

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST AUGUSTINE'S C of E HIGH SCHOOL AND  
SIXTH FORM CENTRE**

London

LEA area: Westminster

Unique reference number: 101154

Headteacher: Richard Cooper

Reporting inspector: Nigel Pett  
17331

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> December 2001

Inspection number: 221143

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:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Oxford Road London
Postcode:	NW6 5SN
Telephone number:	020 7328 3434
Fax number:	020 7328 3435
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Father Reg Bushau
Date of previous inspection:	February 1999

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17331	N A Pett	Registered inspector		The school's results and pupils' and students' achievements How well are pupils and students taught? How well is the school led and managed?
14756	J R Lovell	Lay inspector		Pupils' and students' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils and students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
13122	Mrs S Mathews	Team inspector	Equal opportunities History – Sixth form Business education	How good are curricular and other opportunities for its pupils and students?
13122	Mr D MacIldowie	Team inspector	English	
3643	D Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics	
23188	Mrs V Maunder	Team inspector	Science Biology	
31685	Ms V Girling	Team inspector	Art	
31218	Dr T Allen	Team inspector	Geography	
19295	T Wall	Team inspector	Physical education	
24622	Dr D Davies	Team inspector	Drama	
27082	Mr G Henshall	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
7084	Mr J Haslam	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology	
30317	Ms E Barthaud	Team inspector	History	
31652	K Homard-Roy	Team inspector	Music	
12179	L Moscrop	Team inspector	English as an additional language	
2711	D Griffith	Team inspector	Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd  
7 Hill Street  
Bristol  
BS1 5RW

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33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This school is situated off the Edgware Road in the Kilburn area of Westminster LEA, and serves the immediate area of established housing and high-rise flats, as well as admitting pupils from within the wider area of London. It is adjacent to the distinguished church of St Augustine, from which it takes its name. There are 684 pupils on roll, including 93 in the sixth form, making it smaller than the average secondary school nationally. Pupils and students come from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds, although a significant proportion experience financial and social disadvantage. Over a half of the students are eligible for free school meals, well above the national average. Many pupils are of minority ethnic heritage, with a large proportion of Black Caribbean and African heritage, and a significant proportion of refugee pupils. About two thirds of students have English as an additional language, which is much higher than the national average. About a fifth of the students are identified with special educational needs, and 18 hold statements to address their specific needs, which are above average proportions. Attainment on entry for the current Year 7 is below the national average, overall, but in previous years prior attainment has been well below average. The school is part of an educational action zone. Its aims seek to provide for the academic and personal development of all of its students, in the context of a Christian community.

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

This is an improved and improving school, with notable strengths. The very high expectations set by the headteacher are leading to very effective improvement. Leadership and management are very good. The overall quality of teaching is good. The school is an orderly community in which pupils and students enjoy very good relationships. Standards have improved and many students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment, although results are well below the national average. The school gives good value for money.

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

- Is improving the success for its pupils and students in public examinations.
- Teaches effectively in almost all lessons so that many pupils learn well.
- Gives good support to students with special educational needs and English as an additional language so that they make good progress.
- Effectively encourages the very good behaviour, attitudes and personal development of students, and provides good guidance.
- Makes good provision for extra-curricular activities overall.
- Is an inclusive school.

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

- The proportion of pupils gaining the national average in National Curriculum tests at 14 and in GCSE/GCE examinations.
- Statutory curriculum requirements for art, design and technology, information and communication technology and music, and provision in geography.
- The use of assessment procedures and quality of information to parents.
- The quality of the environment, especially to address issues of health and safety.

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

**The strengths of the school clearly outweigh its weaknesses.**

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1999, and was then judged to have serious weaknesses. The overall improvement has been very good and it now provides effectively for its pupils and students. Standards and teaching have been significantly improved. The management structure at both senior levels and in the leadership of departments has been improved. The support for pupils with special educational needs, and with English as an additional language, have improved. Satisfactory progress has been made in improving the curriculum and in developing assessment procedures. Good progress has been made in improving the internal school environment, including very effective displays. The weaknesses in financial management have been very well addressed. The school recognises that further improvement in the standards and quality of education is required and it has the potential to achieve this improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds 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	E	E	E	B
A-levels/AS-levels	n/a	n/a	n/a	

