.

### **Sixth form**

28. The attitudes to learning of students attending the sixth form are also good. They enjoy discussion on challenging issues and are developing well as independent learners. Girls who attend regularly develop as mature and thoughtful learners. For example, in a Year 12 psychology lesson, students demonstrated very mature attitudes during a discussion on obedience in the context of carrying out an instruction that might harm another individual. In a Year 12 science lesson on the cardiovascular system, girls responded in a very mature way to aspects of the lesson that could have made some feel quite squeamish. In English, excellent learning attitudes emerged when girls shared the enthusiasm of the teacher. In Year 13 classes, there is often good collaborative

working and high quality discussion, for example, in mathematics and in art, where there was a supportive and warm working atmosphere.

29. Post 16 students also have a sixth form council that promotes its own agenda as well as being consulted by school management. Pupils also help to organise some of the after-school activities. Older students are offered and respond well to training, so that they can become peer mentors for pupils in Year 7.
30. Attendance in the sixth form is poor. Places have been in the past routinely held open for students on sixth form courses in both Years 12 and 13 who have had very poor attendance throughout the academic year and this is one of the factors which has skewed attendance figures overall. During the week of inspection, attendance was as low as 50 per cent in a significant minority of sixth form lessons and 75 per cent in a number of others. Unsatisfactory and poor attendance impairs the progress of some girls and limits the standards they finally reach.

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

31. Teaching is good for the most part. There is much which is very good and some teaching is excellent. Teaching is at its best in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. There are also some good examples in Years 7 and 8. There was a minor concentration of unsatisfactory teaching in Year 9. Teaching is wholly good in English and music in Key Stages 3 and 4, where four out of every five lessons are very well taught. In mathematics, physical education and history, the majority of the teaching is good and in these subjects is at least satisfactory in the main school.
32. The best teaching encourages pupils to share their views and work together to improve everyone's learning. This characteristic was evident in a religious education lesson in Year 11, when insistent but low key prompting by the teacher resulted in pupils reflecting deeply on their own knowledge and exploring the concept of their relationship with the environment. The adoption of this method of teaching ensured that all pupils could make significant progress during the course of the lesson and the theme made a real impact on them.
33. In a Year 11 drama lesson, reflection and action went hand in hand, as girls prepared their pre-examination practical work. Clear instructions from the teacher, combined with calm and reassuring delivery, ensured that all pupils could become thoroughly involved with their task and prepare well. Probing analysis and questioning encouraged pupils to analyse their own work and objectively and helpfully assess each other. In this atmosphere, by the end of the lesson, when pupils presented their performances, they could ask perceptive questions of each other and give sensitive and concerned responses.
34. In Year 7 in a music lesson where teaching was very good, the lesson planning was a key factor in ensuring very good learning. Pupils were being introduced to Chinese music and good use of questioning enabled the teacher to convey some very complex concepts. In a music lesson in Year 10, very appropriate materials supported a GCSE task very well and this too enabled pupils to grasp some very difficult concepts. Teaching in music is generally characterised by good relationships where strengths and weaknesses are well known, leading to well-focused questioning and the creation of a most purposeful atmosphere in the music room. Planning is also good, with some very good examples of personal target-setting in all lessons. Routes to success are made clear through individual feedback which refines these targets and pushes them further on, as appropriate to the needs of each pupil.
35. Teachers' subject expertise is generally good and often very good, having a real impact on pupils' attitudes to their subjects. For example, in a Year 10 physical education lesson (PE), the teacher was expert enough to be able to study and analyse pupils' performance and guide them well on technique and personal fitness and health related exercise. The use of vivid description enabled a teacher in a Year 7 history lesson to bring to life the key features of what it would be like to live in a medieval town. This caught pupils' imaginations and made them want to contribute their own ideas, as well as ensuring that the subject matter would stay with them as the basis for the rest of the unit of work. In design and technology, pupils' interest and sustained effort come as a result of the strong emphasis on design throughout the department. Pupils know what is expected of them

and they begin to develop independence in their learning from an early stage.

36. There is much challenge in the best teaching. Teachers understand the importance of motivating and building high expectations and confidence in pupils. A Year 10 mathematics lesson on simultaneous equations did just this, by requiring pupils to listen carefully, explain their thinking to the class and decide on the correctness of the pupils' own approaches. The teacher broadened the base of learning by discussion with pupils. This lesson was based on a well-prepared intention to reinforce and revise known earlier work and challenge pupils to build upon it.
37. In English, the clear link between good and very good teaching and the quality of pupils' and students' learning and progress is made in every lesson. The well balanced lesson preparation leads to stimulating teaching, high but achievable expectations of what pupils can learn and consistent identification of clear learning objectives for the lesson and the sequence of lessons. Pupils and students respond very well to their teachers' helpful spoken comments. In art, similarly, learning is good when teaching is good. Well planned lessons offer pupils and students a range of stimulating projects.
38. The reasons for the unsatisfactory teaching, much of which is concentrated in Year 9, are these:
  - the range of work does not meet all pupils' needs or challenge all levels of attainment;
  - the provision made for pupils with English as an additional language is insufficient;
  - the pace of the lesson is too slow;
  - progress is sometimes insufficient as a result of over direction.
39. In Year 9, there is a particularly high concentration of pupils with significant special educational needs, and a higher proportion of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. This has not been adequately recognised in planning teaching.
40. The school has an effective strategy for teaching the basic skills of literacy. Many departments have developed clear literacy strategies and others are following this lead. Teachers recognise their role in making these strategies work. For example, literacy is a powerful force in music lessons where excellent extended writing has been developed. The development of literacy skills is also a very good feature of design and technology, art and history lessons where pupils are encouraged to read from a range of texts, use reference books and read aloud to the whole class. There are examples of good practice in most departments. For example, key words are displayed in mathematics. Teachers emphasise the technical application of these words. In history key words are recorded on the board, copied into pupils' glossaries and used frequently. Speaking and listening skills are well developed in art. Pupils are encouraged to discuss, analyse and develop ideas. In modern foreign languages, pupils' attention is focused on spelling, presentation and grammatical accuracy. Overall, the level of competence is good at the age of 14 and at 16.
41. There is no school wide approach to the teaching of numeracy and this is unsatisfactory. The development of the teaching and reinforcement of literacy across the school provides a model. There were few examples of numeracy use or development in subjects other than mathematics and a general lack of awareness of the importance of numeracy as a cross-curriculum basic skill to be developed and used in a range of situations and contexts. The teaching of number in mathematics is good and the teaching has improved as a result of the use of techniques promoted by the National Numeracy Strategy. The emphasis on teaching the skill of mental mathematics is proving influential in raising standards.
42. The teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) skills in lessons, other than the separate lessons in Year 7 or on the GNVQ course in Years 10 and 11, is unsatisfactory. Departments have not systematically planned their input to the teaching of ICT and it is not well co-ordinated across the curriculum. In English, however, pupils are encouraged to use information and communication technology effectively for drafting their written work. For example, in the coursework folders of Year 10 and 11 pupils there are some very good examples of word-processed essays, stories and newspaper articles. Pupils do not generally make use of spelling

and grammar checkers to create error-free writing. The result is that, for many pupils, learning is patchy and standards are not as high as they could be.

43. Teachers who are supporting pupils with special educational needs have very good knowledge of the range of strategies they need to ensure progress is made. They have excellent knowledge and understanding of individual pupils and undertake very good planning to support the learning and teaching of small groups. Teachers and teaching assistants have very high expectations of the progress pupils can make and how well they can achieve. They manage pupils well, in part by ensuring that withdrawal lessons have very good pace and constantly challenge pupils to do better. In one lesson, for example, with a Year 10 pupil, the teacher's range of strategies to help the pupil make progress was effective because of its breadth – including vocabulary building, self-assessment and review. Where SEN staff work in partnership with other subject teachers, for example, in English and mathematics, teaching makes an excellent contribution to pupils' learning and engagement with the subject and ensures that pupils can understand the lesson, whatever their prior attainment. On occasions, the support they give extends beyond the small group on whom they are mainly focused in these sessions and helps a wider group to make progress.
44. The team of teachers and assistants who work most closely with the pupils and students who are beginners or at the early stages of English acquisition provide effective support through an induction programme, catch-up literacy programmes which are part of the National Literacy Strategy, assisted learning and in-class support. The induction programme for pupils just beginning to learn to speak English is very well taught. In one session for Year 10 and 11 pupils, newly arrived in England, the teacher focused on the weather and pupils were encouraged to explore different types of weather descriptions. They were provided with maps of Europe, which also helped their orientation. Pupils gradually gained in confidence as the lesson progressed.
45. There is some very good teaching when EAL specialists take small groups of pupils whilst team teaching with subject teachers in mathematics, religious education, English and science. Teaching is generally related well to the context of the lesson from which a pupil is withdrawn, but this is not always the case. There were instances when the EAL specialist was not fully aware of the lesson content, and subject teacher did not get enough feedback on what was covered in the withdrawal lesson. This results in missed opportunities to help the pupil make maximum progress, for example, in Years 10 and 11, when coursework and key examination preparation may be missed through withdrawal.
46. In lessons where there is no EAL specialist support, teachers make use of various strategies to support these pupils. They use writing frames and arrange seating so that pupils can have peer helpers. In modern foreign languages, they match questions to language levels, display technical vocabulary in Turkish classes, for example, and in information and communication technology (ICT) they use large word cards containing key vocabulary to help pupils. All departments are invited to bid for EAL support on an annual basis. There are some good examples of teaching resources produced through the collaboration of EAL specialists with subject teachers, for example, in English and science. Further opportunities for such partnership teaching, including joint planning and sharing of information on student progress as part of the school's strategy to raise the achievement of EAL students, are still needed.
47. There is insufficient support for some EAL pupils who are more confident speakers of English during Key Stage 4. Some subject departments show greater interest in using available support than others, with the result that the quality of the teaching aimed specifically at pupils and students with English as an additional language varies somewhat.

### **Sixth form**

48. Teaching in the sixth form is almost always at least satisfactory and the majority is good or very good. All is at least good in art, design and technology, history, science and mathematics. In spite of small numbers in many subjects, most teachers put considerable energy into their lesson planning and succeed in making their lessons stimulating.

49. The best teaching in the sixth form is characterised by significant academic challenge. In a Year 13 mathematics lesson, for example, tackling the problem of momentum and impulse, the teacher made sure that students had the opportunity to analyse and develop their own ideas. A confident and well-informed teacher anticipated the pitfalls and prepared students well to avoid them. In a chemistry lesson in Year 12 on alkene molecules, challenge was accompanied by a degree of inspiration and enthusiasm from the teacher, which resulted in a very good learning atmosphere. Another Year 12 lesson, an AS English lesson on 'The Glass Menagerie' by Tennessee Williams, enabled the same sort of conceptual development by using very skilful questioning, which guided pupils into the key features of the text and provided them with the requirements for a good essay framework. The more able in this group moved forward to identify the specific language features characterising the writing of Tennessee Williams. Good transition to working with a partner provided further opportunities for textual analysis, identifying the evidence for the presence of key vocabulary. In a Year 13 English lesson, the intellectual challenge in the study of Wilfred Owen's poetry and Pat Barker's 'Regeneration' was evident when students were referred to Rimbaud's poem, 'Le Dormeur du Val', for comparative purposes.
50. Teachers' own subject knowledge and expertise is a major factor influencing the success of many of the best lessons in the sixth form. In a Year 12 German lesson, for example, the teacher's very good command of the language enabled a fast pace to be developed on the theme of 'healthy eating'. The teacher's sophisticated use of German and the very good relationship enabled the single student to sustain a conversation and develop and practise vocabulary and structures well.
51. Use of very well-chosen stimulus material enhances a number of lessons in the sixth form. A Year 12 biology lesson on genetics, for example, used recent newspaper articles to develop discussion and broaden the basis of the students' understanding of the ethical and moral dimensions of this subject. Such examples managed to engage pupils with very different levels of attainment and ensure that they all made progress, with the highest attainers brimming with ideas.
52. One of the major challenges to the teaching in the sixth form is the small size of some of the groups. Teachers plan very well in the best lessons to ensure that there is sufficient stimulation for their students. A good example of this occurred in an art lesson in Year 12, on the theme of 'the ties that bind'. A very stimulating interpretation had been prepared by the teacher, resulting in very effective experimental work from students. One girl responded particularly well.
53. Although some support for sixth form students with English as an additional language has been made available, overall it is insufficient to ensure that those who are more confident speakers of English make the progress they need to in order to achieve good examination results. For example, there has been valuable support for Year 12 students taking GCSE for the second time. However, students still do not consistently receive the support they need to understand more complex texts and write the academic English needed for success in formal examinations. The reduction in the size of the EAL teaching team three years ago has left it in a weaker position to meet the needs of all EAL students in this age group.

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

54. There has been real improvement in the curriculum at Key Stage 3 since the last inspection. The school now has a two-week timetable that provides 25 hours of teaching per week, an increase of 1.7 hours. This has enabled the school to enrich the timetable in order to prepare for its new remit as a performing arts specialist college. There is an ongoing process of development and improvement related to this new status and to the school's clear aim to provide a challenging and inclusive curriculum so that all its pupils can reach their full potential. The school believes that the extra-curricular programme, the focus on personal, social and health education and the developing links with local primary schools are all an essential part of this vision for its curriculum. It has a coherent and cohesive approach to curriculum planning that ensures that the full statutory curriculum is provided in Key Stage 3 and within it opportunities for wider choice and extra challenge at Key Stage 4. It also has a clear emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and



numeracy, although there is not as yet a co-ordinated approach to the National Numeracy Strategy or to the teaching of information and communication technology in the school.

55. The curriculum has sufficient breadth and balance in Years 7 to 9 and is enhanced by the addition of drama, seen as a vital component in the ethos of the school. An Arts Festival is a feature of the school year. A second modern foreign language has been introduced for all pupils in Year 9. Extra teaching of science in Year 9 allows some pupils to take the triple award and all to have an early start in science at GCSE. However, there are some anomalies in time allocation that affect continuity and progression in some areas. In history and geography, pupils have only one lesson per week in Years 7 and 9. Provision for information and communication technology is limited by time constraints as, other than in Year 7, it receives only one per cent of taught time. This means that it has to be developed through other subjects, some of which are already allocated limited teaching time. This insufficient time for the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 8 and 9 adversely affects standards.
56. The amount of time allocated to core physical education in Years 10 and 11 is not sufficient to improve standards and ensure fitness. Up to three different year groups are timetabled to study physical education at the same time in the available large spaces and this has a detrimental effect on standards. This organisation of the timetable and the shared teaching of a few groups lead to lack of continuity and progression.
57. In Key Stage 4, pupils value the opportunity to express some of their own preferences in their choices of subjects, whilst maintaining a broad curriculum. The school maintains a broad common core, and options are comprehensive. However, for pupils not opting to study a GNVQ ICT course, the provision for them to develop their computing skills is uncoordinated across the curriculum. The quality of their ICT opportunities is over-dependent on the choices they make, as some subjects make good provision for ICT in their planning but others do not.
58. In both Key Stages 3 and 4, the provision for personal, social and health education is good. The programme's content develops well through the years and is well resourced. It changes regularly to meet the needs of pupils from year to year and is very sensitive to the needs of pupils with particular religious beliefs and cultural preferences. As a result, no pupil has to be withdrawn by their parents from any part of the programme, but girls are given a thorough and balanced opportunity to explore themes and ideas which interest and affect them as they grow older. The provision of careers education is also good, as are the very comprehensive materials and support available to help pupils make their choices at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. Some pupils felt that they did not get enough information at the age of 16 about alternative forms of post 16 educational provision, but this was not generally held to be a problem.
59. Structured and well-planned support for pupils and students between the ages of 11 and 16 with special educational needs comes from named members of the learning support department and is focused this year on English, mathematics and science. It is most effective at present in English and mathematics, although the very good contacts between science and special educational needs staff are helping to improve pupils' work. Learning support staff are supporting improvements in the schemes of work and lesson planning in these subjects. The department is also responding well to the changing profile of the pupils entering the school both in Year 7 and at other times. In particular, the staff are developing a range of strategies for curriculum and teaching for pupils with very low levels of prior learning.
60. Pupils and students with English as an additional language are generally well supported to enable them to make good progress and access the full range of National Curriculum and other subjects. Pupils at an early stage of learning English are usually withdrawn from class or are provided with in-class support. Support is provided in a classroom in the main block of the school. This base is important as it provides a secure and supportive environment in which students can learn and make progress. There is a wide range of quality resources there, including subject textbooks linked to the National Curriculum multi-lingual materials, topic packs and access to computers, appropriate software and materials to aid reading development.