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average   E

The trend for improvement in national tests and examinations is better than the national trend. Standards have been significantly improved since the last inspection, although the overall performance in GCSE is well below the national average, but above average in comparison with similar schools. Many pupils do better than their prior attainment suggests. Many pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language do well. Sixth form numbers are small and it is unreliable to compare results with the national average. Results in the year 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 show improvement in English, mathematics and science. Taken together, results in these subjects were below the national average but close to the average for similar schools. For pupils currently in school, standards are generally below average at age 14 and 16 in English, mathematics, science, geography and art. They are broadly in line with the average in information and communication technology, design and technology, history, French, music and physical education. Standards in the sixth form vary widely, reflecting the prior attainment of the students although a significant proportion achieve average standards for their courses. The school recognises that an overall improvement in standards is a key issue. The very large number of pupils and students with English as an additional language and the mobility of the school population pose significant implications for raising standards. The provision for these pupils and students, and the large proportion of pupils and students with special educational needs, is supporting the raising of standards.



## STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Most students have good attitudes towards their work and teachers. They are proud of their school and of their collective and individual achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most students behave well and understand the difference between right and wrong.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships exist between pupils and between pupils and adults in the school.
Attendance	The overall attendance is satisfactory, although sixth form attendance needs to be improved.

This school has a very positive ethos. Most students enjoy school and work hard. They care for resources very well. Their positive attitudes, behaviour and relationships enable them to do well. A minority of students do not respond as well. Good behaviour management strategies are effectively used to deal with anti-social behaviour, and exclusions are used as a last resort. Unauthorised absence is above average. Students enjoy meeting and talking with visitors and many show great maturity and sensitivity for their ages.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	Aged 11-14 years	Aged 14-16 years	Aged 16-18 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching has significantly improved since the previous inspection and it is now a strength of the school. Almost all lessons observed were satisfactory or better and in a high proportion, teaching was good and often very good. Occasionally, it was excellent. In both key stages and in the sixth form, teaching is good, overall. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is good overall. The teaching of literacy is good, and for numeracy and information and communication technology it is satisfactory. Teaching is generally good over time, and has a positive impact on pupils' and students' learning and leads to their generally good progress. There are shortcomings in geography and art. A particular strength is the good teaching and support given to pupils with English as an additional language, and for special educational needs. The very large majority of teachers have high expectations for both behaviour and work, providing a good challenge to their students, to which many willingly respond.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is breadth and balance in Years 7-9, but statutory requirements are not met. Opportunities need to be developed in Years 10 and 11. The sixth form curriculum is satisfactory.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Good. Support staff are generally well deployed, but there is insufficient attention to meeting the differing needs of pupils in a minority of lessons.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Good. Teaching and learning are effective and students make good progress and achieve well. Support staff are well deployed.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, overall. Very good provision is made for social and moral education, and issues relating to values and beliefs are considered in subjects across the curriculum. Multi-cultural provision is good.
How well the school cares for its students	Good. Pupils are very well known by staff, although aspects of academic assessment are inconsistently applied.

The curriculum provides effectively for the needs of the students in Years 7-9. In Years 10 and 11 alternative courses have been developed and the school recognises that further development is required. National Curriculum requirements are not met for information and communication technology, design and technology, art and music. The range of extra-curricular activities is good. Some individual education plans for students with special educational needs lack sufficient focus. Assessment procedures are not consistently applied and the monitoring of personal development by tutors is inconsistent. Annual pupil reports are unsatisfactory.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has a clear vision and is leading the school exceptionally well. Senior staff provide good support and many middle managers, some of whom are very new to the school, operate well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well involved in school improvement strategies and are very supportive of the school. Statutory responsibilities are not fully met for the National Curriculum.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Test results and national data are well analysed and used. Targets set are not sufficiently monitored and evaluated to maintain progress and to support the raising of standards.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are generally effectively used and the school is giving good value for money.

The high expectations set by the headteacher and his partnership with the senior staff have enhanced the leadership and management leading to school improvement. There is some good practice in leadership and management at all levels. The range and quality of monitoring and evaluation are inconsistent. Target setting is developing effectively. Good links with the Educational Action Zone have been well managed to the benefit of the school.

There have been many changes of staff since the last inspection, which has supported improvement. The expertise and experience of the staff meet curriculum and pupils' and students' needs overall. Resources are satisfactory. Accommodation is adequate for most subjects although facilities for physical education are inadequate, requiring travel off site. There are no facilities for the physically disabled. There is a range of health and safety issues in the external environment.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The progress being achieved by their children.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations.</li> <li>• The school helps students to become mature and responsible, and the majority of students are well-behaved.</li> <li>• How well the school cares for its students.</li> <li>• The good quality of teaching.</li> <li>• Students with English as an additional language and special educational needs are well supported.</li> <li>• That they feel able to approach the school with questions or problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The arrangements for homework.</li> <li>• The information on their children's progress.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside of lessons.</li> </ul>

Only a minority of parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and about 10 per cent returned the questionnaire. Inspection evidence supports all of the points that please parents and carers most. Reports are unsatisfactory. The large majority of parents who responded find that they can approach the school with questions or problems, and although a minority at the meeting expressed some concerns, inspectors do consider that the school is seeking to work closely with parents and carers. Homework is generally well used and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities. Overall parents are very positive about the school.

## **ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM ST AUGUSTINE'S SCHOOL SIXTH FORM CENTRE**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM**

The post 16 provision has 93 students and is expanding because of the developments in the Westminster Consortium. There are many minority ethnic students and they come to the school from many countries, some as refugees, and have English as an additional language. Sixty per cent of the Year 11 pupils stay on and some join the sixth form from other areas across London. However, few choose to stay on into Year 13 and groups in A level classes are very small, as some students are repeating AS classes. The 16+ results are well below the national average but many students achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. Students can choose from a range of one and two year academic and vocational courses. The choice has been extended by the establishment of the consortium.

### **HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS**

In relation to the courses offered within the centre and consortium, the provision is cost-effective and adequate in relation to the arrangements within the consortium. Students learn effectively and achieve well. There is good educational inclusion. The overall provision is satisfactory, with clear strengths in teaching and relationships within the Sixth Form. Teaching is sound in all subjects and good in the majority.

#### **Strengths**

- Students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
- Students have positive attitudes to their work.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The choice of subject and vocational area is improving through the developing consortium.
- Students work together and support each other well.
- The provision for personal, social and moral education.

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

- The management and use of assessment data.
- Timetabling arrangements to extend the choice of subjects.
- Accommodation, as there is limited space for private study.
- Access to computers.
- Arrangements for registration to ensure that the school knows which students are on site.

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

## THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Good. Students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment at GCSE. Teaching is very good overall and staff use their subject expertise well.
Biology	Good. Standards are improving and students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment at GCSE. Teaching is good.
History	Unsatisfactory. The small size of groups and weakness in planning and leadership have an adverse effect on learning. Teaching is good and is improving provision; individual students respond well to the subject.
Business	Sound. Achievement is at least satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory. Accommodation, resources and planning are underdeveloped.
English	Good. Teaching is good. Relationships between staff and students are very positive. Standards achieved are well below average, but results in English compare well with other subjects.

In addition a further range of subjects were also sampled. Provision is good in art, physics, chemistry, information and communication technology and in leisure and tourism. Standards vary widely but students achieve well for their prior attainment and in the face of language difficulties. Teaching is good in most subjects and very rarely unsatisfactory. Modern foreign languages and social science courses are provided by the consortium.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Satisfactory support and guidance are provided for students. They are given some information about the courses being taught and an induction programme is in place. Career and higher education information and advice are readily available. Students are supported well by their teachers and tutors.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Leadership and management are sound overall. The new Sixth Form coordinator is providing sound support and guidance and most of the subject and vocational areas are managed well. The overall curriculum management is sound. There is a clear vision for a comprehensive and inclusive provision that fits very well with the ethos of the school and the local community.

## 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>• The quality of their teachers.</li><li>• The Personal Development Programme.</li><li>• They feel that they are supported well.</li><li>• They have some privileges and they enjoy being in the Sixth Form.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accommodation for private study.</li><li>• Students feel that they do not have enough access to computers.</li><li>• The timetable, which means that subject choice is occasionally limited.</li></ul>

Overall, students' views are positive. They enjoy their studies and generally work hard. The inspection evidence confirms students' views of what could be improved.