61. The co-ordinators of special educational needs and English as an additional language are part of the Inclusion Group which meets on a regular basis. Links between the two are satisfactory but are not yet strong enough to ensure that all pupils with both English language learning needs and special educational needs receive integrated support. Links are also not yet strong enough to ensure that all pupils and students who are at the early stages of learning English are not seen as having special educational or learning difficulties.
62. The provision for pupils who are higher attaining and may have special gifts or talents is very good. Teachers ensure that pupils are identified early and have opportunities to deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills in lessons, and schemes of work have been well developed in French and German, mathematics, English and other subjects. Beyond the classroom, these pupils are well catered for by extension lessons, which challenge them with more difficult and thought-provoking work. These sessions contribute to improved standards and maintain a momentum of learning.
63. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities for everyone and take up is good throughout the school, including the sixth form. These activities enrich the girls' personal development, stimulate their interest and imagination and support learning outside the classroom. In English and music, for example, visits are linked closely with the subject matter being studied, and this improves pupils' and students' motivation to succeed. Music in particular involves a large number of pupils and students in public performance, increasing their confidence, interest and commitment to the subject, and their pride in the school. Other opportunities range from sport to debating, visits to the theatre and events in London, to musical activity of every sort. The school's designation as a specialist college for the performing arts justifies fully the time and effort put into building up the very good range of musical activities. These provide very good opportunities for pupils to experience both a wide range of aspects of music and the pleasure of public performance at a high standard. There is much less extra-curricular drama, but the provision of a performing arts centre will provide similar opportunities for an extra-curricular enrichment programme.
64. A strong feature of the school's life is the positive relationship between students from different ethnic groups, both in and out of the classroom. The various lunchtime clubs are well attended by pupils with English as an additional language and minority ethnic pupils and students and provide a valuable opportunity for students to talk and engage in activities in a secure and supportive environment. There are very good positive images and role models in the form of posters and displays, including multi-lingual signs. This is important as it makes ethnic minority students feel that the school values their cultures. Activities such as the Black History Month and units of work on equal opportunities issues such as women composers, together with the celebration of religious and cultural festivals in the weekly newsletter, create additional positive images for all girls, which also deepen their knowledge and understanding of their own and other cultures.
65. These features all contribute very well overall to pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Spiritual and moral development opportunities are good, and social and cultural development very good. Assemblies celebrate a wide range of cultural and religious practices and enable the girls to explain themselves to their peers. The mature way in which students take responsibility for many of these assemblies adds to their value and impact. Music plays an important role in all such assemblies and this is not confined to Western and English musical traditions. The school is applying for a Determination from the appropriate local authority to exempt itself from providing an act of worship for all pupils which is broadly Christian in character, on the grounds that this multi-faith assembly matches the needs and desires of pupils and their parents very well. Parents commented on the importance to them of the respect which the school's approach fosters.
66. Lessons also play an important part in developing opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In many subject plans, this area has an important place, and although this is not consistent, the efforts made in history, geography, English, modern foreign languages and other subjects all sustain the school's approach.

## Sixth form

67. The sixth form curriculum is devised in close co-operation with the school's sixth form partner, Highgate Wood School. The curriculum is appropriate to the needs of most students. The open access policy encourages students to pursue sixth form studies. The range of A level and vocational courses offered is good. The co-ordination between the two schools generally ensures that provision is accessible to any student.
68. The school has recently introduced units of work on Key Skills, covering aspects of literacy, numeracy and ICT. All girls have to elect to study one unit. Although these have not proved as popular as the school had hoped, and attendance has been quite poor, the courses are providing satisfactorily for students' development needs. There is no planned provision for physical education or religious education (apart from A level) in the sixth form and this is unsatisfactory. In the case of religious education, the poor provision breaches statutory requirements.
69. Students' views of the curriculum were generally positive. However, a significant minority felt that they were not well advised about future options. This emerged more as a comment on the alternative establishments in which they could take their courses, than on the courses at Hornsey or the quality of careers education and guidance which was offered to them prior to the sixth form. Careers education facilities in the school are very good and sixth form students have virtually open access to the resources.

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

70. The school provides good support and guidance to pupils and sixth form students and the care taken over their welfare is good overall, with some areas of great strength. Teachers and support staff have a very good understanding of the personal and academic needs of pupils and sixth form students. Tutors know and understand their pupils very well and care for their personal needs in a supportive and sensitive way. The complex needs of many pupils, including the significant number of new arrivals mid-phase every year presents challenges that the school responds to with great skill.
71. There is in-depth support available to every pupil. Individual learning, social and personal development needs are diligently assessed and monitored. The progress of pupils' personal and academic development is meticulously recorded. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and returned questionnaires confirmed that their daughters feel happy, secure and cared for, and that where there is a concern, effective action is taken to remedy it. The school actively promotes equality of opportunity and ensures that all pupils and students, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, learning or personal difficulty, are provided with appropriate and timely personal care, support and guidance.
72. The procedures for dealing with child protection are very good. One of the deputy headteachers leads a highly experienced child protection team and ensures that all concerned with the welfare of pupils and students are well-trained and alert to the signs of need. The co-ordination of all external agencies, and the support teams which work in the school, is very good. The school provides learning mentors for pupils who lack personal organisational skills and for some with emotional difficulties. Pupils and students have access to a professional counsellor and there are schemes to provide professional academic and peer mentoring for those who need the additional support. Overall, the support provided to pupils and students, and on occasions where appropriate, to their families, is a great strength of the school.
73. The health and safety policies and procedures are well documented. There is a health and safety committee that meets regularly. Risk assessments covering the buildings and site are conducted on a regular cycle. Fire and electrical equipment is checked annually and there are regular evacuation drills. The arrangements for first aid are good and the school has a medical room with a full-time welfare assistant. The implementation of health and safety procedures in some departments is unsatisfactory and a number of specific issues were raised with the school during the inspection. Risk assessments in some departments where practical activities take place have lacked rigour, with the result that the storage of chemicals, gases and other reactive materials has

been unsatisfactory. When these matters were drawn to the school's attention, they were immediately rectified.

74. Personal, social and health education is provided through dedicated weekly timetabled sessions. The PSHE policy, with supporting schemes of work and good resources, is regularly reviewed to ensure that the programme includes all requirements relating to citizenship, healthy living, including drugs and alcohol education, sex education and the development of social skills. A balanced coverage is provided as pupils progress through the school.
75. The policies and procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour are good. The management of behaviour by teachers and support staff is very consistent throughout the school and on only a few occasions, where teachers lacked the skills and strategies to control elements of disruptive behaviour, was unsatisfactory behaviour noted during the inspection. Good use is made of incentives and rewards for effort and consideration of others. This results in an achievement-driven culture throughout the school. Incidents of poor behaviour, such as bullying or showing a lack of consideration towards others, are dealt with effectively.
76. Overall, the procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance are unsatisfactory. For pupils in Years 7 to 11, the registers of attendance are efficiently transferred onto the school computer network within an hour of morning and afternoon registration. Separate class registers are maintained for the majority of subjects. For Years 7, 8 and 9, attendance logs are carried by a member of each tutor group so that absences can be monitored throughout the day. This is not effective in Year 9 where tutor groups frequently break down into other groupings. A similar procedure is used for Years 10 and 11. The monitoring of attendance is satisfactory overall and there is a high probability that attempted truancy will be detected.
77. The procedures for promoting higher levels of attendance lack rigour. There is no procedure for ensuring first day contact with parents or carers to stop absenteeism. The school has not had the services of an attached education welfare officer for several months, but the attached home links team has been used to good effect as a substitute. However, the overriding trend is one of falling attendance.
78. Procedures for assessing attainment and progress are good. The school makes effective use of the assessment data and test results that are transferred from the primary schools. During pupils' first term in school a series of additional tests is conducted and attainment projections made for individual pupils for all subjects. These projections show expected attainment for the next round of statutory assessment at the age of 14 and potential GCSE grades. Results are re-analysed after the national tests and projections adjusted. The school has a very clear view of the progress being achieved by pupils. Overall the collection and analysis of performance data are good.
79. There is a cycle of termly monitoring and tracking procedures within each year group. All pupils have medium term goals and those who need additional support, but who are not considered to have special educational needs, are given short-term targets that are also meticulously monitored. The use of assessment data by departments is variable. The use of assessment to guide curricular planning and the future learning needs of pupils is unsatisfactory in some departments. Some of the subject monitoring is very good, but the good practice is not established across all subjects and all year groups. Some tutors are unclear as to how to make best use of the data and present it to pupils in a meaningful way which will help them to have a greater understanding of their areas for development. Across the school, the mathematics department makes very good use of assessment data and there is some good work in English, science, modern foreign languages and geography. The weakest practice is in information and communication technology (ICT) where there is very little ongoing assessment and no link between pupils' attainment and National Curriculum levels.
80. Another area of relative weakness is in the marking of pupils' work where there is inconsistency, ranging from very informative marking to a simple comment such as 'well done'. The school meets statutory requirements in relation to pupils' records, including annual reports to parents on pupil progress. All pupils compile a record of achievement during Years 10 and 11. Assessment and the use of assessment procedures overall have developed significantly since the time of the last

inspection.

81. The school's management of the processes for annual and transitional reviews of pupils with statements of special educational need fully meets statutory requirements. Pupils' individual education plans are very well written, regularly reviewed and the targets identified show a good breadth of aspects of learning. The balance between subject targets related to pupils' learning and personal targets related to their behaviour is very good. Assessment, particularly in Year 7, when pupils first arrive in the school, is excellent, enabling the school to provide quickly the observation and intervention to ensure that pupils can tackle their new learning. Record keeping on pupils with special educational needs is exemplary in a number of ways: records are working documents, full of well targeted communication between staff and other agencies to ensure continuity. They are very extensive and give all relevant details of ongoing assessments of needs and progress and how pupils have responded and the progress they have made. This enables specialist staff and subject teachers to adapt their teaching to meet pupils' and students' changing needs.
82. The learning support department is adapting well to meet the needs of the increasing number of pupils with very low prior attainment. They are considering how to adapt methods of assessment to measure needs and progress by using techniques adapted from special school practices.
83. There has been much improvement in the quality of data the school generates and uses in relation to the performance of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. This results in better target-setting and improved achievement from many. There has been little improvement, however, in the performance of pupils from African Caribbean backgrounds, despite the school's involvement in a major project to look at the issues involved. The rates of exclusion of these pupils also remain disproportionately high. However, it is clear that the school has very good support structures in place to avoid exclusion, and that it follows these procedures with the greatest care.
84. The wide range of lunchtime clubs enables pupils and students who are still learning English throughout the school to ask and receive additional personal and language support from staff in a secure, friendly and helpful environment.

### **Sixth form**

85. The monitoring of attendance, which is poor, is not totally reliable, particularly for those students who are participating in lessons off site. Absences are not followed up sufficiently quickly for action to have an impact on attitudes to full attendance. The trend in attendance is still falling, and during the week of the inspection, attendance fell well below acceptable levels. The procedures for monitoring punctuality in the mornings also lack rigour and in a number of these lessons, late arrivals were not appropriately challenged.

### **Assessment**

86. The procedures for assessing attainment and progress are good. Students have a clear understanding of their targets and what they need to do to achieve them. Gains in knowledge and understanding are carefully monitored and the use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning is satisfactory.
87. The school generates and records good data about pupils' and students' special educational needs, ethnicity, languages and command of the English language (EAL). Information is accessible to all staff for the purpose of identifying under-achieving groups and setting them appropriate targets for improvement.

### **Advice, support and guidance**

88. There are several opportunities for parents and students formally to consider with staff appropriate courses of study which will meet students' needs and build on prior attainment well. The regular letters and newsletters enhance this flow of information. There is a lot of communication between

home and school about attendance and morning punctuality, which is a serious issue for many students.

89. The quality of support provided by the tutor team is very good. In a short space of time, as a result of the very good sixth form management, tutors have adopted common approaches to supporting, monitoring and advising students. Students themselves feel confident in the guidance they receive, which covers academic as well as personal development.

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

90. Parents have very favourable views about the school. The consensus from the pre-inspection parents' meeting and the questionnaires parents returned is that the school promotes high expectations and their daughters make good progress, achieve their full potential and enjoy school. They appreciate the high standards of behaviour and positive attitudes and values promoted by the school. They consider that the school is approachable and listens to what parents have to say. The inspectors agree with these positive views.
91. The inspectors judge that the school works very hard to keep parents well informed about the personal development and academic progress of all its pupils. A minority of parents did not feel that they were kept well informed about their daughters' progress or that the school promoted a close partnership with them. The school is active in promoting a close working partnership with parents, which starts with a good induction programme for those new to the school.
92. The home-school agreement clearly defines the expectations of the school, the parents and pupils. The school makes very effective use of the language skills of the home-school links team and learning mentors. This particularly helps to promote closer relationships with parents and carers who speak Turkish or Bengali. The quality of information provided for parents is good. There are many examples where the school has provided guidelines for parents, in several languages, which enable them to help their daughters with their learning.
93. The annual progress reports include a subject by subject summary of attainment and effort and sets goals for further development. There is a separate commentary on attitudes and personal development. There are frequent opportunities for both formal and informal consultation. If parents or carers find it difficult to visit the school, staff will organise a home visit to discuss progress and any pastoral issues that may be required. Tutors and heads of year work hard to ensure that parents are kept fully informed about every aspect of their daughters' learning and the many support programmes that are in place.
94. There are focus evenings for selecting subject options at the end of Year 9, providing careers advice and planning work experience. The many letters and telephone calls which are made about pupils' attendance do not generally make an impact on the problem, and are unlikely to do so without the full co-operation of parents and carers.
95. There is excellent evidence in the records of pupils with special educational needs of very good links with parents. The staff provide useful guidance to parents on how to help pupils with specific learning difficulties, particularly those associated with literacy. Home visits are frequent, well documented and purposeful. There is excellent liaison with the primary schools from which pupils come, and staff attend the Year 6 annual reviews of pupils who are to come to them at the beginning of Year 7.
96. There is a parent-school association that meets formally about six times a year. The meetings provide an opportunity for the school to make brief presentations on such areas as the literacy and numeracy support programmes, the provision for gifted and talented pupils, the role of the learning mentors and how pupils with special educational needs are supported. Overall there are good links with parents. The contribution of parents to their daughters' learning at school and at home and the impact of their involvement in the work of the school are satisfactory overall. Many give very good support, but there is confusion in the minds of some as to how they can support and encourage

because, although generally supportive, many lack experience of the British education system and its expectations. The school has continued to build on the satisfactory relationship with parents reported after the last inspection.

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

97. The governors, headteacher and staff are strongly committed to the aims and values of the school, which emphasise co-operative behaviour, hard work, achievement, inclusion, valuing and respecting others, celebrating diversity and equal opportunities. The very good ethos is the result of the concerted efforts of all senior managers and a determination to make this school a caring community. The students feel valued and supported and are positive about the school. Parents speak highly of the warm, personal support their children receive.
98. The headteacher practises an open and consultative style of management and ensures very clear direction for the work of the school. She is very well supported by the restructured leadership team, which shares a commitment to equality of opportunity and to school improvement. Roles within the team and line management responsibilities are clear. Members of the team are very supportive of each other and they work closely and co-operatively to ensure the smooth and effective running of the school on a daily basis. They work with a wide range of staff through the learning teams to determine curricular priorities and to implement the school's targets.
99. There is considerable evidence of strong leadership and management in some individual departments and of strong leadership of the sixth form. In English and mathematics, for example, subject leaders set high expectations of the quality of teaching from their colleagues and ensure that schemes of work are implemented. The heads of year and their tutor and mentor teams provide very good personal guidance for students and are very well supported by senior management. A satisfactory system for appraisal and performance management is in place. Lesson observation is increasing in frequency to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is adequately monitored. The accelerating system of self reviews within departments is already used well to diagnose strengths and establish priorities for improvement.
100. The governors are very supportive of the school and give generously of their time to ensure that the work of the school is effectively monitored. Their committee structure works well, as do their links with individual departments. They have not yet considered the possibility of appointing one of the governors to take responsibility for English as an additional language, as for special educational needs, to give these departments a higher profile. The headteacher provides them with full reports and they follow school developments closely in the context of national initiatives. Policies are in place which cover all the areas of legal responsibility, including equality of opportunity, and a policy on the support of the large number of pupils and students who are at an early stage of English language learning is well established. However, this policy has not been reviewed sufficiently recently to ensure that all issues related to race equality and cultural diversity have been addressed, in line with the recommendations of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, 2000, and the new CRE Statutory Code of Practice on promoting Race Equality. The governors have developed their role as strategic planners in determining future educational directions and how to achieve them. They have played a major role in deciding on the new building developments and have been able to base their judgements on accurate and detailed information.
101. The governors and senior staff have sharpened their analysis of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The revised school development plan is more closely focused on raising achievement in line with national standards for girls in all external examinations as the overriding aim. Individual department targets reflect this focus. Educational priorities, as expressed in the plan, are very well supported through the school's financial planning and the governors ensure that best value principles are applied. Specific grants are well used to support the work of departments and individual students, although monitoring of spending and the balance between short and long-term commitments is not adequate. There is an action plan for the activities associated with the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant, parts of which appear in the School Development Plan. Targets are very clear, although budgetary implications and timescales are not sufficiently defined in this action plan. Strategies for financial control and administration are efficient and there is tight budgetary supervision. This has contributed towards governors' and senior staff intentions to build

up a large carry-forward to support the work of replacing and extending facilities over the next eighteen months.