## 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 on entry show the full range of achievement when pupils are aged 11. A significant proportion enters the school with standards that are well below average, particularly those with English as an additional language and with special educational needs. The proportion of pupils from Black Afro-Caribbean and Asian heritage is very high and, whilst a significant number have good command of English, there is a significant minority who do not, having recently entered the country. This applies also to pupils of white European heritage whose families have recently settled in this country. The proportion of the pupils identified as having special educational needs is average and they are drawn from across all ethnic communities present in the school.
2. In the National Curriculum tests for 14 year olds in 2001, the trend for improvement is above the national trend. Results were well below the national average in English and mathematics and very low in science. When compared with results from similar schools, standards were well above average in English, close to the average in mathematics, and below average in science. These results show that the pupils are making good progress and beginning to achieve well. Targets were broadly met. In these results boys achieved slightly better than girls. In relation to ethnic heritage there are no significant differences, although the pupils with English as an additional language encounter some problems in test conditions. When taking all core subjects together, results were well below average in comparison with all schools nationally and average in relation to similar schools.
3. Results in GCSE examinations in 2001 improved again at above the national trend. The proportion of pupils who gained 5 passes at A\*-C and at A\*-G were well below the national average, as is the average points score. In comparison with similar schools, based on free school meals, results were close to the average at 5 A\*-C and above average at 5 A\*-G. The average points score was above average in comparison with similar schools. A significant number of students are achieving better than would be expected for their prior attainment. The targets for this year group were broadly met. The analysis by ethnic origin shows that pupils from all backgrounds achieve equally well. Boys achieved slightly better than girls overall in the 2001 examinations.
4. From inspection evidence, the majority of pupils are achieving well. Standards for Year 9 are average in design and technology, drama, history, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. They are below average in art, English, geography, mathematics, music and science. They are above average for information and communication technology in dedicated lessons but the use and application of skills across the curriculum is inconsistent.
5. Standards are above average by the age of sixteen in drama. Standards are average in design and technology, history, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and physical education. They are below average in art, English, mathematics and science, and well below in business education and geography. In music, there is only a Year 10 group and their standards are average. Judgements on standards in religious education will be made in the Section 23 report from the Diocese.
6. The overall standards being achieved by pupils with English as an additional language are good. Pupils are drawn from many ethnic minority backgrounds of Black Afro-Caribbean, Asian and European heritage, and they are well supported in their work, which enables them to make good progress. In literacy, the programme of study for English in Years 7 to 9 is currently under review, as the literacy strategies previously experienced at primary school are being adopted in early secondary years. The work in this direction has been good within English lessons, and there is also good practice in most other curriculum subjects. Key words for each subject are emphasised in lessons, and many opportunities for pupils to use language with a learning purpose are given. Drama, modern foreign languages and physical education are particularly successful in encouraging speaking and listening skills. Geography and design and technology

contribute well to research skills and the use of information from sources that include CD-ROMs and library books. Many pupils speak with great confidence and enjoy discussions. They generally listen very well. In their written work, pupils from all ethnic backgrounds write well and draw on their experiences to illustrate their opinions. Overall, standards in basic literacy for pupils who have good command of English are average, with a significant minority achieving above average standards. Where the larger majority have English as an additional language, this impacts on the overall levels of literacy in the school and thus standards are below average in comparison with the national scene but at least average in relation to schools in similar contexts.

7. The standard of numeracy overall is below average at the end of Year 11. The effectiveness of strategies for teaching numeracy skills is satisfactory overall. The teaching of basic skills in mathematics is good. Calculators are used appropriately and accurately. The school has a numeracy policy but this is not reflected across all subjects. Spreadsheets and databases are used well in information and communication technology. Strategies are good in design and technology, providing pupils with plenty of opportunities to develop skills in measurement and calculation. Good graphical skills are being developed in science. In other subjects insufficient opportunities are taken to develop and apply numeracy skills, for example, in art, geography and history. Although there is a policy in geography, its application does not give rise to any higher analysis in graph work. In art there is no opportunity for pupils to become involved in three-dimensional work and this restricts pupils' spatial development. Information and communication technology is taught as discrete lessons in Years 7-9 and as a cross-curricular subject in Years 10 and 11. Opportunities are taken, but the integration into subjects is generally unsatisfactory and standards are average, overall. Word-processing, data handling and graph conversions occur, but it is in the knowledge and understanding of applications that standards suffer. There is inadequate development of control technology and sensing.
8. Overall pupils with special needs from all ethnic backgrounds are well integrated and make good progress. Whilst some do very well, the majority generally achieve lower standards than their peers. On entry to the school some pupils receive extra support in small groups, for example, one pupil in Year 7 has already improved in English teacher assessments from below the national average to above. They achieve well in mathematics even when they are working below the national average. Three pupils in Year 11, one with significant need and another with a statement, were below the national average on entry and are now predicted to gain average A-G grades at GCSE. In Years 7 to 9 in English, mathematics, science, history, French and physical education, pupils make better progress than expected. In some lessons observed, and when taught in small groups withdrawn for literacy support, they make very good progress. In Years 10 and 11 pupils make better progress than expected in English, mathematics, history and on vocational courses. Progress is impaired where there is no learning support assistant available.
9. Overall, the improvement in standards and achievement has been good since the previous inspection. The school's analysis by ethnicity and gender shows that they are very aware of underachievement and are taking appropriate action. Good standards are achieved by many pupils from the different ethnic backgrounds, and many Asian, white European and Black Afro-Caribbean boys and girls have high expectations, although a minority do underachieve. Gifted and talented pupils from all heritages achieve well. The good inclusive strategies and relationships are a key factor in the improvement which has begun and there is the potential for this to continue.

### **Sixth form**

10. Post-16 education is provided at the Sixth Form Centre and through the North Westminster consortium. A significant proportion of students take advantage of this provision to pursue academic and vocational courses. The prior attainment of students on entry is very wide, reflecting the previously mentioned diversity of ethnic backgrounds, special educational needs and English as an additional language. A significant minority of students have recently joined the school as their families come to live in London.



11. The majority achieve well, although the average points score for GCE A level in 2000 was very low in comparison with the national average. In 2001 it was well below average, but any comparisons are unreliable because of the often small number of students taking individual subjects. No judgements can be made as to the standards of AS examinations taken for the first time in the summer of this year until national comparisons are published. No national comparison is made with similar schools because of the diversity of post-16 education. Because of the size and gender make-up of some groups, comparisons by gender and ethnicity are unreliable.
12. There has been a slight improvement in overall standards since the last inspection. Five subjects were inspected in depth and other subjects taught in the school sampled. Standards are average in English, mathematics, biology, history and business studies. Standards are average in all other subjects sampled. Standards in literacy develop well for most students, and a significant majority are articulate and numerate. Students undertaking vocational courses have good opportunities to develop key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, and they achieve well. In other subjects, standards in this key skill and the opportunities to apply ICT are underdeveloped.
13. Overall, standards show that the attitudes and behaviour of a significant proportion of pupils and students make a positive contribution to the progress that they make. Achievement is supported by the expectations and ethos of the school.

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

14. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning are good and often very good. They enjoy school and this is confirmed by parents and carers. Pupils from Black Afro-Caribbean, Asian, and white European heritage represent some whose families have lived in the area for some time whilst others are more recent members of the community. The very large majority see themselves as an integral part of the school community and share the same positive attitudes. In lessons, where the teaching is good or better, pupils are motivated, interested and responsive, showing a positive attitude to their work. In a minority of lessons, where teachers' expectations are inappropriate, when lessons lack pace or when objectives are unclear, the attitudes and behaviour of a minority of pupils become unsatisfactory. Pupils persevere well when faced with challenging tasks, but their ability to work independently and organise themselves is insufficiently developed and this has been recognised by the school within its development plan. Pupils generally show interest, commitment and enthusiasm for their work which they usually undertake with enjoyment and confidence. When oral contributions are called for, most pupils respond readily and around the school they confidently and readily engage in discussions with visitors, expressing very positive views of their school and the support which they receive. Some of the most positive views were expressed by pupils receiving additional support in the learning support unit.
15. The quality of relationships was identified as a strength of the school at the time of the previous inspection and remains so. Pupils and students come from a rich tapestry of cultural diversity and work and play together, displaying very good relationships within a friendly and caring community. Pupils and students take a pride in belonging to the community of St Augustine's School and in being associated with its uniform. They talk with confidence about the school, its results and even its budget. They are sensitive to each other's beliefs and views and hold meaningful discussions at lunchtime in which every contribution is valued. Pupils and students treat each other and adults with courtesy, respect and consideration. They work well together through the school council and respond well to opportunities to take responsibility within the school community, which provide good opportunities for personal and social development. The majority of pupils and students participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities with enthusiasm and commitment. Pupils and students work effectively in teams and support each other in activities, understanding the impact of their actions on others, showing initiative and taking responsibility.
16. Behaviour in lessons and around the school has improved since the time of the previous inspection and is usually good. This makes a positive contribution to the way in which the school operates as an orderly community that values the rights of all pupils to learn. On