102. The co-ordinators for special educational needs and English as an additional language (SEN and EAL) provide strong leadership and efficient management and both have a key role in raising achievement. There has not been enough recent training for teachers to ensure that all teachers are fully aware of the needs of these pupils and students. Whilst there is a very good partnership between the EAL specialist team and other subjects, this is not shared by all. The result is that some subjects have not yet developed sufficiently effective teaching strategies to ensure that all pupils and students can gain maximum benefit from their curriculum and raise their levels of achievement.
103. The quality of leadership in managing the needs of pupils with special educational needs is very good, particularly in the light of the very challenging profile some of the pupils present. There is excellent teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants, and they are all committed to the school, their pupils and to building effective relationships which support other subject teachers and the pupils and their parents. The training for what is in large part a new team has ensured that all have quickly become effective in their roles. There is a very good match of expertise to pupils' needs, for example in the field of support for pupils with hearing impairment or with challenging behaviour. The teaching team is flexibly and well deployed to make the most of its resources. However, it will be very stretched to sustain the impact it has been making, particularly for pupils in Key Stage 3 between the ages of 11 and 14, as the school grows.
104. There is an effective induction programme for new teachers to the school and for newly qualified teachers. The many supply teachers also receive helpful guidelines. There is a very thorough staff handbook which makes for easy reference to all the major areas of school policy. Most departments make good use of their continuing professional development budgets, although the impact of such training on standards is not systematically evaluated. The school has managed well the difficulties of teacher recruitment, although some classes, particularly in Key Stage 3, have had a high turnover of staff and this has led to some poor behaviour and achievement.
105. School accommodation is used to capacity. Improvements have been made since the last inspection, in particular, the construction of the new building, housing mathematics, religious education and ICT, which provides an attractive working environment for large classes. There are plans for a complete refurbishment of the whole school. Accommodation for physical education restricts the range of activities offered and there is insufficient teaching space for the increasing numbers of students on vocational courses. Rooms are generally well furnished, in good decorative order and adequately maintained. Resources are satisfactory in most departments. The library has been attractively refurbished and is both popular and well used. Students and staff are well supported by the library team. Restricted access to computer facilities for most departments, despite recent investment, limits how well they can meet curriculum requirements.
106. Resources, including the number of hours available for teaching assistants, for the support of the pupils and students with special educational needs and English as an additional language are barely adequate. Accommodation for the special educational needs department is also inadequate.
107. The school has improved its use of new technologies. Administration staff make effective use of computers in their work. Electronic registers have been introduced, although these have not led to a rapid follow-up of absent students. Senior managers use data well. There is a large quantity of detailed data on the individual performance of students, including predictors of performance, and analysis of attainment by ethnic groups. Line managers can access complete sets of data and some are now using this to set individual targets for students.

#### **Sixth form**

108. The aims and values of the sixth form mirror those of the whole school, emphasising equality of access and opportunity. Both the headteacher and the head of sixth form lead by example in setting high expectations and in ensuring clear educational direction. They are committed to



raising standards to the national average for all girls in external examinations. Students aim for success and personal fulfilment within a caring and supportive community.

109. The governors are well informed about curriculum developments in the sixth form. It is a policy of the school to ensure that the sixth form curriculum remains broad and balanced, and with open access, despite the high unit costs for some courses. Governors' financial planning is based on the assumption that the sixth form will continue to grow, but they have insufficient information on the true cost of the present sixth form upon which to plan reliably for growth. Governors are very supportive of the sixth form leadership.
110. The head of sixth form is new in post and has clearly identified the strengths of the sixth form and areas for improvement. She has a very clear vision for building on the work of the strong team of form tutors and of the tasks to be shared and delegated within this team. These include guidance for students' personal statements and the drafting of university entrance references. The leadership of the personal and social development by the tutor team, and the quality of their pastoral care, are very good.
111. The sixth form development plan is clearly linked to the school's own priorities for improvement. The transition between Year 11 and the sixth form is not yet wholly smooth. The head of sixth form therefore targets guidance on the choice of sixth form courses, a fuller induction programme, together with a review of the teaching of Key Skills and the enrichment programme.
112. Monitoring of the quality of sixth form teaching is now in place. Assessment data is now available to track students' progress and value added in the sixth form. Many staff are now active recipients of this data and are beginning to use it to set challenging targets so that each student can improve her learning. The monitoring of attendance, however, lacks rigour, and poor attendance, which impairs students' progress, has only recently become a major development priority.
113. The timetabled distribution of lessons in the sixth form is satisfactory. The school has experienced staff recruitment difficulties but the AS, A level and vocational courses are taught by qualified staff. Many give generously of their time outside scheduled lessons to help individual students. Support staff make a valuable contribution to the delivery of the curriculum.

### **Resources**

114. There is excellent provision of equipment, textbooks and other support for pupils with visual impairment. The resources available for the EAL and SEN departments, to match the identified needs of the large number of pupils and students for whom they provide support and specialist tuition, are well used. This is true whether the resources take the form of hours to be deployed or materials. It is also true whether they are provided by the school, the LEA or specific grants such as the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant. However, these resources, which have been reduced over the last three years, are insufficient overall to meet the needs of the growing numbers of girls requiring support. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 4, for girls aged 14 to 16 and in the sixth form.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

115. The governors, headteacher and staff, to carry on improving their school, should:

(1) give immediate attention to improving levels of attendance, in particular by:

- establishing a rigorous system for following up casual unexplained absences on the day they occur
- involving parents in improving punctuality and attendance as fully as possible;

*(See paragraphs 26, 27, 76, 77)*

(2) develop and implement urgently a school-wide policy and approach to the National Numeracy Strategy;

*(See paragraphs 41, 54, 136, 137)*

(3) investigate further the reasons for disproportionately high numbers of exclusions of African Caribbean girls and implement a development programme to ensure that the numbers of these exclusions are reduced;

*(See paragraphs 23, 83)*

(4) introduce as quickly as possible a taught programme in information and communication technology in Years 8 and 9 and ensure that departments are in a position to implement National Curriculum requirements for their contribution to pupils' and students' capability with computers.

*(See paragraphs 42, 54, 55, 57, 135, 147, 163, 179, 192-194, 197, 208, 221, 250)*

### Sixth form

(1) improve the levels of attendance in the sixth form by:

- discussing with parents and students the importance of regular attendance
- linking quickly with the partner sixth form consortium school to monitor the degree and impact of lack of punctuality at the start of lessons;

*(See paragraphs 14, 30, 85, 112, 239, 240)*

(2) meeting the statutory requirements for religious education in the sixth form;

*(See paragraph 68)*

(3) introduce opportunities for physical education and fitness activities in the sixth form.

*(See paragraph 68)*

116. Governors and the headteacher may also wish to consider the amount of time allocated to religious education in the main school, and ways of seeking a Determination from the local SACRE in respect of collective acts of worship in this multi-faith school.

*(See paragraph 65)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	146
	Sixth form	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		49

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Years 7 – 11</b>							
Number	4	36	51	42	10	0	0
Percentage	2.7	24.7	34.9	28.8	6.8	0	0
<b>Sixth form</b>							
Number	2	10	18	13	1	0	0
Percentage	4.4	22	40	28.8	2.2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1197	192
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	429	32

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	16	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	312	25

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	841

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	75
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	71

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.3
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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	0	238	238

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	162	127	127
	Total	162	127	127
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	68 (78)	54 (59)	53 (48)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	43 (34)	28 (31)	32 (20)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	138	140	99
	Total	138	140	99
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	61 (72)	61 (57)	43 (48)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	28 (31)	24 (19)	23 (26)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	0	235	235

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	0	0	4
	Girls	103	212	231
	Total	103	212	235
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	44 (51)	90 (93)	100 (100)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	39.5
	National	39

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	65	49
	National		56

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations, GNVQ or VCE	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	1	48	49

		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	1	48	49
	Average point score per candidate	12	12.1	12.1
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9 (17.1)	18 (18)	17.5 (17.6)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	10	60
	National		N/a

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	220
Black – African heritage	216
Black – other	104
Indian	102
Pakistani	76
Bangladeshi	101
Chinese	24
White	435
Any other minority ethnic group	52

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	53	0
Black – African heritage	16	1
Black – other	19	0
Indian	2	0
Pakistani	1	0
Bangladeshi	1	0
Chinese	0	0
White	10	0
Other minority ethnic groups	13	1

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	80.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.9

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

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	493.5

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	26
Key Stage 4	21.6

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000-1
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	£
Total income	5,356,200
Total expenditure	5,171,630
Expenditure per pupil	3311
Balance brought forward from previous year	75,171
Balance carried forward to next year	242,886

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	47.7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	44.5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	11
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	11
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1389
Number of questionnaires returned	314

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	42	5	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	43	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	42	6	3	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	42	11	2	2
The teaching is good.	39	45	8	3	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	38	11	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	33	6	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	27	3	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	39	41	12	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	43	40	6	2	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	41	7	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	43	10	5	12

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

### ENGLISH

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

#### Strengths

- Standards are good with sustained improvement: the 2001 results in national tests (Key Stage 3 SATs) at the age of 14 were resoundingly good.
- Teaching is consistently very good.
- The head of department provides a clear sense of direction.
- The management of the department is effective and efficient.
- Formal monitoring of teaching and learning provides guidance on how to improve.

#### Areas for improvement

- The department needs to develop strategies to improve pupils' results in GCSE English and English Literature.

117. Since the last inspection, the performance of pupils at the end of Year 9 has improved and it is now well above average. This is because teaching is good and the schemes of work specify the content to be taught. In 2001, Year 9 test results were well above the average compared to schools nationally. When compared with similar schools, results were very high. Pupils' performance in English was higher than in mathematics and science.
118. In 2001, pupils attained results in line with the national average in GCSE English by the age of 16. This is because 28 per cent of pupils lack the fluency in English to gain a grade C. Pupils' achievement was good in relation to their starting point. Results were higher than in several other subjects. Since the last inspection, pupils' performance has improved slightly. African-Caribbean and Turkish girls achieved lower grades than other pupils. There was a very high entry for GCSE English language and 23 per cent of pupils gained an A\* or A grade, almost twice the national average.
119. GCSE English literature results have improved since the last inspection. Very good teaching and the success of extra classes explain this achievement for pupils who needed examination technique practice. Differences between ethnic groups are less than in English language. There was a very high entry for GCSE English literature and 17 per cent of pupils gained an A\* or A grade.
120. Overall, pupils' achievement in all years is good. They have responded well to the overall high quality of teaching, high teacher expectations of what they can achieve and the well-balanced schemes of work that result in stimulating lessons. Most are putting in the effort needed to improve significantly on their earlier levels of achievement. Homework is generally carefully done and pupils listen attentively to make sure they understand. They do not hesitate to ask questions for clarification, to improve their understanding.
121. Since the previous inspection there have been some major improvements. The overall standards have risen. The ability of pupils to speak clearly and with confidence has improved. Years 7 to 9 pupils' books show that they acquire literacy skills at a good, steady rate. Many pupils spell monosyllabic words accurately. Higher attainers use and spell polysyllabic words accurately. They use full stops, capital letters and question marks correctly and they organise simple and complex sentences into paragraphs. Teachers' comments on pupils' work strongly emphasise the need for correct punctuation and spelling and this encourages pupils to make the necessary effort to improve. All pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Gifted and talented pupils make very good progress. Some pupils with English as an additional language do not write as fluently or accurately as others, and this impairs their work as they approach, in particular, their tests and examinations at the ages of 14 and 16.



122. The overall standard of work seen in Years 10 and 11 is above the national average. Pupils speak and listen very well. Pupils of all abilities readily and confidently join in small group discussions. Most can express their views clearly, share ideas, negotiate, solve problems and use talk to develop their own knowledge and understanding. By the end of Year 11, the majority of girls listen attentively. They are keen to answer questions. This is because they are highly motivated and respond to their teachers' very helpful questions and comments. Where pupils are well prepared for discussions, they make sophisticated contributions and maintain high quality dialogue.
123. Pupils' reading is good. A majority of pupils read aloud with confidence, fluency and expression. Low attainers are encouraged to improve the quality of their reading by reading aloud. A shared reading and discussion of *An Inspector Calls* by a Year 11 class showed that pupils could understand significant ideas and events and make moral judgements based on their understanding of the text. For example, one girl explained, "Inspector Goole represents justice and conscience. He makes characters such as Sheila and Mrs Birling reflect on their behaviour and their contribution to Eva's death."
124. Pupils' written work is good, although some pupils with English as an additional language struggle to reach average standards in essay writing for the GCSE English examinations. Information and communication technology is used effectively for drafting. There is evidence of good creative writing, ranging from imaginative stories, diaries, personal poems and letters, often arising from the literature texts being studied in class. Good oral work prior to writing often helped pupils to write more extensively. For example, in a Year 9 lesson, pupils preparing to write an analysis of persuasive language in holiday brochures collected and sorted ideas in pairs before discussing them with the whole class. Most pupils were able to improve the fluency and accuracy of their writing with re-drafting. Their handwriting at this stage is generally satisfactory.
125. Teaching and learning are very good overall. English department schemes of work indicate the content to be taught, the teaching and learning styles that could be adopted, literacy strategy contributions, the resources to be used, and the range of the work to be assessed. Teachers make their high expectations for pupils' work and behaviour very clear. The overall effectiveness of teachers' planning is very good, particularly the planning for individual lessons and sequences of lessons. Teachers consistently identify the learning objectives for lessons and make them explicit. In a Year 7 lesson designed to enable pupils to understand personification, the teacher made sure that learning objectives were clear and that pupils wrote them in their books.
126. In four out of five lessons during the inspection, teaching was very good or excellent. The skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing are well taught. The National Literacy Strategy is making a real impact in Years 7 and 8. All teachers have an excellent knowledge of both language and literature. They understand the importance of motivating, encouraging and providing pupils with opportunities to succeed. Their very good constructive comments in lessons encourage pupils to co-operate and help them to improve. Throughout the school, well-targeted work, combined with high expectations of learning and behaviour, results in the majority of pupils making good progress. All lessons had appropriate learning objectives. The skills and understanding necessary to achieve them were developed very well through a wide range of interesting activities. All teachers shared assessment criteria with their pupils and encouraged self and peer assessment. For example, Year 10 pupils writing an essay discussed GCSE Assessment Objectives and how to meet them.
127. The English department has raised standards by using assessment to inform planning; combining subject matter with the development of language skills; and further developing pupils' confidence and skills to speak effectively in a wide range of situations. Leadership and management are excellent. The department makes a very significant contribution to pupils' education. All members of the department share a very strong commitment to the school's aims. Monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work provides guidance for teachers and pupils on how to improve. All classrooms contain good quality and stimulating displays.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths

- Leadership and management of the department enable the teachers to work effectively as a team.
- Teaching.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to mathematics.
- The links with the special educational needs department.
- The monitoring of progress and achievement.

### Areas for further development

- The use of computers in mathematics teaching.
- A whole school strategy to develop numeracy across the curriculum.

128. In national tests for Year 9 pupils in 2001, the standard reached was well below average national. However, the results were in line with the results achieved in similar schools. Pupils' results in mathematics are below those achieved in science and are well below the results achieved in English. Over the last three years the average points scores in national tests in Year 9 have been well below the national average points score, although they have been rising broadly in line with the national trend.
129. The number of pupils in Year 11 who achieved grades A\* to C in GCSE results in 2001 was well below the national averages. There was no A\* grade awarded in 2001 to any pupil in Year 11. In 2001, results as measured by the percentage of A\* to C grades fell slightly from the previous two years. These results and the results in the previous two years are, nonetheless, well above those achieved by similar schools. Results in GCSE, when compared using average points scores are below those achieved in science, and well below those achieved in English. However, the school enters virtually all pupils for the GCSE mathematics examination and most of these pupils achieve a grade in GCSE mathematics. Absence affects their achievement and the overall attainment in mathematics.
130. In lessons, pupils are working in line with national expectations in both key stages, and this indicates the gradual improvement occurring in standards and consistency of teaching, which has occurred this year. In Key Stage 4, teaching groups are organised on the basis of prior achievement; the standards seen in the higher sets were above national expectations. In one Year 11 class of higher achieving pupils, the pupils were using a range of geometric theorems to deduce unknown angles and sides. In another class, pupils with average ability were working in line with national expectations and they were able to solve simultaneous equations by substituting the value of one unknown into the second equation. In Key Stage 3, pupils are taught in mixed ability groups. More able pupils in Year 9 are able to explain how to work out the sum of the interior angles in a polygon. Less able pupils in Year 9 are able to describe and name angles of different sizes.
131. Pupils make satisfactory and often good progress through Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is below national averages for pupils aged 11. Pupils in Year 7 can work out the fraction that is shaded in a partly shaded shape but the majority of pupils cannot then simplify the fraction. However, most pupils in Year 7 have an appropriate understanding of place value and can correctly use co-ordinates in the four quadrants. By the time pupils have reached Year 8, the majority can correctly name different solids. The more able pupils in Year 8 complete a two-dimensional net and number each face correctly so that when they made it into a solid it became a normal dice. More able pupils in Year 10 have sound algebraic skills and they can manipulate algebraic equations. The numerical skills of all pupils are being developed and consolidated in most lessons through planned starters to the lesson and this enhances the progress of pupils through the key stages. Nevertheless, the progress of all but the more able

pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 is affected by their insecure numerical skills.