occasions, a minority of pupils behave in an unacceptable manner but such instances are dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils are trustworthy and property and equipment are treated with care. There is no evidence of vandalism or graffiti. Pupils respond very well to the school's high expectations and ethos which makes them responsible for their own behaviour and actions. Whilst there are few incidents of bullying, these are usually identified very quickly and dealt with effectively. Pupils and students are very confident that any concerns will be addressed promptly and know that appropriate and effective action will be taken in the rare case of any form of oppressive behaviour. During the previous year there has been a 50 per cent increase in the number of fixed period exclusions and a small increase in the number of permanent exclusions, although the school's inclusive policies and strategies, such as the St Augustine's Learning Support Unit (SALSU), are seeking to ensure that exclusion is used only as a last resort. In the previous year there have been 57 fixed period exclusions and five permanent exclusions, involving 36 boys and nine girls. The pupils who have been excluded include a disproportionately high percentage of black Caribbean, African and other black heritage pupils, although these pupils form 45 per cent of the school population. However, inspectors found that exclusion has been used appropriately and effectively as part of an overall strategy to promote good standards of behaviour.

17. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory overall. During the day, pupils and students move in an orderly and purposeful manner between lessons. Registers for pupils of compulsory school age are completed efficiently and comply with requirements. The attendance of all pupils on the special needs register is monitored through the pastoral system, and appropriate steps are being taken to follow this up through the school-based education welfare officer to support the achievement of these pupils. Overall attendance is above the 90 per cent threshold and unauthorised absence is slightly above the national average. There has not been a marked improvement in attendance overall since the last inspection. These levels of attendance have a satisfactory impact upon standards of achievement and learning.

#### **Sixth form**

18. Students have generally positive attitudes to the school and to study. Those who choose to stay on in Year 13 often have good attitudes to their work. The development of personal and learning skills is sound during Year 12. The development is hampered by the significant number of students who have English as an additional language and who have recently joined the school. This reflects the high percentage of white European and some Asian and Black ethnic heritage refugees, and these students are experiencing problems with their studies, although they remain positive and are well supported.
19. Relationships are good. Students mix together well and they also support each other. A number of students are relatively new to using English as the main medium for their studies. In the common room and in classrooms there is an atmosphere of support and friendship which helps these students to achieve well. This is very apparent in classes where students from a wide variety of ethnic origins and faiths collaborate and share very well. They exchange knowledge and ideas for the benefit of everyone. Individuals often translate ideas and information for others whose command of English is less secure. This harmonious and supportive atmosphere is a real strength of the post 16 experiences of students in the school. Individual students say that this is what they value and that they would not have chosen to continue to study if the facilities had not been available in the school. They do not feel that they would have had the confidence to go elsewhere. Many students accept responsibility well and support younger pupils in their studies and also support their contemporaries without any concerns for ethnic heritage. In their responses to the questionnaire, students were positive about the school and their involvement.

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

20. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Overall, teaching is good and a strength of the school. In Years 7-11, teaching is satisfactory in almost all lessons, good in a third and very good or better in a further third of these lessons. There remains a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Almost all parents who returned the questionnaire were pleased with the quality of teaching. There is consistently good teaching in

all year groups, although the strongest teaching is in Years 7 and 11. Teaching effectively promotes the good progress of the large majority of pupils and enables many to achieve well. There has been a very high turnover of staff in the last two years and this has contributed positively to the improvement in the quality of teaching.

21. The teaching of English as an additional language and of special educational needs is good. Pupils are correctly identified and good provision is made for either their language or learning needs. The differing language needs of the wide range of ethnic heritage pupils are well met. Pupils make good progress from their low levels of language acquisition. There is very good preparation prior to the lessons on many occasions, and the specialist teachers and support staff are very active and enhance pupils' learning. Links between subject areas are generally satisfactory but they are impaired when there are no support staff present and mainstream teachers do not have the resources or differing materials to support pupils. Where teaching is satisfactory in lessons and the learning needs of all pupils are satisfactorily met, the needs of pupils on the special needs register are also being met. Pupils' individual education plans are effectively used. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Good practice occurs in most subjects, for example, in history and science, where teachers provide a wide range of learning opportunities and stimulate good spoken answers. Not all subjects understand how they can support pupils through their curriculum and not all teachers match their style and method of teaching to the range of pupils' needs in a class. In a geography lesson teaching provided all pupils with tasks and activities at the pace of the slowest, showing planning did not include additional strategies to retain pupils' interest and challenge pupils' thinking. Although the school policy prefers support for pupils in the classroom, pupils are withdrawn on occasions. Teaching in small groups is effective, and teachers relate well to the pupils and provide good role models. When learning support assistants are present they are very effective, improving the quality of learning by supporting and challenging individual pupils, helping to raise attainment. The learning support staff prepare well for lessons and use excellent forms to monitor pupils' targets and achievements. The quality of the support staff is good but there are occasions when the demands across subjects prevent classes which need support from receiving it. In most subjects the gifted and talented pupils, who are drawn from all ethnic backgrounds, are well identified and they achieve well.
22. Teaching in English is good overall and very good in Years 10 and 11. Teaching in mathematics and science is good, although in mathematics the use of sharp mental sessions to begin lessons is not developed sufficiently. The teaching of information and communication technology as a specific subject is good but where it is taught as a cross-curricular topic it is satisfactory. This is because opportunities to use computers and apply skills and programs are missed by the teachers. Whilst teaching is consistently of a good standard in most subjects, there are shortcomings in business studies, geography and art, and in a minority of lessons in mathematics.
23. Most teachers have high expectations, providing a stimulating challenge, to which pupils willingly respond. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good and they use this well to provide challenging tasks to stimulate and motivate pupils. For example, in a Year 10 English class where gifted and talented pupils were encouraged to use critical vocabulary, the teacher provided a very good challenge that extended pupils' knowledge and understanding. Similarly in a Year 10 drama class, the adherence to developing pupils' understanding and use of words extended not only their vocabulary but also their thinking skills and personal development. Lessons are generally well planned. Teachers are clear about their learning objectives and share them with pupils. Just occasionally, this is not done clearly enough. Most lessons have good introduction and summary sessions.
24. The majority of teachers manage and organise their classes very well. Good use is made of time and lessons are conducted at a brisk pace. Relationships are good, overall, and this has a marked effect on the learning process. Teachers come from a diverse range of ethnic heritages. This supports relationships and there is exceptionally good harmony in classrooms. In the best lessons, teachers spend time checking for levels of understanding through purposeful questioning. There are inconsistencies in marking among teachers and departments. Many teachers write constructive comments to identify strengths and areas for improvement, but, in some cases, there can be cursory ticks. Homework is set, sometimes to

extend work done in class as well as to extend pupils' learning, although there is some inconsistency across subjects. Teachers make generally good use of resources, for example, in a Year 8 science lesson, where aspects of literacy and historical facts about science and scientific models were linked to really extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Where teaching has limitations and shortcomings. This reflects the fact that lessons are too slow, work is not challenging enough and differing needs are not well met. The use of assessment to support planning is developing well but is not yet having sufficient impact to ensure that there is good continuity and progression. Many teachers are developing pupils' thinking skills and there are opportunities where independent learning is being developed.