132. Throughout the school, the progress pupils make in mathematics is enhanced by the very good behaviour and attitudes pupils show in their lessons. Pupils respond to questions with interest. For example, through the discussion and interactive teaching in one Year 7 lesson the pupils explored and developed their understanding about changing fractions into decimals. They show respect for their teachers. Pupils in Key Stage 3 work together positively and productively and quickly organise themselves when they are asked to work on their individualised programmes. They work quietly and show respect for each other's learning needs, which allows the teacher to give focused support to individuals and small groups within the class.
133. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers are aware of the range of ability within each of their teaching groups and particularly in the mixed ability groups in Key Stage 3. The pupils are given good support and work, matching their needs well, is planned for every Key Stage 3 class. It enhances the progress of each ability group within the class. There are very good links with the special educational needs department. Learning support teachers provide good support in class. In a Year 9 class, one pupil with visual impairment was working well with a support teacher. All the resources being used in the class had been appropriately adjusted to enable her to work as well as the rest of her class. In Key Stage 4, teachers who are teaching lower ability sets plan for learning in small but appropriate steps to enable good progress to be made. In a Year 10 class, the mathematics teacher and the support teacher worked effectively as a team to help the lowest ability group understanding compass directions.
134. Teachers are also aware of those pupils in their class who have English as a second language and they provide appropriate support in class. In one class a language support teacher was exploring the meaning of the word 'multiple' with a pupil whose first language is Turkish. She was using an English-Turkish dictionary and a second Turkish speaking pupil to help the first pupil develop her mathematical understanding of multiples.
135. The use of ICT within mathematics is not yet sufficiently developed, although there has been recent improvement. In each mathematics classroom, there are two computers and pupils use them mainly to consolidate and review their learning. However, the level of computing skills required by pupils to undertake this work is undemanding. There are opportunities for teachers to use the computer suites in the school for whole class ICT based activities and there is reference to using ICT in the mathematics schemes of work. However, as yet, the use of ICT in mathematics is not systematic and thus more advanced ICT skills that enhance pupils' learning in mathematics are not appropriately developed.
136. The mathematics department has embraced elements of the National Numeracy Strategy. Techniques to develop numerical skills within the classroom are well developed and most lessons begin with a mental warm-up session. However there is no whole school numeracy policy to ensure that pupils' numerical skills and understanding are progressively developed in a consistent and coherent way across the school. This is unsatisfactory. There are few examples of pupils using other than basic numerical skills effectively in other subjects. In ICT lessons, pupils in Year 7 produced a bar chart and used the computer to design a room. In design and technology, pupils use only basic number work in their projects. In history, quantitative analysis is underdeveloped.
137. Teaching in mathematics is good overall and some of the teaching is very good. The features of teaching in these lessons are very good planning and interactive teaching which challenge pupils and ensure that pace and expectations are appropriate high. In those lessons judged to be satisfactory time was not always used effectively and the pace was only moderate. In some lessons, particularly in Key Stage 3 when pupils are working on different activities according to their attainment, teachers are not able to ensure that all pupils are working steadily and making appropriate progress through the lessons. Overall, teachers have very good subject knowledge and planning is effective and detailed, particularly for the range of ability in the Key Stage 3 classes. Pupils are managed well and teachers use a range of teaching methods. In one lesson, pupils were asked to work in pairs to discuss and agree a definition for a mathematical net. The

mixture of topic lessons and activity-based lessons provides a good variation in the learning experiences of pupils

138. The consolidation of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is good, for example the emphasis on key words and the mental starters. However, in a few lessons the teachers did not make clear their learning objectives for the lesson and consequently the plenary was not as effective as it might have been to summarise learning.
139. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Marking is thorough but the amount of written feedback given by the teachers is inconsistent. Regular assessment ensures that the department keeps a detailed record on individual pupils' progress. The department monitors the performance of each pupil, there are discussions with pupils who are underachieving and the allocation of pupils to sets in Key Stage 4 is constantly monitored. The assessment information is linked appropriately to National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades. Pupils in Key Stage 4 know the GCSE grades at which they are working and also what they should achieve, based on their current performance. Pupils in Key Stage 3 are also set targets. However, the targets do not sufficiently link to learning objectives and therefore pupils do not have a clear awareness of what they need to do in order to improve their performance. The department is aware of some cohorts of pupils who are underachieving but the use of the assessment data to monitor and evaluate the performance of different cohorts is underdeveloped.
140. The department is very well led and managed. The senior staff in the department work well together and provide good support to each other and to the new members of staff. There is an appropriate departmental development plan and appropriate schemes of work are in place. There has been some monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning but this is not systematic.
141. The department is accommodated in a new building and this enhances the standards now being achieved. Most of the teaching takes place in this building and consequently mathematics teachers are working close to one another and they support each other well. The recruitment of mathematics teachers has been difficult in recent years. For example, three of the Year 9 teaching groups have been taught by a number of different teachers and this has impacted on standards of attainment. There are no teachers currently teaching mathematics at the school who were teaching in the school during the last inspection.
142. Since the last inspection there has been good progress. Teaching and planning for the mixed ability classes are much improved. There is good teamwork to ensure that teachers support one another in their planning and in the sharing of ideas and resources. Pupils now have mathematics books to take home and which they can use to do homework. Although the numeracy skills of some pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 remain limited, there is less reliance on calculators than previously. There is effective whole class teaching and the use of the three-part lesson linked to the National Numeracy Strategy is in place and being developed.

## SCIENCE

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

### Strengths

- Teachers are well qualified and have a good knowledge of their subject.
- Staff work well together and are committed to raising standards of attainment. Standards in Years 10 and 11 have improved since the time of the last inspection.
- Relationships with pupils are good.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment in Key Stage 3, particularly in data logging.
- The use of ICT to support teaching and learning.
- The range of teaching and learning methods and creative written work.
- Guidance to students on how to improve their work.

- Support for pupils with English as an additional language.

143. The results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2001 were below the national average for schools nationally, but were average when compared with similar schools. Between 1996 and 2001, test results improved steadily until 1998, but then dropped sharply in 1999, before rising to their highest point in 2001. During this period the results were consistently below average compared to the national averages. The results in 2001 represent a slight improvement overall at Level 5 or above, but a significant improvement in Level 6 or above when they were well above average for similar schools. The results in science were not as good as those in English, but were slightly better than those in mathematics.
144. In the GCSE examinations in 2001, the proportion of students gaining grades A\* - C were broadly in line with the national average, but was well above average when compared with similar schools. The results in 2001 show a decline over those in 2000, but were similar to those in 1999. Students do less well in science than they do in many of their other subjects.
145. Pupils currently in Year 9 are achieving similar standards to those obtained by last year's classes in the national tests for 14-year-olds. Standards are below those expected for students of the same age nationally. With the exception of scientific enquiry and experimental method, standards are broadly similar in all aspects of science. Pupils' practical and investigative skills are weak because there are too few opportunities for them to make their own predictions, or to define problems based on scientific knowledge and understanding. They seldom plan their own experiments and evaluate their results. Pupils are generally good at carrying out experiments planned by the teacher. They record observations, take reasonably accurate measurements and present data in the form of charts and graphs. The standards of pupils' work are held back because tasks frequently do not sufficiently incorporate applications to everyday life or to the world around them. For example, in a Year 9 class, many could explain how satellites orbit the earth, but were unable to explain their scientific uses. In another lesson, pupils learned about the manufacture of fertilisers, but had little understanding of their importance and applications. Many lack confidence in using basic scientific terminology. Although teachers help pupils to develop their literacy skills appropriately, this is not done rigorously enough. Students' numeracy skills are below average. Their ICT skills, although improving, are not well developed because of the lack of opportunity to use computers, particularly for data logging. Nevertheless, by the end of Year 9, achievement is satisfactory in relation to previous learning in the subject which, when they join the school as 11 year olds, is below average. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress overall. Although many are proficient English speakers, a number are not, and their lack of fluency inhibits their learning in science.
146. Standards in the work seen in Year 11 are broadly in line with those expected nationally and similar to those indicated by the results in the GCSE examinations in 2001. Students achieve well. They have at least a satisfactory knowledge of the topics they are studying and some have a better than expected understanding for their age. Standards in Year 10 are slightly better than those in Year 11. Most pupils in the top set in Year 10 were able to compare the reactions of metals with oxygen, water and acid, and to arrange them into an order of reactivity known as the 'reactivity series'. Higher attaining pupils can explain how metals are extracted from their ores. They can explain why unreactive metals, such as gold and silver, are found as elements in the Earth's crust, and why reactive metals such as potassium and sodium are always found in compounds. This is better than would be expected in relation to their earlier attainment. As at Key Stage 3, there is too little independent investigative work. Opportunities for pupils to suggest their own hypotheses and experiments are often missed. The majority understand fair testing principles, but there are too few opportunities for them to make predictions based on scientific knowledge, and to plan their own work.
147. Pupils at all levels of attainment tabulate results satisfactorily, although all too often too much guidance is given as to their construction. Most understand word equations and are able to present results graphically. The highest attainers can use symbolic equations. Literacy skills are

generally well supported in terms of their developing scientific vocabulary and terminology. Numeracy and computing skills are below average.

148. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 to 11. Teaching was good in nearly one third of lessons. Science teachers are knowledgeable about their subject. In the better lessons, they plan effectively to focus upon the organisation of the activity, as well as upon what pupils must learn. Teachers create a good atmosphere within which high, sometimes ambitious, expectations are shared with students. In the best lessons, questions are delivered with speed, skill and enthusiasm, explanations are clear and activities are interesting. This was seen to best effect in a Year 7 lesson about the movement of particles in solids, liquids and gases, and of the process of diffusion. As part of this very interesting lesson, there was a wide range of activities and experiments in which pupils had to make their own observations and explain what they had seen in terms of particle theory. Higher attaining pupils could explain diffusion in terms of molecules moving from an area of high concentration to one of low concentration. Pupils make the best progress when they are quickly involved in demanding work. Their progress is much slower when they receive too much guidance from teachers, with too few problem-solving activities and opportunities for students to write at length for themselves.
149. Teachers know their pupils well and recognise the importance of adapting their methods to meet individual needs. In practice much of the teaching is instructional, directed at the whole class without sufficient adaptation, particularly for the highest attainers. In one lesson for example, there was too great an emphasis on copying notes from the board and worksheets. The teaching was clear and articulate, and provided an interesting practical activity to support the topic. However, the teaching style was directive throughout the lesson, asking questions and providing the answers when pupils struggled to respond. Pupils had little opportunity to discuss significant issues, highlight important points, feedback their views, plan their own experiment, or make their own notes. The lesson was successful, but pupils were too passive. The opportunity was lost to challenge them and make them really think. Whilst this more directive approach is frequently effective in conveying information, it reduces opportunities for pupils to take any initiative, think for themselves and solve problems. Overall, learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 3, and good at Key Stage 4.
150. Attitudes to learning are good, and most pupils concentrate well. Behaviour is mostly good. The majority of pupils respond well to their science lessons, are co-operative with their teachers and help one another. Pupils share equipment safely and happily record their observations together. They answer questions in a courteous manner and generally to the best of their ability. Few ask questions to enquire more deeply into a topic, which is an attribute that needs to be fostered to raise standards in science.
151. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Some changes have taken place since the last inspection which indicate that further improvements can be made. The department has been under the management of two acting heads of department for the past six months. There has been significant staffing turbulence in recent times, as the school has experienced difficulty in recruiting suitably trained science teachers, and this has impacted on teaching and learning. The staff work well as a team, although the recent turnover of staff has resulted in a reduction in the breadth of experience. There is a shared commitment to raising standards and an enthusiasm to succeed. The two acting heads of department have an understanding of the department's strengths and weaknesses. Whilst planning, monitoring and evaluation have been insufficiently rigorous to raise standards in the past, this is now changing. There needs to be a broadening of current schemes of work to allow teachers to modify and use a wider range of teaching strategies. There has been little significant improvement in the use of computers since the last inspection, although there has been a significant investment in hardware and data logging equipment. Some deficiencies in the management of health and safety were brought to the attention of the school and received urgent action.
152. The laboratory accommodation is unsatisfactory and this impacts adversely on the quality of teaching and learning. The problems of poor accommodation for science are shortly to be rectified by a major building and refurbishment project.

153. Overall, there has been a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. GCSE attainment is now in line with national averages and there has been a marginal improvement in Year 9 test results. The quality of teaching is better than it was, but it is still variable. Assessment and recording procedures have improved, but there needs to be more rigorous monitoring and evaluation to raise attainment, particularly at Key Stage 3.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- Good progress in Key Stage 3.
- Above average results in GCSE.
- Good schemes of work to introduce pupils to a range of materials and to the work of artists.
- Planning shared with pupils so they know how their courses will develop.

### Areas for improvement

- Monitoring across teaching groups to ensure consistency of teaching and learning.
- Greater emphasis on drawing from observation, including drawing from the figure.

154. Standards reached by 14 year olds are in line with the average for similar schools. At the end of Year 11, results are above average when compared with national figures. Achievement is good at the end of Year 9, where pupils' good rate of progress enhances their work, and at the end of Year 11.

155. Pupils' attainment is generally below average in Year 7. By the end of Year 9, standards are average, which shows that most pupils are making good progress in art and design. From Year 7, pupils are introduced to a range of media and to the work of artists. They work both in two dimensions and three dimensions and develop good skills of planning, research and construction. Examples of good work include papier-mâché masks derived from a range of cultures in Year 7, large scale paintings and smaller collages inspired by the work of Georgia O'Keefe in Year 8 and clay totem poles inspired by North American art in Year 9. Drawing skills are less well developed by the end of Year 9, much of the work in sketchbooks being copied from magazines or photographs rather than from direct observation. Although there is variation in the use of sketchbooks, there has been some improvement since the previous inspection.

156. Achievement is good overall in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are expected to take more responsibility for their work and there is evidence of impressive contextual studies on the work of artists. High attainers are prepared to experiment and make good progress. Some sketchbooks are developed to a high level but again this is not consistent. Expectations for homework are not always high enough or consistent throughout the department. Sketchbooks are an important requirement for all years, and the current situation of pupils having to supply their own books is unsatisfactory and has a negative effect on learning. GCSE results last year were impressive and above the national average for all schools, with over two thirds of the pupils entered gaining high grades.

157. Most pupils have a positive attitude to their work and are keen to talk about what they are doing. Behaviour is generally good and classes are orderly. Relationships are supportive; on two occasions there was brief spontaneous applause following a good demonstration from pupils. Most pupils with special educational needs are making good progress, although at times they would benefit from extra help in topics such as perspective. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are also making good progress. Gifted and talented pupils do well, but not always well enough. Some in Years 7 and 8 are attending an extension lesson after school but all would benefit from higher expectations and more individual work in their usual lessons. In Years 10 and 11, the course meets the needs of all pupils as there are more opportunities for individual work.

158. Overall teaching is good. It is good in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of teaching styles. In a Year 8 lesson on perspective, pupils gave presentations to the rest of the class. This not only inspires others but helps pupils to consolidate their own learning. The skilful use of questioning in an after-school extension lesson for Years 7 and 8 helped pupils to explore their feelings and put them into words. A Year 7 group had their previous art lesson in the library so they were all able to contribute to the discussion on Op Art.

159. In Year 10 the stimulus of a colourful still life encouraged pupils to explore imaginative responses



through drawing, painting and studies in clay. In Year 11, most pupils are self-motivated and developing their own individual projects with the help of the teacher. Research is supported by a good selection of art reference books in the library which includes texts on women artists, Caribbean and Islamic art.

160. Assessment procedures are good and have a positive impact on standards as pupils know their levels and how well they are doing. Homework is marked regularly, although not always with a comment that tells pupils how to improve their work.
161. Learning is not consistent in all classes, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Some teachers are working outside their main subject area or have expectations that are too low and allow a level of chatter in lessons which prevents others from working as well as they should. In a few lessons, there is a limited range of teaching styles. The lesson is introduced, pupils carry on with their work and the teacher goes round to help individuals. There is no whole-class teaching and little learning takes place. This was commented on as a weakness in the last inspection and, although there has been considerable progress in most lessons, it is not consistent.
162. Overall, management of the subject is satisfactory. There continue to be areas of leadership which require further development, such as the monitoring of teaching and learning. The department still lacks an overall sense of direction, and this is unsatisfactory. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Two rooms used for teaching art are in another department and a third is an unconverted classroom with no sink. This does not provide a stimulating environment for learning and the lack of art ethos in these rooms has a detrimental effect on standards. This unsatisfactory position should be resolved in the near future by the school's building and refurbishment programme.
163. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Standards in Year 9 match national expectation and have been maintained in Years 10 and 11. Resources are adequate except in the provision of sketchbooks. Storage is good in the main art rooms and there are now more artefacts to work from. ICT has still to be introduced. There is not enough monitoring of teaching and learning, particularly for the 11 to 14-year-olds, to ensure that all receive the same quality of art and design experience. The previous inspection referred to the art department being in the Design and Technology Learning Area and deriving no obvious benefit from the arrangement. This has not changed.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Pupils' achievements and progress in the subject.
- Class management of pupils.
- The design process and modelling opportunities.
- Pupils' good attitudes to the subject.
- Literacy skills in the design and technology curriculum.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment at the ages of 14 and 16.
- Greater consistency of the best practice through monitoring and feedback to staff.
- Target-setting to raise standards.
- Use of assessment of how well pupils have met learning objectives in each lesson.
- The provision of resources such as computers, computer assisted design, basic hand tools to meet the needs of the curriculum.

164. Progress is good for pupils who entered the school with lower than average results in design and technology (as assessed by primary teachers) at the end of their primary school phase - the value added is high by Year 11. The trend in results at 16 shows a slow gradual improvement over several years for D to G grades, but much less improvement in A to C grades. Pupils' standards

on entering the school are well below average for their age but by the end of Key Stage 3 have begun to improve. In the Key Stage 4 examination results four out of ten pupils gained A\*-C grades across all the design and technology subjects, just below the national average. The A\*-G pass grades are better and almost equal to the national average.

165. The subject's average trend and average points score per pupil in examination results over four years has shown wide variation but importantly has continued to improve for the majority of pupils in the D to G grades of GCSE. The A\* to C grades again have varied across the four years of results but remain static in terms of a trend or improvement. Sixth form A level and AS level examination results are satisfactory for the small number of candidates entered and, over several years, a range of grades has been achieved and most students pass. In examinations across the school, pupils do better in many other of their subjects than they do in design and technology.
166. Between the ages of 11 and 14, pupils make good progress with their basic skills and the majority of pupils' attainment, as judged by work seen, their finished products, design folders, books and discussions, is much improved. They can make artefacts to meet a simple specification such as a soft toy, identify the different materials for use and suggest why they have been used. Few, however, distinguish between the quality of their design and the quality of their manufacture. By the age of 16, attainment levels have continued to improve slowly through their acquisition of more specialised practical and design skills as seen in the 'commercial' project to make a game, enabling them to make prototype products in resistant materials such as plastic and wood. They are especially developing their abilities as designers because of the good emphasis in the scheme of work on products in differing commercial, cultural and social contexts. By the end of the sixth form, the quality of individual projects is very professional and specialist skill areas are developed to appropriate advanced levels.
167. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress. From their low Key Stage 2 entry level, pupils make good gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. Over the longer term, they are beginning to achieve well. In Key Stage 3, the teaching is well matched to the requirements of the scheme of work, and this influences the good rate of progress. However, in Key Stage 4, there are several factors adversely affecting progress. These include basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills, which are insufficiently developed to enable sufficient progress for some pupils. Literacy is already a focus for improvement in the department and results are beginning to be seen.
168. The attitude to learning by the majority of pupils is good. They are interested in learning design skills and how designers make products. Most pupils display sustained concentration levels and persevere with both their design ideas and manufacturing of their products. Behaviour is good for the majority of pupils, with positive relationships and co-operation shown in sharing equipment and working collaboratively.
169. Across both Key Stage 3 and 4, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and in the sixth form it is good. The balance of experience is good. The range of teachers' knowledge and understanding is appropriate. In particular, teachers explain and demonstrate skills and techniques well, both in designing and making. They do so in a way that shows they expect pupils to produce good quality artefacts and finish them well, develop safe working practices, complete tasks to a design specification and communicate using the correct technical terminology.
170. In the very best lessons, teaching styles are varied and expectations of pupils are higher, making pupils more responsible for their work at an earlier age by the use of good assessment strategies throughout and at the end of lessons. Teachers are also more prudent in the use of their advice, support and evaluative comment. They demand the use of deeper thinking, creative effort and quality of work from the pupils. The more mature pupils respond well to this type of challenge and more could be done to encourage these methods across the department. However, all staff give pupils sufficient time to wrestle with their design or technological problem, and time their interventions well to avoid any pupil becoming frustrated. This advances learning without inhibiting

creativity. In lessons that do not produce the highest standards, the organisation and teaching methods used do not sufficiently involve pupils for the most effective learning. Then the management of pupils and standards of discipline become unsatisfactory, with the consequence that the use of time and the pace of the lesson are unsatisfactory.

171. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. The subject reflects the school's aims very well, fully supporting integration and social and academic inclusion. The scheme of work in its medium and long term planning is systematic and well documented in both the CD-ROM and paper formats. The curriculum generates a range of design opportunities for modelling, prototype products and developing technological skills. Design, as a way of thinking about products is built in from the start and becoming well established. The department staff are well trained in the use of information and communication technology in design and technology courses. Computer-aided manufacture has been introduced within courses. The curriculum is planned effectively and within the constraints of the carousel course arrangements, provides for continuity and progression through aspects such as design, problem solving, modelling, product analysis and basic information technology. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment, targets and progress are satisfactory.
172. There is effective leadership of the department that has a positive impact on the achievement of the pupils. The style of teamwork where all members of the department contribute strategically ensures a fully co-operative managed approach to change. Curriculum development is becoming a continuous improvement process built in to the cycle of development planning, but there is realism about the implementation of planning priorities. For this to take place, monitoring of the curriculum, teaching and standards needs to take place on a more regular basis. Curriculum aspects of health and safety are managed well but risk assessments should be carried out in a more systematic way to identify all hazards. Improvements since the last inspection report are very evident and go beyond the requirements of the last report.

## Drama

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

### Strengths

- The quality of drama teaching is very good.
- The leadership and management of the subject are excellent.
- Drama teachers have developed excellent schemes of work.
- Drama makes a very positive contribution to the overall ethos of the school.

173. Standards of attainment at both key stages are very high. Pupils have a clear understanding of the skills they require. They work very hard to attain high standards. Opportunities are provided for them to express themselves freely and to develop their individual interests and strengths, although always within clearly understood boundaries. Pupils are developing their imagination and using vocabulary effectively. They respond to a range of texts from different times and cultures. They shape ideas and select forms to structure work and evaluate others. They are developing performance, devising and improvisational skills. They are developing and realising ideas and communicating. Individual, pair and small group presentations are constructed carefully. Pupils' use of language and voice projection is very good. Pupils are developing attitudes, skills and techniques that have a positive effect on other areas of learning. The quality of work is particularly good in Years 10 and 11, with much original and exciting work being undertaken. This is reflected in good GCSE examination results. Between 1998 and 2000 the percentage of pupils gaining grades A\* to C was high. In 2001, GCSE results fell but were in line with the national average. This is because the department did not have sufficient space or resources for the increased number of pupils who opted for the subject.
174. Progress in lessons is always very good with pupils of all abilities being able to integrate fully into the process of creating and presenting work. Units of work have been produced which ensure continuity and progression in the teaching of the subject. Careful use of time during classes

ensures that pupils are kept on target so that they can focus on preparing performances for presentation and evaluation at the end of the lesson.

175. The quality of teaching is very good and often excellent. The teachers have excellent subject knowledge. Their enthusiasm inspires the pupils. Drama teachers motivate pupils very well and manage their behaviour very well indeed. Pupils trust their judgements and respond very positively. The overall effectiveness of teachers' planning is excellent. The planning for individual lessons and sequences of lessons is excellent. Lessons contain varied activities that are carefully timed and well spaced. Excellent technical advice is given to the GCSE pupils.
176. The majority of pupils in the school enjoy drama. This is reflected in their attitude during lessons. Pupils are attentive and enthusiastic. They quickly become immersed in their work. The quality of discussion is frequently very good. Many pupils make perceptive and encouraging remarks. For example, in a Year 10 lesson pupils worked in pairs and small groups to create a sequence and make a presentation to the whole class. The class analysed and evaluated the presentations before offering constructive criticism. Drama provides opportunities for the personal development of pupils. They are encouraged to explore a range of issues and ideas. For example, a Year 8 class studying war was able to explore what happens to families in wartime and the role of women in war.
177. The management of drama is very good. Many drama topics contribute immensely to pupils' personal development. As a result the subject makes a significant contribution to the curricular aims of the school. The recent designation of the school as a centre for the performing arts, together with the planned improvements in accommodation, will enable greater involvement in productions and other performances than currently occurs.

## GEOGRAPHY

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

### Strengths

- The improving GCSE results and the commitment to raise standards still further.
- The clear leadership, teamwork and efficient administration of the department.
- The good teaching of the full-time specialists so that students make good progress.
- The good progress made by students with special educational needs.
- The good behaviour and enthusiasm of most students.

### Areas for improvement

- Enhancement of the ICT and fieldwork entitlements in the subject.
- An increase in the pace and challenge in some Key Stage 3 lessons so that students stay on task throughout.
- The use of available assessment data to plan the curriculum and to set targets for all students which will improve their learning.

178. The standards reached by students by the age of 14 were below the national average in 2001, as reported in the statutory teacher assessment results. The GCSE results were below the national average for both girls' and all maintained secondary schools and the proportion of A\* to B grades was particularly low. However, the results have shown a steady improvement over the past three years and challenging targets have been set for 2002. There is no consistent pattern of underachievement by specific minority ethnic groups from year to year. Students with special educational needs and with English as an additional language achieve well.
179. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress between the ages of 11 and 14. All acquire a broad geographical vocabulary and are able to use technical terms with accuracy. They can describe geographical features in detail and explain the underlying processes. In a Year 7 lesson for example, students were able to explain why factors influencing the choice of a village site change over time. In Year 8, they were able to discuss why certain ethnic groups cluster in particular

London boroughs. Their written work shows that they can balance the impact of physical and economic factors on the environment, as in the area around Milan. Gifted and talented students also make satisfactory progress but would benefit from the provision of more regular enrichment work. There are limited fieldwork opportunities to develop the skills of geographical enquiry and limited evidence of individual research or use of the Internet.

180. Pupils make good progress between the ages of 14 and 16. All maintain and most accelerate the progress made at Key Stage 3. They understand both the direct and indirect impact of economic changes on the physical landscape and on the social and cultural life of an area. Year 11 students traced the link between the closure of the South Wales coal mines and the construction of a Japanese restaurant in Port Talbot. They can select and interpret data from a variety of sources, as well as decide on the most appropriate methods of presentation GCSE coursework on the Docklands provided evidence of very good independent investigation and analysis. Much work was word processed and graphs and charts were accurately used. Progress in the sixth form is also good. The small numbers sometimes inhibit the length and pace of discussions, but students show a good understanding of the advanced processes of globalisation.
181. Students with special educational needs and English as an additional language made good progress in a Year 8 lesson, where the learning support assistant kept them on task by explaining new vocabulary clearly and by checking their understanding of each stage of an exercise. In most Key Stage 4 classes, a range of work was available for both the foundation and higher level students. In other lessons, the good behaviour allowed teachers to give focused assistance to individual students.
182. The overall quality of teaching is good and was never less than satisfactory at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject. Planning is good in both content and timing. Some students arrive late to lessons, but recall exercises are given to the prompt arrivals until the whole class is present. Explanations of new concepts are clear and concise, so that students make good gains in knowledge and understanding. The teachers' enthusiasm for geography is shared with the students who are motivated and mostly sustain concentration, although some distracting behaviour occurs towards the end of lessons. Homework is regularly set and marked, although the positive comments do not always clearly tell students how to make improvements.
183. In the good lessons, expectations were high and lesson objectives for all students clearly stated from the outset. There was a brisk pace throughout and a range of challenging activities. Year 10 students, for example, were able to explain rainfall and temperature variations across Britain through very good use of projected maps. Progress was good. In lessons which lacked momentum, instructions were not precise so that students were confused as to how to start a task, as in the introduction to the Year 9 topic on rivers.
184. The department is well and conscientiously led. Expectations are high, there is clear direction as to how the curriculum should be implemented and documentation is comprehensive. Steps have been taken to observe lessons and to monitor the quality of teaching in the department. Since the last inspection, schemes of work have been revised to include plans for the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies at Key Stage 3. Additional fieldwork has been arranged in Epping Forest. Standards reached at GCSE have risen over the past three years and overall standards of behaviour have improved. Departmental planning reflects the overall aims of the school development plan.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- Secure teacher knowledge and enthusiasm in the subject.
- Well planned lessons with clear and shared objectives.

- Good departmental leadership and management.
- Relationships in the classroom are very good.
- Valuable contribution to the literacy strategy.
- Relevant and challenging curriculum.

Areas for improvement

- Ensuring GCSE results are in line with other subjects that pupils take.
- Greater use of computers in teaching and learning history.

185. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 is below average. Standards at the end of Year 9 are average: lesson observations and the work seen confirm this. In the 2001 GCSE examination, 40.6 per cent of the pupils achieved A\*-C grades, against national figures of 60.8 per cent gaining equivalent grades. 100 per cent of the students gained A\* -G grades, as they had in the previous three years.
186. Pupils and students of all levels of attainment make good progress in their first three years in the school, including those who are gifted, those with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language. Pupils develop a wide range of historical skills, including the interpretation of appropriate historical evidence and data, the analysis of difficult historical issues and the understanding of chronology. They are able to use a wide range of learning materials including thematic worksheets, pictorial evidence, timelines, writing frames, videos and a comprehensive range of primary and secondary source material. The handling of different forms of historical data is secure and pupils are able to work individually and in pairs to develop their understanding of history. Pupils are given good opportunities to handle, interpret and use historical information in order to develop their historical understanding. In Year 7, pupils are able to effectively analyse the different reasons for mediaeval town growth. Pupils' historical understanding is extended in Year 8 by studying the effects of the eighteenth century slave trade. The learning is strongly reinforced by pupil role-play and the use of empathy to understand the slaves' conditions. By Year 9, pupils are accurately and systematically analysing how The Great War radically changed the lives of women. Classes in these years are mixed ability and all pupils are able to make good progress because the worksheets contain a sufficient range of tasks for the full range of capability. In addition, the teachers know the individual needs of their pupils and are able through good classroom management, clear objectives, well-planned activities and targeted help to support effective learning.
187. Pupils continue to make at least satisfactory progress throughout Years 10 and 11 as they build upon the foundation of skills and knowledge acquired in the earlier years. By the end of Year 11, pupils have developed a good understanding of the origins of The Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement in America. In these years there is a greater emphasis on developing extended writing skills, the making of their own notes, often from visual materials, and the interpretation and use of primary and secondary source material. Pupils are encouraged to make oral contributions and to discuss complex issues such as the impact of the black passive resistance movement on American society. Thorough examination preparation is built into the framework of the lessons. However, examination results in GCSE last year were significantly lower than the national average.
188. Teaching is good overall, with some very good features. There is a wider span of skills demonstrated in the lower years where there is a need for greater consistency amongst the teaching team. There is considerable evidence of well-planned and well-structured lessons. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about their subject, which they are able to share with the pupils. Most lessons begin with a question and answer session where the teacher is able to prompt and support good pupil learning. A comprehensive range of classroom activities promotes the development of a wide range of learning skills. There is considerable emphasis upon acquiring literacy skills and this is a strength of the department. The curriculum is carefully selected to reflect the pupil intake and there is a large and very effective unit of black history and coursework in Year 11 focuses on the changing role of women in the twentieth century. History makes a strong contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural education.
189. The atmosphere in classes is purposeful and ordered and pupils are able to successfully acquire historical skills. Historical ideas are clearly and thoroughly explained and developed and there is

good evidence of teachers using their knowledge, enthusiasm and teaching skills to develop pupils' understanding at all levels of competence. Teachers are particularly good at creating historical empathy and this encourages pupils' enjoyment of the subject. Take up in Year 10 is well above the national average.

190. Overall the standards of behaviour are very good. The strong relationships observed in the department underpin effective learning and the acquisition of skills. Good interpersonal relationships are one of the strengths of the history department. Pupils listen carefully to each other and co-operation amongst pupils in all years is high.
191. The management of the department is good. The head of the department gives clear leadership and has a sound knowledge of how the department can build upon its existing strengths. She has built up a good team spirit in a short period of time. At present, after a period of turbulence, there is a satisfactory match of staff to the school's needs in experience, expertise and qualification; however, one post is currently filled on a temporary basis. Homework is set regularly and marking supports progress, learning and achievement. Teachers' comments are supportive and encouraging, particularly in the lower years and then become more diagnostic in Years 10 and 11. Greater attention needs to be given to assessment in order to ensure it underpins the raising of standards in Year 11.
192. The specialist classrooms provide an effective learning environment with attractive displays of historical material and pupils' work. Capitation is satisfactory and the department is well stocked with worksheets, videos and textbooks. At present there is very limited use of information and communication technology. This needs to be developed and built into the scheme of work. Since the last inspection the department has continued to develop. The new head of department has ensured that key historical words are displayed in the classrooms, that the teaching quality has been strengthened, that pupils' behaviour throughout the department is consistently good and that a departmental resource base has been established which meets pupils' and students' needs.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

### Strengths

- The commitment and expertise of specialist ICT staff.
- The enthusiasm of pupils for the subject.
- Significant progress recently in improving hardware and software resources and ICT accommodation.

### Areas for development

- There is no coherent whole-school ICT plan in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 which can deliver effectively the whole of the National Curriculum programme of study.
- There is no whole-school ICT assessment and monitoring system in Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 which will enable the school to evaluate and report securely on the attainment of pupils in ICT and further develop the ICT curriculum in response to pupil needs.

193. Standards in both key stages are generally below national expectations. Attainment is in line with expectations only in Year 7 and in the Key Stage 4 GNVQ IT courses. The most recent teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 3 shows pupils achieving in line with national averages, but this an overestimation, based on incomplete evidence of attainment in a few subjects. Most pupils are able to use routine ICT tools, such as word processors, but they do not demonstrate an appropriate level of capability across the full range of knowledge, skills and understanding required by the National Curriculum. Little evidence, for example, was seen in ICT lessons or in subjects across the curriculum of pupils being able to reflect critically on their use of ICT or to be independent and discriminating users of computers. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities, including pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, attain as well as their peers.
194. Progress is unsatisfactory for most pupils. Little evidence was seen in pupils' work or in lessons

- across the curriculum of the expected increase in ICT capability as pupils move through the school. Progress in Year 7 is satisfactory, supported by a coherent programme delivered in separate lessons. Similarly, the progress of pupils in the GNVQ IT classes in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. Year 7 pupils were observed, for example, making good progress in developing their keyboard skills and ICT vocabulary in their weekly specialist lesson. Their portfolio of work contained brochures and letters of reasonable quality produced using a variety of software. However, the unsatisfactory rate of progress in ICT is due to the absence of a planned and integrated programme of work across the curriculum which addresses the requirements of the National Curriculum and is fully monitored and assessed. There is no difference in the rate of progress of pupils from different backgrounds or of different prior attainment.
195. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning through ICT is good. Most pupils show a positive attitude to computer use in lessons and in the popular after-school and lunchtime clubs. Pupils always adopt a responsible approach to handling computer equipment and software. Relationships between pupils of different minority ethnic groups are very positive and pupils of all abilities are fully involved in learning activities. This results in a good rate of learning for pupils in lessons where ICT is used appropriately.
196. Teaching in specialist ICT lessons is always at least satisfactory and was good in just under half of the lessons. The quality of teaching is the same in both key stages. Specialist lessons were generally well planned and delivered with appropriate content which engaged the interest of pupils. Teachers showed an appropriate level of expertise and used a range of teaching strategies to manage pupils' learning, including the use of questioning, individual and small group work. Pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language were clearly identified in all lesson plans and teaching strategies were used to address their needs effectively. In one Year 7 lesson, for example, the teacher used cards showing key relevant vocabulary to support those learning English. Specific software is also being used to support the language development of groups of Bengali and Turkish pupils and large screens are used to support the needs of visually impaired learners. This teaching results in a pace and quality of learning.
197. However, the teaching of ICT across the curriculum throughout the school is not satisfactory overall. This is because there is no coherent planned programme for pupils in subject areas across the school. There are many examples of the use of ICT in subjects, but these are not adequately assessed or co-ordinated to ensure the secure delivery across the school of the National Curriculum ICT entitlement to all pupils. Some subjects have not yet adequately assessed their own contribution to pupils' skills in ICT. This results in a quality of learning in ICT which is unsatisfactory for most pupils, in spite of the various examples of good practice.
198. Long-standing recruitment issues have impeded progress in ICT in recent years, although the current staffing situation is positive. An ICT curriculum co-ordinator and a Key Skills co-ordinator were appointed at the beginning of the current academic year. These teachers, working with the ICT systems co-ordinator, are helping the school move forward to address outstanding issues. The relationship between the roles of the three ICT managers has not been adequately reviewed to ensure the most effective deployment of skills and expertise and to sharpen decision-making.
199. Major financial investment in the last financial year has significantly improved ICT accommodation, hardware and software. This has brought the overall level of ICT resources in the school to a satisfactory level, although some departments are still unable to obtain adequate access to the heavily booked ICT suites and lack of suitable specialist software. The planned extension of the Year 7 provision to Year 8 can reasonably be expected to improve standards further and put more of the statutory curriculum into place. The current provision, however, remains unsatisfactory. The school is aware of this key issue and is poised to move forward quickly to raise the quality of its ICT provision in line with statutory requirements.



## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES – French, German, Bengali and Turkish

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **satisfactory** in French and German.

### Strengths

- Pupils achieve well by the age of 16. Their attitude to language learning is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs, those in the early stages of learning English and the most gifted and talented pupils make good progress.
- Teachers help pupils to develop the basic skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking successfully.
- Pupils generally gain from learning a second modern foreign language in Year 9.
- The department is well led. Its work reflects school aims well and its priorities for future development are appropriate.
- Action taken since the last inspection has resulted in some improvement in standards.

### Areas for improvement

- Many pupils and some higher attainers do not make expected progress in their first modern foreign language by Year 9.
- There is insufficient time for languages in Years 7 to 9, and in some classes, teachers do not use the time well enough.
- Pupils are not challenged enough to work from memory and to speak only the foreign language in class. In particular, more can be expected of the higher attaining students.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not have enough knowledge of how well they are progressing or of precisely what they need to do to improve their work.

200. In Years 7 to 9 students learn French or German as their first modern language and then add the other language in Year 9. Over the past few years, nationally reported standards in the teacher assessments in Year 9 have been close to average. Samples of these pupils' subsequent work in Years 10 and 11 indicate that assessments were accurate.

201. GCSE standards in 2001 in both French and German were lower than in the previous three years. In both languages, they were below the average for girls in similar schools, in German well below. They were closer in French than in German to the average for all schools. The trend in French has been static compared with the national improvement. Results have fluctuated in German, mainly because of staffing changes. French is among the stronger subjects in the school and results indicate that, in relation to their overall attainment on entry to the school, students generally achieve well. In 2001, all French candidates obtained at least grade G, better than in similar schools, and nearly all did so in German.

202. Currently in Year 9, attainment is slightly below national expectations. Many students are on course for the expected National Curriculum level 5 by the end of the year. Listening is relatively strong and writing shows a secure grasp of basic structure. Most students can as a minimum identify detail correctly in recorded passages and write short paragraphs or letters using simple sentences to describe family, home and favourites. Some gifted and talented students produce outstanding work with minimal support, enriched with perfect and imperfect tenses, negatives, opinions and reasons, and correct verb placement in German. They can switch accurately between persons, linking a wide range of structures securely and creatively. Other higher attaining and most average attaining students, however, do not write as extensively or confidently. They understand rules of grammar while they practise and apply them in sentences but then do not show well enough in extended pieces what they have learnt previously. Standards of speaking are similarly limited by a lack of progress beyond the accurate rehearsal in drills or role-play of vocabulary and patterns within the current topic. Most students show an acute ear and pronounce well, but they lack spontaneity and many lack confidence beyond saying words or phrases in isolation.

203. However, given their attainment on entry to the school, these standards show that the majority of students achieve as expected. Those with special educational needs and those in the early

stages of learning English make good progress, because teachers support them well with appropriate gapped texts, writing frames and frequent individual attention. They learn to pronounce clearly and recognise learnt vocabulary and phrases, and some learn to write simple paragraphs including the past tense. The gifted and talented, too, when encouraged to work independently on open-ended tasks, achieve well. Overall achievement in the first modern language is not better because students do not have enough lessons in it in Years 7 to 9, and so do not have the chance to consolidate and progress more quickly. In addition, in some lessons, teachers do not use available time well enough, and too much time is lost when some students lose concentration. In comparison, progress in the second language is often good because enough time is allocated to it. Students have a realistic chance to reach a level at which they can understand and communicate with meaning, and most succeed.

204. By Year 11, standards are closer to the national average, although still below those of girls elsewhere. Most students are at grades C/D, on course to meet the school's target of the national average for all schools, which is above last year's figure. As in Year 9, understanding tape and text is better than speaking and writing. Not enough students predicted in the C/E range of Foundation level write or speak confidently without the support of text, the result of not working from memory in earlier years. However, because coursework helps redress previous weaknesses in literacy, the content of written work improves significantly in Year 10 and 11 in the range of structure, richness of ideas and accurate application. Students are conscientious, learn vocabulary and phrases and try to apply these correctly, for example, in essays on friends and holidays. The more gifted use a full range of tenses, and can write extensively, accurately adapting model essays and letters, linking ideas and adding reasons and opinions with considerable flair. Some lower attaining students include past tenses and negatives in their coursework pieces. In oral work at Foundation level, students learn their set phrases in answer to rehearsed questions and some learn to improvise in dealing with the unpredictable elements of Higher level. Pronunciation is good, but too little extended language is memorised, so that students rely heavily on their revision over the final year.
205. Progress accelerates over Years 10 and 11 because the additional lesson provides more opportunity for consolidation, which gives students more self-confidence. By Year 11, most students achieve well in relation to their starting point. They are appropriately self-disciplined in carousel-based activities, they word-process coursework and redraft carefully, and their tidy organisation provides a secure base for revision. The more gifted are highly motivated. In one of the best lessons, a second-language German class in Year 11, students described from memory what was in their rooms, showing very good awareness of endings. Some students with special educational needs continue to exceed expectations.
206. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with strengths and weaknesses. It is better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. It is usually sound or good, but in a small minority of lessons, weaknesses outnumber strengths. There are consistent strengths which enable students to achieve well by Year 11. Teachers are accomplished linguists, including some who are native speakers. As a result, students pronounce well and make good progress in understanding spoken French and German. Teachers organise activities appropriate to the lesson objective, suitably supported by a range of resources which motivate students to sustain a purposeful work-rate. They teach basic literacy well with a good emphasis on accurate, neatly presented written work and very helpful use of writing frames. Students thus write carefully and accurately, take a pride in their work, and much GCSE coursework is at average levels and above. In general, teachers establish and maintain the right conditions for learning and most students listen and behave well. Relationships are good and students collaborate well in paired and group tasks. In Years 10 and 11 they respond most sensibly to opportunities to work independently, as in two Year 11 French lessons where they challenged themselves on Higher level reading, listening and role-play exercises, pacing themselves with independent access to cassette and text.
207. Teaching is inconsistent, however. Many lessons with good features are spoilt by unsatisfactory use of the spoken language and low-level tasks. In general, teachers use too much English, in one or two cases speaking very little French or German. This indiscriminate use lowers expectations, gives the wrong signal to reluctant learners and enables some students who could

perform better to avoid the challenge. Sometimes teachers instil urgency with timed tasks, but often do not use time well because their detailed planning is inadequate for the very wide range of individual student needs in the class. For example, insufficient thought is given to the needs of average and higher attaining students when core vocabulary and phrases are being introduced and practised. This stage either takes too long or focuses too much on single words, undemanding for most, especially higher attainers. Valuable time is lost in Years 9 and 10 in non-linguistic activities such as cutting, pasting and even colouring, totally inappropriate for age. In these lessons students are not challenged to develop their skills. In some classes in Years 9 and 10, teachers are too tolerant of inattention during whole-class question-and-answer routines. Marking is frequent but students in Years 7 to 9 do not have enough knowledge of how well they are progressing nor of what they should do to improve because their work is not graded routinely according to national curriculum levels.

208. The department has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Overall, standards have not improved significantly, but the department has successfully weathered a period of turbulence in German and provision for the second language is good. There is unity, purpose, commitment and clear leadership. It meets school aims well, especially in its inclusive practice and its promotion of positive attitudes to French and German culture. Priorities for further development are clearly stated and relevant. It is right that in-service training of staff in German is needed to improve staff deployment, that ICT application needs to be better planned, especially through e-mail links with foreign schools, and that the quality of teaching and learning needs to be more consistently good. The school needs to increase the allocation of time for the first language in Years 7 to 9, and the department should reconsider its marking policy. Above all, it should ensure, through more rigorous monitoring and a sharing of current best practice, that class time is always used productively and that lessons are conducted more systematically through the spoken language.

## Community languages

The school continues to maintain its high achievement in community languages, although the judgement is based on limited evidence. Its 100 per cent success rate in GCSE A to G grades over the last few years compares very favourably with the national and local trends in attainment.

### Bengali

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

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High level of achievement.</li> <li>• Overall teaching and learning.</li> <li>• Opportunity for pupils not attending the course to take public examinations in the subject.</li> </ul> <p>Areas for improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers' good qualifications.</li> <li>• Monitoring of teaching and learning.</li> </ul>
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209. The 2001 GCSE examination results compare very favourably with those of modern foreign languages nationally and locally. Pupils generally gain better grades in Bengali than in any other subjects of the National Curriculum.

210. The majority of pupils at Key Stage 4 demonstrate fairly well developed listening skills, but they lack confidence in speaking standard Bengali. They were able to talk fluently about the plot and characters in a Bengali play which they had watched in a lesson. They have difficulty with standard Bengali pronunciation, particularly with aspirated and unaspirated sounds. Pupils show an average level of attainment in reading and writing Bengali, with high attainers reading with accuracy, fluency and understanding. A significant minority has not yet developed these skills. Many pupils have written for different purposes, including formal and informal letters, paragraphs

and short descriptions, although under the guidance of their teacher. Some have not yet grasped certain aspects of grammar such as the use of appropriate verb endings for different pronouns. Pupils' handwriting is of good standard and their work is well presented.

211. Much of the achievement results from pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and good standards of behaviour. They are co-operative and relate well to each other and their teacher. Their learning is characterised by high levels of motivation, interest and concentration. All of this reflects the quality of teaching, which has some strong features such as good subject knowledge, appropriate questioning, careful preparation and appropriate resourcing. Teaching plans generally link well to relevant homework, but lack variety in methodology, an issue identified in the last inspection report. Planning is not sufficiently focused or detailed. As a result, lessons do not always reflect a balanced approach to skills being developed or the use of target language. Some assessment procedures are in place, but assessment does not adequately inform subsequent planning or teaching in any systematic way.
212. The subject is well managed, overall. The programme of activities is consistent with statutory requirements, and often provides access to Bengali culture. The subject is adequately resourced. The school's efforts involving the Head of the Modern Foreign Languages Department have led to the subject being taken up by a group of pupils in Year 10 as from September. The subject also benefits from the access it has recently been given to the information and communication technology suite. This is the main improvement since the last inspection. The exclusive use of a computer and a designated base would, however, eliminate timetabling difficulties. More importantly, the subject would greatly benefit from the teacher gaining qualified status and teaching and learning being monitored on a regular basis.

## Turkish

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

### Strengths

- High level of achievement.
- Opportunity for students not attending lessons to take examinations in Turkish.

### Areas for improvement

- Teachers' good qualifications.
- Gesture and intonation in speech.
- Use of information and communication technology.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning.

213. The 2001 GCSE examination results compare very favourably with those of modern foreign languages nationally and locally. Pupils' rate of success in Turkish is far greater than that in any other subjects of the National Curriculum.
214. The majority of Key Stage 4 pupils demonstrate fairly well developed oral skills. They are capable of holding a sustained conversation using appropriate vocabulary. This was observed in a role play activity involving the younger pupils, although pupils lacked confidence in the use of appropriate gesture and intonation in their portrayal of characters. Higher attainers read confidently and use information from the Internet. A significant minority of older pupils, however, tends to copy information as opposed to making notes, and some can only read headlines. Written work includes description, reports, comprehension activities, poems and some focus on spelling and grammar, but little independent writing. Most pupils have a good working vocabulary. They have developed good standards of handwriting, and their presentation is a clear reflection of the pride they take in their work.
215. What pupils know and can do is directly linked with their very positive attitude to learning Turkish. Their very good behaviour and the way they treat each other and their teacher contribute to the quality of their learning. They are highly motivated and enthusiastic about their learning and show

well-developed collaborative skills. To a large extent, this is a direct impact of teaching which is well prepared, resourced and managed, and reflects good subject knowledge, overall. Sometimes opportunities are not, however, sufficiently used to promote pupil interaction or the use of target language. Homework is often set, but there is some inconsistency in marking.

216. The subject is well managed. The programme of activities is consistent with National Curriculum requirements. It often provides access to Turkish culture. The subject is adequately resourced. The fact that the school encourages pupils to take public examinations without having to attend the course extends access and enables pupils who speak Turkish at home to gain recognition of this skill without losing access to other subjects. The school has further enhanced the subject profile by enabling the teacher to gain qualified teacher status. The use of information and communication technology to promote pupils' learning of Turkish is a major improvement since the last inspection. However, teaching strategies lack variety; teacher-led activities limit opportunities for pupil initiative and there is some inconsistency in marking. There is as yet no systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation.

## MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **good**. The head of department was unexpectedly unwell during the inspection and this restricted the inspector's access to aspects of the teaching and learning which normally take place.

### Strengths

- Teaching and learning in music.
- Extra-curricular work and other extensions to the curriculum, building on mainstream provision for all.
- Links to other schools and the community.
- Music based fund-raising for charity.
- Instrumental teaching provision.

### Areas for improvement

- Information and communication technology (the use of computers) in the music curriculum.
- Further developments in the assessment system.

217. Teacher assessments for Year 9 attainment, which indicated that the numbers of pupils achieving at level 5+ or better were significantly higher than the national average, were not reliable indicators. GCSE results over the last four years, although still below the national average, have improved every year for the last four years. The numbers gaining A\* and A grades have significantly improved as the quality of teaching and the range of instrumental teaching input increased. Numbers studying at A level are too small to be of statistical significance in comparison with national averages, but all entrants have passed.

218. Attainment of pupils up to the age of 14 is at the national average; the same is true of pupils up to the age of 16 and in the sixth form. Achievement at all levels is good. Pupils in Year 7 showed a good shared understanding of Chinese musical culture and readily understood the pentatonic principle. Year 8 pupils listened well and demonstrated an awareness of major/minor differences. By the end of this key stage, in Year 9, pupils used art-based activities to reinforce their understanding of the variation principle in music. One Year 11 pianist, who plays at a level well above the national average, was composing a very effective piece for piano in a modal style with a strong sense of pulse and constantly changing time signatures. Pupils with special educational needs attain at least as well as their peer group, and since pupils work at their own level, those with higher ability also achieve well. There was no variation by ethnicity or from those with English as an additional language. Standards in extra-curricular groups are high, with the Irish music group, the senior choir and the steel band auditioning for the National Festival of Music for Youth, and many pupils involved in the wide range of activities on offer. Instrumental tuition is strong, with around 20 per cent of pupils receiving lessons on a wide range of instruments. The school gives excellent support for musical activities of all kinds, and this raises levels of achievement overall.

The very exciting extension programme, which involves many visits and artists in residence as well as involvement with educational activities such as those at Covent Garden, the Wigmore Hall and the South Bank gamelan, adds to pupils' confidence and achievement in music.

219. Pupils' attitudes are very good up to the age of 16, and excellent in the sixth form. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic. They respond very well to their teaching. Concentration is deep and listening very intense. There is a strong sense of direction, and pupils are very enthusiastic about each other's work. There is a very good working atmosphere in lessons.
220. Teaching and learning are both good. Work is characterised by very good relationships where pupil strengths and weaknesses are well known; this leads to focused questioning and produces a very good learning atmosphere. Planning and preparation are good, with clear targets set and shared in all lessons, and the routes to success identified; this in turn leads to good feedback and the turning of class targets into individual ones. Organisation and class management are also good, with clear expectations of pupils. The teaching style supports access for all pupils, and enables them to work at their own level, whatever that may be. They learn by listening and analysis, selection and rejection, but above all by doing.
221. The curriculum fully satisfies National Curriculum requirements apart from those relating to information and communication technology. Some of the electronic keyboards have sequencing software built in, and this is occasionally used. It is inadequate to satisfy statutory requirements and its absence limits access to higher grades in composition work at GCSE level. Multi-cultural content is very good, appropriately reflecting the ethnic mix of the school. The Year 9 topic on 'women in music' provides a significant input into equal opportunities provision, and is valued by pupils. There is a good foundation for assessment, but there needs to be tighter focus on establishing criteria for success in all topics to encourage self-assessment. Further opportunity for pupils to set themselves targets for subsequent work as part of the end of topic assessment is limited.
222. Leadership in music is very good; the Head of Department leads by example and the three staff work together in a collegiate manner. The visiting instrumental teaching staff feel highly valued, and are an integral part of the team and are involved in a number of instrumental groups. Relationships with other schools and the community are very good, and the sessions taught in a feeder primary school by the head of department help to ensure that its pupils meet National Curriculum requirements. Staffing in the department is good, with the teachers offering complementary musical skills.
223. There has been very good progress in music since the last inspection, and all the issues raised then have been effectively addressed. Higher level grades in GCSE are now a regular feature, the scheme of work in Years 7 to 9 is clearly structured and balanced, and the assessment system has significantly improved. The strength in instrumental teaching at that time is now an even greater feature of the school's provision.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- GCSE results in 2001 were above the national average and better than in any previous year.
- Pupils' achievement is good.
- Teaching is good overall and teachers have very good subject expertise.
- Pupils' attitudes are good and they have very good relationships with their teachers.

### Areas for improvement

- Curriculum, to promote continuity and progress by allocating the same year groups to physical education at the same time.
- The allocation of the same teacher to each teaching group for both PE lessons.

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The schemes of work.</li><li>• Physical education in the sixth form, currently not provided.</li></ul> |
|--|

224. The 2001 GCSE results were above the national average. In previous years, results in the A\* to C range were below the national average. All pupils have gained at least an A\* to G grade every year. Pupils' achievement by the age of 16, in 2001, was good in relation to their attainment when entering the school.
225. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment is below the national expectation because they have little experience of gymnastics, games and fitness activities. By the end of Year 9, pupils have made good progress. Their attainment in most activities is in line with the national expectation and their attainment in trampolining is above. This is a new activity introduced in Year 7 and pupils build and extend their performance skills well throughout the key stage. By the end of Year 9, pupils are reasonably fit and know the importance of warming up and stretching out.
226. In core physical education, pupils in Year 11 are attaining at a level in line with that expected nationally. A minority of pupils attain above this level in trampolining and health related exercise and pupils have a good knowledge of strength, stamina and flexibility exercises. Girls' basic skills in badminton and basketball are poor; for example, when dribbling a basketball, their ball control and footwork are inconsistent. Pupils in all year groups do not develop their evaluative skills sufficiently and there is a lack of guidance in promoting this strand of the National Curriculum in the schemes of work.
227. Pupils in Year 11 are attaining well in the theoretical aspects of the GCSE course. However, a few pupils in the examination groups are hindered by low literacy skills. Teachers set appropriate tasks to meet the needs of these pupils. Files and notebooks are neatly presented and well organised. Pupils in Year 10 have not yet developed their subject-specific vocabulary but they are able to make accurate assessments of their own fitness levels and reach well reasoned conclusions. Individual pupils and teams attain high standards in district and county competitions in athletics, netball and trampolining. The attainment of these girls is well above the national average and they benefit considerably from the extra opportunities provided by their teachers.
228. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good. As a result, learning is good overall and pupils of all abilities make good progress. This good achievement is caused by the very good specialist expertise of the teachers who are able to give appropriate demonstrations and handle pupils' responses effectively. This gives the pupils a clear idea of performance technique and enables pupils to improve their skills. Relationships are very good. Pupils are enthusiastic and interested and they all actively take part in lessons. This is an outstanding feature and gives pupils the opportunity to make good progress. All teachers encourage pupils to extend their knowledge of health and fitness. Teachers recap previous work and share the lesson objectives at the beginning of the lesson with the pupils. This is a particularly successful strategy with the lower attaining pupils who often need to refine and revisit existing skills before progress can be made. Pupils of the same ability are frequently encouraged to work together and are set tasks that are matched to their needs. In a minority of lessons, teaching was satisfactory when opportunities to enable pupils to take responsibility for their own learning were not provided. Lessons in games, for example, are very performance based; pupils are not set tasks to look at and evaluate their own and others' work. The department does not focus sufficiently on developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Key words and objectives are written on the boards in the gymnasium and sports hall but teaching methods that emphasise these aspects are not yet identified or sufficiently used. The teaching of two activities in the sports hall at the same time can occasionally limit teaching methods and hinders some pupils' learning. Pupils do not concentrate fully and time on activity is lost because teachers have to call pupils together every time they wish to communicate with the whole group.
229. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides a varied programme of activities for Years 7, 8 and 9. The amount of time allocated to core physical education in Years 10 and 11 is not sufficient to improve standards. There is no planned provision for physical education in the sixth form. The poor curriculum organisation directs up to three different year groups to physical education at the same time and this has a detrimental effect on standards. Pupils are unable to

continue with one activity in both their lessons because of the demands on the facilities made by other year groups. This inappropriate organisation of the timetable and the shared teaching of a few groups lead to lack of continuity and progression.

230. The head of department provides clear educational direction and satisfactory leadership for the subject. Many issues raised in the previous inspection have been addressed. The attainment of pupils has improved overall and there has been more time allocated to physical education at Key Stage 3. Teaching has improved and staffing has stabilised over the previous two years. However, teaching has not been formally monitored this year. Assessment procedures are well established and reflect the new national curriculum levels. Further development is necessary to link assessment to the units of work, inform pupils of the levels and to provide them with realistic targets. The indoor facilities are of poor quality and there is a need to review their use and provide a separate area for the trampolines.



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- Progress in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory, with the majority of pupils achieving well in relation to their earlier attainment.
- Teaching is good in Key Stage 3: lessons are carefully planned to include a wide range of activities to meet pupils' needs.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good.
- Pupils' and students' attitudes to work are good.
- The subject is a popular examination course at Key Stage 4.

### Areas for improvement

- Monitoring systems, to ensure that all pupils and students achieve high standards in relation to their earlier attainment.
- Current schemes of work, which do not yet comply with national guidance (QCA 2000).
- Curriculum for 14 to 16 year olds, to meet statutory requirements in full.
- The use of computers in lessons and examination work.
- The definition of roles and responsibilities for each teacher within the department.

231. Standards in religious education by the age of 14 are below average. When students enter the school, their knowledge and skills in religious education are below what would be expected of all students nationally. At present, the teachers do not assess students at the end of Key Stage 3. From the work seen in lessons during the inspection students are making satisfactory progress during the key stage and achieve well in relation to their earlier attainment. Students who then choose to follow a GCSE course in religious education continue to make satisfactory progress but attainment at GCSE is currently well below the national average. The GCSE results at grades A\*-C in 2001 were well below the national average and were below the school's results in other subjects. The last inspection reported on the 1995 results and at that time, attainment at GCSE was only slightly below the national average. The summer 2000 results came very close to equalling the national average in the A\*-C category and were the highest recorded since the subject was introduced at GCSE level in 1994.

232. Students' attitudes and behaviour in all lessons are good and make a considerable contribution to the progress they make. The structure of lessons enables students with special educational needs to make satisfactory progress. This is also true for students who have English as an additional language. In the lessons where teachers deviate appropriately from the detail of the lesson plan and develop tasks that are more open-ended, gifted and talented students also make satisfactory progress. In all lessons, students are very keen to offer responses to questions posed by teachers: orally, they are very confident and very willing to share their experiences and ideas. When given the opportunity they are able to use and analyse a wide range of source material to make clear deductions. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 11 lesson when all students had to discuss the range of moral issues relating to animal rights and then consider the effect of these on the relationship between animals and society.

233. Teaching throughout the department is satisfactory and good at Key Stage 3. Teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies and methods in their lessons and considerable priority is given to maintaining a positive and disciplined working environment. Lesson plans clearly identify the learning objectives for the lesson and whilst they are often written on the board, the importance of each objective is not shared with the students. Intended learning outcomes are not well defined and often non-existent. As a result, the task of monitoring the actual progress made by individual students in lessons is more difficult. Students' work is regularly marked and homework regularly set. However, marking does not sufficiently advise pupils on how to improve their work. As a result students' are unclear as to what they specifically need to focus on to improve. Teachers have access to a wide range of data produced by the school to support the learning of all students. The next step is for the department to consider how to use this data to raise standards for all

students.

234. Leadership and management of the department are currently unsatisfactory. The current head of department joined the school in September 2001. Her main areas of focus since that time have been on raising standards in Year 11, re-writing the scheme of work and on developing the range of resources available for teachers to use. Recent Year 11 examination results suggest that the strategies she has currently introduced will have a positive effect on this year's GCSE grades. The range of new resources available includes ICT software, videos and recently published textbooks. Currently, the schemes of work do not comply with QCA (2000) guidelines. The department has yet to agree and publish a set of policies and procedures which focus on raising standards. The department needs to agree on and publish an improvement plan so that it can review and monitor its effectiveness. There are a number of important initiatives that need to be discussed and agreed within the department as a matter of urgency. To enable the department to move forward, the roles and responsibilities for each member of the department need to be clearly defined and effective monitoring procedures need to be established.

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

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

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

### ***GCE AS level courses***

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
ICT	3	66.8	74	0	N/a	N/a	N/a
Design and technology	2	100	N/a	50	N/a	N/a	N/a
Home Economics	2	100	N/a	50	N/a	N/a	N/a
Turkish	3	66.6	N/a	0	N/a	N/a	N/a
Greek	1	100	N/a	0	N/a	N/a	N/a
Psychology	12	92	N/a	42	N/a	N/a	N/a

### ***GCE A level and AVCE courses***

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	9	78	87	22	43	4.7	5.8
Biology	10	80	88	0	34	3	5.6
Chemistry	6	83	90	50	43	4.7	5.9
ICT	10	10	86	0	23	0.2	4.62
Geography	0	0	N/a	0	N/a	0	N/a
History	1	100	35	100	88	10	5.5
English	7	86	95	29	37	5.2	5.9
French	4	100	89	0	38	3.5	5.6

### ***Intermediate vocational qualifications***

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
GNVQ Business	25	64	86	5	65	0	N/a
Health and social care	7	57	N/a	0	N/a	0	N/a

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

### MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

235. In mathematics, all courses offered in the sixth form were inspected. The inspection reports (below) on GCSE re-sits, AS level and the A2 course. The main focus in the inspection of science was on chemistry and biology, but physics was also sampled. In 2001, only three students were entered for the A level physics examinations, which makes national comparisons inappropriate. However, results achieved were significantly below average. Take-up rates are low. In a Year 12 lesson, students were able to explain, using correct terminology, how standing waves are produced in a taut string. Sound teaching was a significant factor in the consolidation and extension of the students' knowledge about phase differences of particles in a standing or progressive wave. On the whole, students found the physics difficult, mainly because of the mathematical content, but were determined to try their best and to succeed.

#### Mathematics

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

##### Strengths

- Teaching.
- The steady improvement in A level results over the past three years, to a level which is now in line with national averages.

##### Areas for improvement

- Standards of work in Year 12.
- Some students start the AS level course with too little mathematical knowledge to succeed.
- The attendance of students in the re-sit GCSE classes.

236. The inspection covered the A and AS level course offered by the school. Over the two years of the A-level, course students complete modules in pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics. The re-sit GCSE course for those who did not gain grade C in Year 11 and the application of number leading to a Key Skills qualification were also inspected.

237. The results of students from the school who sat A level in 2001 as measured by the average points score was in line with the national average and of the nine students who sat A-level, two achieved the highest grade. These results are an improvement on the previous year when results at A level were below national averages. There has been a steady improvement in A level results over the past three years.

238. The standard of work in the students' folders was in line with national expectations. The work of Year 13 students in particular is of appropriate quality. In class, they show a good understanding of mathematics. In one lesson the students were introduced to a new topic concerning the equilibrium of a lamina. They were quickly able to recognise the importance of choosing a particular point about which to take moments in order to work out unknown forces acting on the lamina. In another Year 13 lesson the students were able to apply their knowledge of forces working on a mass on an incline plane to the system of forces in which two masses hang from a pulley.

239. The standard reached by students who are re-sitting their GCSE mathematics course in the sixth form is below average. Students find the work difficult because their number skills are insecure. They also find the algebraic work difficult. For example, in a lesson on factorising quadratic equations, the students made slow progress. They were having particular difficulties with quadratics expressions which did not follow precisely the rules seen in the example explained by the teacher. The attendance of students following the GCSE re-sit course is unsatisfactory and impacts on their progress.

240. The standards being achieved by students who are following the applications of number programme are also disappointing. Students who are working at level 2 and those who are working at level 3 were preparing for an assignment to design a room, given particular constraints. All students were having difficulties with scale drawings. Students in the level 2 group had written a scale with mixed units. Some of the students in the level 3 group were having difficulty working out the actual distance from the local station using a map with a scale of 1:20000. Students have one application of number lesson each week. Those students who do not attend regularly therefore have significant periods without a mathematics lesson and this impacts on their progress.
241. Year 12 students are taught in two groups, one containing students who have achieved pass grades A\* - C after following the higher level GCSE programme and another group who gained GCSE passes A\* - C after following the intermediate GCSE programme. The standards that are being achieved by these groups are below expectations. In the first group, students were considering transformations of functions such as quadratic and sine functions. The students' understanding of the function notation and their understanding about sketching graphs were below expectations. Students in the second group were working on problems involving differentiation to find maximum and minimum values. The students could follow the work demonstrated by the teacher but were insecure when they tried to apply their knowledge to other situations.
242. Students following AS and A level courses are keen and work steadily. In the classes they work collaboratively in pairs and small groups. In other sixth form mathematics classes, those pupils who attend work quietly but without demonstrating a great deal of intellectual effort. Teachers make themselves available to support learning both in the class and outside the classroom.
243. Teaching in the sixth form is good. In one excellent lesson in Year 13, the teacher explored equilibrium situations with the students. He was able to develop a question from a student about a seesaw and use this to explore the situation of equilibrium. The interactive questioning about a range of situations enabled all the students in the group to explore and gain understanding of the topic. In a lesson which was satisfactory, the teacher attempted to explore in an interactive way with the students ideas about transformations but the method floundered because of the students' insecure understanding and skills. In a good lesson with a GCSE re-sit group, the teacher was challenging and taught at pace. She had high expectations and required that the students take responsibility for their own learning. Students had a record of what they were required to know and they were expected to assess their own understanding and take responsibility for asking if they felt they had problems. Overall, teachers have good subject knowledge for teaching at sixth form level. The marking of students' work is thorough and detailed and helps learning.
244. The management of sixth form mathematics is good. The department is aware of the strengths and areas for development. Recently, not all students achieving the highest grades at GCSE have been choosing to study A level mathematics at the school. As a consequence, there is a fast track GCSE group in Year 10 to enable some students to study an AS pure mathematics module before they enter the sixth form. There is a detailed scheme of work and one of teachers has prepared an extensive set of model examination answers for the recently introduced syllabus.

## Biology

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

### Strengths

- Teachers are well qualified and have good knowledge of their subject.
- Students have a positive attitude to biology and do what is expected of them.

### Areas for improvement

- Retention rates, which are poor.
- Results at A level, (A2), which are well below the national average.
- Teaching which lacks stimulation and interest.

- The use of computers to support teaching and learning.

245. The GCE A level examination results in 2001 were well below the national average. No students were awarded the higher A and B grades. The proportion of students gaining A to E grades was down on the previous year. There was a corresponding drop in the average point score per student to 3.0 compared with the national average of 5.25. There has been a sharp decline in standards since 1998. However, when account is taken of students' GCSE grades at the start of the course, these results represent satisfactory achievement.
246. The standards reached by current Year 13 students as seen in lessons and written work are slightly better than 2001 A level examination results would suggest. They demonstrate a sound understanding of concepts and ideas as well as the factual content of their work on ecology. They understand the basic sampling techniques used in studying ecology, but find the mathematical content difficult because their numeracy skills are below average. Achievement in relation to prior GCSE results is satisfactory overall.
247. The standard of work from students in Year 12 is slightly better than from Year 13, but below national expectations overall. In a lesson about genetic engineering, students learned of the scientific advances in the development of technology, which allows genes to be manipulated, altered and transferred from organism to organism; even to transform DNA itself. They know that rapidly reproducing organisms such as bacteria can be used as chemical factories, producing useful and life saving substances. Higher attaining students showed a good understanding of recombinant technology and gene therapy. In another lesson on the Nitrogen cycle their knowledge and understanding were much less secure.
248. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall though it does vary from very good to satisfactory. Teaching of theory is generally narrow in its approach and lacks stimulus and excitement. There is little variety of method, so that in many cases the learning approach is not well suited to the needs of the students. In some lessons students are expected to do no more than listen, answer a few questions and take notes. In the best lessons teachers demonstrate their knowledge in their questioning and explanations, and in the tasks they perform. Marking is not always as thorough as it could be and there is often insufficient guidance as to how students can improve their work. There is insufficient assessed work to enable truly effective monitoring.
249. The principal features of the best teaching were clear objectives, sharp planning that included relevant practical work and application of knowledge, a brisk pace, and a range of approaches which results in learning. In many lessons, however, these features were inadequately developed although teaching overall is nevertheless satisfactory.
250. Students sometimes make their own notes, but there is a tendency for over use of photocopied sheets. There is little evidence in students' files to indicate that they have engaged in presentations or debate, or made use of ICT. Students have positive attitudes to learning, enjoy the subject and work diligently. They respond well when questioned by teachers, but very infrequently initiate discussion or challenge concepts.
251. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory after a period of staffing uncertainty. At present there are no schemes of work for the subject, a situation that needs to be rectified urgently. An effective policy for setting and marking assessed work throughout the course is needed to ensure a consistent approach by all teachers to checking on pupils' progress. More effective monitoring is needed to identify weaknesses in the provision, and more effective strategies to ensure that there is significant improvement.

## Chemistry

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

### Strengths

- New and strong leadership in the subject.
- Good teaching underpins the good progress which students are making in increasing their knowledge and understanding of chemistry.
- In the best teaching, meticulous planning ensures that students are challenged to give their very best and standards are rising.
- Relationships with students.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment.
- Marking is not always as thorough as it could be.
- Take up and retention rates are poor.
- Accommodation.

252. The A level examination results for 2001 were below the national average for all maintained schools. There was a decrease over the previous year in the proportion of students achieving higher grades A and B. Overall, when account is taken of the students' GCSE grades at the start of the course this represents satisfactory achievement. The standard of work reached by current Year 13 students is below expectations for the course, though slightly better than indicated by students' results in the A level examinations in 2001. In lessons students do well as a result of effective teaching, which demands much of them. In one lesson students were able to explain the electrolytic process of rust formation. They were aware that if iron is incompletely protected from corrosion, say by paint, the areas under the paint corrode more rapidly than those which are exposed, and that this has enormous economic implications for shipping, airline and other industries.
253. Students in Year 12 are only six months into their course, but their achievements are good in relation to prior attainment. In a lesson on organic chemistry, students learned about the molecular structure and bonding of the alkenes through making their own individual models of ethene, ethane and propane. The very good teaching was a significant factor in the consolidation and extension of the students' knowledge about the types of reactions alkanes and alkenes undergo. In particular, students were able to explain how the alkenes react with hydrogen, bromine, hydrogen chloride and steam and were able to use structural formulae in the symbol equations. Standards in Year 12 are broadly in line with expectations for the course.
254. Teaching is good overall, though it varies from very good to satisfactory. The best teaching is characterised by careful planning; effective use of clearly defined learning objectives which set out clear targets for students' attainment; well chosen material and effective direct teaching and presentation. Systematic and helpful intervention by the teacher promotes pace and sustains the students' progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and is well applied in raising the attainment of the students. One of the lessons observed was dynamic and resulted in secure teaching and learning.
255. The independent work, including course work, which students undertake, is generally well prepared and the tasks set complement the content of the lessons well. They extract information from books and use ICT. Most compile their notes carefully. Skills in ICT are developing, but their progress in data logging techniques is hindered by a lack of sufficient resources.
256. Leadership and management of chemistry are very good. The teacher responsible for chemistry has a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses within the subject area. There is a clear vision as to the purpose of the course, and how to teach and assess it. A new course was introduced in September and good schemes of work are being produced. Good monitoring and evaluation of students' work and attitudes are leading to improved standards in attainment.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

One A level ICT lesson was observed in both Year 12 and Year 13, and a Key Skills IT lesson was observed in Year 12. Both the A level ICT course and the Key Skills IT programme are recent additions to the post-16 curriculum introduced in 2000.

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

### Strengths

- The teaching in A level classes is good.
- The achievement and attitudes of students in A level classes are good.
- All Year 12 students have access to a taught IT Key Skills course.

### Areas for development

- The content and structure of the Key Skills course need to be further developed to explore information concepts more fully and to make better connections with other subjects and the wider world.
- The attendance and attitudes of students on the Key Skills courses.

257. The numbers of students taking the AS examination in 2001 were too low to comment reliably on results. From lessons observed and work seen during the inspection, students in Year 12 and Year 13 are attaining in line with national averages. This represents a good level of achievement in the context of students' previous attainment. Year 12 students were working on a range of advanced individual projects, including video editing, Internet site development and the production of advanced desktop publishing reports. Students from all backgrounds are achieving equally well.

258. The 23 per cent pass rate in the Key Skills IT courses in 2001 was well below national averages. In this first year of the programme, the course was delivered mainly across the curriculum. In the current year there is a central taught element which is proving to be a more successful delivery strategy. Standards observed during the inspection indicate that students are now working in line with national expectations. Students show an appropriate level of skills in preparing a report on a UCAS Internet research task. The Key Skills programme is offered at three levels according to the previous attainment of students, with most students working at level 2. Achievement levels are in line with students' previous experience. Students of different ethnic backgrounds are achieving equally well.

259. Students' approach to their work in the A level classes is good. In the lessons observed, students were fully engaged in developing their course assignments and showed a high level of enthusiasm in the subject. Relationships with other students and the teacher are good.

260. In Key Skills lessons, attitudes are just satisfactory. Students are showing less commitment to their work than might be expected. Although relationships between students and between students and the teacher are satisfactory, attendance is low in many lessons.

261. Teaching in A level classes is good. Teachers are well-organised and deliver lessons effectively using a variety of suitable teaching methods, including class discussion, individual work and whole class presentation supported by appropriate documentation and software. The level of teacher intervention and support is appropriately balanced with the need to promote independent learning. As a result students sustain a good work rate during lessons and make good progress in their learning.

262. Teaching in Key Skills lessons is satisfactory. However, lesson content is not as challenging and interesting as it might be. As a result, the quality of learning is just satisfactory. There is a need to discuss underlying information handling concepts more deeply. For example, in the Year 12 lesson observed the need for effective structure in written reports could have been discussed more



fully with, for example, different report formats compared and evaluated. Assignment work generally needs to be more clearly linked to work in other subjects and to real-life examples in business and elsewhere. Learning could be improved by addressing these teaching points and by investigating and responding to the reasons behind low attendance in some lessons.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design was the main focus of the inspection in the sixth form, but drama and music were sampled and were found to be providing well for the students who chose those subjects. Standards in music were satisfactory, but in drama, recent results have been below average.

### Art and design

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

#### Strengths

- Results on the A level course, which have been good.
- Teaching is good, lessons are well planned and stimulating with a good integration of theory and practical work.
- Students' self-motivation and willingness to experiment with a range of materials.

#### Areas for improvement

- Recruitment. Take-up for the subject is disproportionately low and retention rates unsatisfactory.
- More gallery visits and greater contact with the outside world of art.

263. The overall standard of work in art and design in the sixth form is average. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Results on the GCE A level course have been very good. In 2001, they were well above national averages, but when numbers are small, as they are this year, meaningful comparisons can be difficult. Attainment on the AS course is in line with course expectations. There is no significant difference between students of different ethnic heritage.

264. The work of current students is average. Students' achievement is good, in some cases, very good. One girl, who had not studied art since Year 9, is making very good progress on the AS course. Progress is generally good from the previous GCSE work and learning is good in both years. Students acquire the skills necessary to conceptualise imaginative responses to the new units of work. Preparatory studies are mostly thorough, although some of the preliminary sketches and finished work would benefit from a higher standard of drawing skills. Portfolios of art and design work show that students have carried out thoughtful investigation and explored a range of ideas. They are also prepared to experiment with a variety of materials, although the use of ICT has still to be included. One girl was sculpting with fabric soaked in wax to form part of her finished assignment whilst another was interpreting Celtic designs into low relief forms. Students talk about their work with knowledge and enthusiasm.

265. Teaching is good overall and in some cases very good. Project briefs are well designed and students are fully aware of the course requirements and deadlines for completion. Teachers work hard to overcome the limitations of small numbers and manage to inject energy and challenge into their lessons which encourage students to take risks and work at a good pace. The stimulus in one lesson was a large wrapped still life in the style of Christo which led to a variety of interpretations, including painting with wax resist. However, some of the most individual and vibrant work was in response to a unit on the theme of localities and included a visit to the city. Students took photographs and made visual notes on this trip and produced exciting final designs. Students lack sufficient outside contact with art and a programme of gallery visits as part of their course. In one lesson, a Year 13 student presented her portfolio of work to the rest of the group and described her recent interview at art school. Last year, an impressive seven students gained places on art or art-related courses. Students are keen to hear about these experiences but have insufficient opportunity to evaluate their work against that of others.

266. Teachers monitor students' work thoroughly. Students receive much support and feedback during

individual sessions on their progress and are aware of their progress. Work in journals is regularly assessed and most students are aware of what they need to do to improve. This new work journal, which combines sketchbooks and record keeping is essential to the course and should be provided where necessary – the responsibility should not be placed on students to provide it. As a result, some students are working in inappropriate books that do not support their development.

267. Management of the sixth form in the department is satisfactory. Courses are well planned. Communication between staff is effective and teachers are up to date in their knowledge of the new course requirements. Courses have been further developed and the quality of work maintained since the previous inspection, but there is a need to enlarge the learning experience of students.

## HUMANITIES

The inspection included review of the work of the history and geography departments, as set out below.

### Geography

The quality of the overall provision for geography is **good**.

#### Strengths

- The commitment to raising performance in external examinations.
- The good leadership of the department and teamwork among staff.
- Good teaching so that students make good progress.

#### Areas for improvement

- The sense of urgency and pace of working of some students.

268. The provision for sixth form geography is for one group in each of Years 12 and 13, following an AS and A-level course.

269. There was no A-level group in 2001. The results for the previous three years, with group sizes of six or fewer, were below the national average but showed a marked improvement. The AS results in 2001 for the two students were in line with their prior attainment and with course requirements.

270. Students on all courses make good progress in the sixth form. They have good knowledge of advanced technical vocabulary and of the processes which interact to determine physical and economic landscapes, as in the village of Ashwell, near Luton. They have a good understanding of landscape changes over time and of the scale of change. This was seen in the study of the globalisation of the fashion industry and its impact on Bangladesh and Leicester.

271. Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers are enthusiastic, have good subject knowledge and plan well. Students show a positive attitude and cooperate well with staff and with each other. The small size of groups sometimes inhibits the length and pace of discussions which would enable students to challenge each other's viewpoints. The subject makes a good contribution to their social and cultural development through its selection of case study materials.

272. The subject is well led and there is good staff teamwork. There is a strong commitment to raising standards and challenging departmental targets have been set.

### History

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

#### Strengths

- A level results are consistently good.
- Teacher's subject knowledge and lesson planning.
- Effective teaching.
- Very good relationships between the teacher and the students.
- High standards of students' written work and oral contributions.

Areas for improvement

- Self-assessment procedures.
- Independent learning skills.
- Schemes of work.

273. Standards in recent AS and A level examinations have been good and are above national averages. In 2001 the three AS students achieved A and B grades, with 66 per cent achieving an A grade. An A and B grade were gained by the A level students. Standards have been improving over the last three years.
274. The standards of written work and levels of understanding observed are high. The quality of work is consistent with the good results achieved in recent years. Students in Year 12 show maturity and insight in discussing the impact of Nazi ideology on the Christian churches in Germany. In group discussions they are able to demonstrate good analytical skills and a real depth of knowledge and understanding. In Year 13, students are able to very effectively dissect and interpret the Scott source material and relate it to the economic developments of the first Soviet Five Year Plan. The quality of the discussion is very high.
275. Students have a strong sense of shared responsibility about their learning. This results from the very good relationships that exist between the teacher and students and amongst the students themselves. Students of differing levels of ability are encouraged to make a full contribution to the discussion and in Year 12 they work effectively in teacher-selected groups to enable all students to fulfil their potential.
276. Self assessment material is used to introduce the students to the experience of reflecting upon their own progress. This process is still in the early stage of development and needs to be strengthened so that it provides a sharper range of learning targets for each student.
277. Teaching and learning are good. The teacher is very secure in her subject knowledge and is able to stimulate reflection and evaluation amongst the students. There is good use of source material, which is systematically analysed, especially by the Year 13 students where the debate is of a very high order. The teacher is very skilful in ensuring that students of all abilities are able to make a full contribution. This skilful classroom management of the students ensures that the pace of the lesson is challenging and supports the high standards achieved. Although students have made some presentations of their own research, this is an area, from the scrutiny of work, which needs to be enhanced still further.
278. There is a good range of sixth form resources, including books and videos, which are used comprehensively. The Scheme of Work does not, however, currently include a breakdown of resources for each topic and this needs to be developed. The chosen A level syllabus enables students to develop an understanding of the nature and consequences of three twentieth century totalitarian regimes, and in addition, the coursework examines the changing role of women in the period. The choice of topics offers a wide range of period and theme and considerable challenge for study. During the lessons observed and in conversation with the students it was evident that involvement, enjoyment and achievement in the course were very high.
279. The subject is well managed in the sixth form, especially in the light of difficult staffing conditions in the department. There is a good team spirit and morale is high. The department's planned areas for development, such as more use of ICT, are appropriate.

## **ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION**

All courses offered in English were inspected. In modern foreign languages, the focus was on French, but it was not possible to gather sufficient evidence to form a judgement on standards. Work in Year 12 was sampled. Two lessons were seen, one each in French and German. Teaching in each was at least good. There was also observation of Bengali.

## English

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

### Strengths

- Teaching is very good: students are intellectually challenged by teachers with high levels of subject expertise.
- The teaching of literary criticism is very good and students have a good grasp of studying literature from different periods and cultures.
- The support students receive in the AS and A2 courses, which they recognise and value.
- Strong leadership and very good management.

### Areas for improvement

- A minority of students are passive in oral work and do not readily volunteer responses.
- A level examination results.
- Training about ways to revise and techniques for examinations.

280. This is a very effective department. The number of students choosing to study A Level English literature in Year 13 has increased despite many more able pupils choosing other sixth form providers. A level English literature examination results in 2001 were in line with the national average. Achievement, however, is good when related to students' GCSE results. This is because teaching is very good.

281. In the new AS examination, students' results were satisfactory. Of the 26 students who started the course 20 sat the examination and obtained an A to E grade; 19 of these students have moved on to the Y13 A level course. GCSE English language results are good. Two students were entered for the GCSE English literature examination; both gained grade E.

282. Students perform better in the classroom than they do in examinations. The guidance for revision and examination technique is improving but has not yet reduced the gap between classroom performance and examination results. Students achieve very good standards in discussion and the analysis of texts. In a Year 12 lesson on *The Glass Menagerie* students analysed video clips and cross-referenced them to the text. Their questions and responses showed that they had a clear understanding of events and each character's motivation. Students' critical writing is good. Teachers encourage them to develop and express a personal response to literature.

283. In Years 12 and 13, students' attainment in all areas of the curriculum is good, especially in reading and interpreting literary texts. Year 12 students enjoy speaking and listening and most make significant contributions to oral work. They express their viewpoints clearly, show sophistication in their use and command of language and are prepared to express their ideas, necessary skills for meeting the requirements of the assessment objectives in the examination. They understand how to initiate and sustain discussion. By Year 13, students have developed in greater depth the skills of speculation and forming hypotheses as seen in their work on *Regeneration*. Explaining and illustrating their views with evidence are prominent features during discussion of literary texts in both Years 12 and 13. There are, however, a small number of passive students who contribute very little unless they are drawn into the discussion. Attainment is better than recent examination results would indicate.

284. Although Year 12 students have only completed one term of their course, they are reading analytically. From the start, students establish a good standard of critical reading. They read quickly and perceptively. In one lesson for example, they analysed *The Glass Menagerie* in terms of envy, hate and anger. In this lesson, students responded critically to the use of language. They talked with ease and understanding about the images and themes as they developed their hypothesis. For example, one student said that: "Despite the difficult lives of the central female characters, there is a lot to celebrate about being a woman in this play." During the inspection, their comparative analysis of Wilfred Owen's poetry and Pat Barker's novel *Regeneration* showed a clear understanding of how writers use specific features to express meanings. High attaining

students have a secure knowledge and understanding of texts. They explore texts with ease giving personal and alternative interpretations in which they can identify the implicit meanings. In contrast, average students do not always sustain their interpretation, even though they can give a personal response and a reasonably well constructed answer.

285. Most students read widely around texts, researching into historical, social, political and cultural backgrounds of the texts that they are studying. For example, a group of Year 12 students cross-referenced *The Glass Menagerie* to *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and the mores of the southern United States of America. Similarly, they reach good levels of understanding based on their well-organised annotations and research notes, which they use to analyse texts.
286. Students write effectively and their achievement is good. Planning of essays is thorough, as is their comprehension work. High attaining students write effectively, showing skilful control and great confidence when expressing their ideas. They produce well-structured essays, draw on a wide vocabulary and use technical literary terms well when conveying their response to literary works. Average attaining students give a good overview but some do not take sufficient care when editing their work and, as a result, there are significant errors in their use of language.
287. Teaching is consistently very good with some excellent features. Teachers know their subject very well and adopt a scholarly approach to prepare and deliver intellectually challenging lessons. They provide a wealth of information on the background of literary texts and use this information to assist students in interpreting texts. For example, in an excellent lesson comparing and contrasting Wilfred Owen and Pat Barker, students were given a wealth of socio-historical information so that they could make connections and understand the different perspectives of the writers. Teaching is committed to students using a range of knowledge and skills, so planning for progress, which is always good, identifies specific and substantial learning outcomes.
288. The use of talk is central to all lessons as teachers extend students' communication skills and encourage them to adopt a critical approach. The skills of intellectual enquiry through research, effective questioning and assessment are used in lessons. Expectations are high and teachers support independent learning. Marking is thorough and assesses strengths and areas for improvement.
289. The subject is lead and managed excellently. The department is well established and its members have a shared commitment to teach students a love of literature and language as serious critics aiming for a high standard. Planning for success is at the heart of the department's work and careful deliberation takes place before decisions are made. The department monitors students' achievement and provides appropriate advice about how to improve and succeed.
290. The major strengths of the department are, firstly, the excellent contributions it makes to cultivating students' personal development and, secondly, the enthusiasm and expertise which all of the teachers bring to the subject.

## **FRENCH AND GERMAN**

291. There have been insufficient entries in either French or German in recent years to enable accurate comparisons with A or AS level results nationally. By the time of the inspection, the small A level group from Year 13 had ceased to operate.
292. In a German lesson on healthy eating conducted almost entirely in German, the standard of understanding and speaking was above average. Very good teaching had the highest expectations of the student's accuracy and attention to detail in the answers she gave to questions on the text and in her own views.
293. By contrast, in the French lesson on the decriminalisation of cannabis, good teaching received only a limited response. Learning was only satisfactory and oral standards below average because, despite tightly structured textual support, students were reluctant to engage in discussion and struggled when required to paraphrase complex ideas and express their own

views.

294. Work in the very small Year 13 German class indicates that standards of writing are above average. Essays on foreign workers, asylum seekers, Third World issues and the fight against drugs show good progress in understanding complex text and in using given key words and phrases sensitively in a convincing presentation of the issues and personal views.