### **Sixth form**

25. Teaching is good overall and teachers ensure that students are able to learn well. All teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject or vocational area and they are able to advise students well. Teachers take advantage of the small size of groups to provide individual support for students and resources are well used. However the size of some groups, for example, in history, is too small and this affects the quality of learning as students do not have the opportunity to discuss and share ideas.
26. In the best lessons the teachers develop students' thinking skills well and challenge them through good questioning techniques. The students consider that they are well taught and respond well to the expectations and good strategies used by their teachers. Teachers assess students and provide guidance for their future progress. Assessment is sound but the information is not always used well. Sixth form courses are open access and therefore there is a wide range of capability in some groups and many students are using English as an additional language rather than as their mother tongue. Sometimes students are tackling the same tasks using the same resources and not receiving any extra support. However, where support is available it is used well and often teachers adjust the pace of lessons to meet the learning requirements of students

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

27. There has been a significant improvement in the curriculum overall since the last inspection. There is now a clear vision of how the curriculum should be developed and issues related to planning and development are now a priority. The school recognizes that it is in a period of change and development and that the curriculum is evolving to meet the changing requirements of its pupils. Support from the Education Action Zone has been beneficial in a range of curriculum initiatives.
28. The quality and range of the curriculum for Years 7-11 are satisfactory. It has sufficient breadth and balance in Years 7-9 and has been enhanced well in Years 10 and 11. Drama has been successfully introduced. Vocational courses and extra-curricular Latin for pupils of higher potential attainment are indications of the wide-ranging and inclusive provision in Years 10 and 11. Courses linked with the construction and catering industries are very valuable, providing vocational education and training, directly linked with the world of work, as an alternative curriculum to meet the needs of a minority of disaffected pupils, or those for whom a mainly academic curriculum is unsuitable. However, this is an area which is underdeveloped to ensure that the differing needs of pupils are more widely met. Statutory requirements are not met for information and communication technology, art, design and technology and music as the full programmes of study are not covered.
29. The organization and content of the curriculum take due account of the wide range of ethnic backgrounds and differing needs of the pupils. There is good equality of opportunity and access. Support for pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language is available. The needs of pupils across a broad range of learning, behaviour, social, medical and physical needs are understood and there is generally good provision. Gifted and talented pupils from all ethnic backgrounds are effectively provided for. Pupils and staff work well together and the atmosphere in the school is harmonious and inclusive. In mathematics the grouping of pupils in Years 7 to 9 allows small classes which use

the national numeracy strategy to raise pupils' attainment. The withdrawal of pupils in Years 7 and 8 provides effective accelerated learning for literacy skills. The school recognizes that there are issues related to the setting and banding of pupils in teaching groups which affect curriculum access, and there are plans to eradicate these problems.

30. The programme of extra-curricular activities is good. It includes sport, music and drama. There are also extra classes to support work in academic subjects. Individuals learn to play a variety of musical instruments and many are involved in creative arts activities, for example, drama and music groups. Pupils go on a variety of visits in the local area and outside London. There is an established pattern of residential visits and exchanges with other countries. Pupils play a very full part in local community activities such as charity fund raising.
31. The provision for the personal, social and health education of pupils is good. A new programme has been introduced, which is well planned, and is taught in a designated lesson every week. The activities are well balanced through the year and include modules on health, substance abuse, study skills and careers. The sessions observed during the inspection were for the most part well managed and well resourced. There is good support for careers and vocational education. Pupils have good opportunities for work experience in Year 10 and to seek advice from the careers service. The school is seen as an essential part of the community, and very good links contribute well to pupils' learning, for example, through community activities, work placement and support for the vocational programme. Links with the local church are very good.
32. Links with partner institutions are good. This involves the sharing of assessment and curriculum information and is valuable for all the institutions involved. The headteacher and the senior staff work very closely with the other schools, the local college and with the Learning Skills Council. Links with primary schools are at least sound although pupils come from many different schools and from abroad and it is often difficult to access previous records. The school of necessity also works very closely with organisations such as the police and social and education welfare services to ensure the wellbeing of its pupils and students. Since the last inspection overall improvement has been satisfactory and the school recognises the need to further develop curriculum opportunities as a means of meeting differing needs and raising standards.

### **Sixth form**

33. The Sixth Form is inclusive and gives open access. Opportunities have been extended through arrangements in the North Westminster Consortium of schools in the area. Some timetabling arrangements lead to difficulties and thus subjects have to be taken after school; a minority of students do not have the opportunity to attend all lessons. This situation particularly affects ICT lessons but it has an impact on other subjects including business studies. Students can choose from a variety of subjects and options in traditional subjects, and GNVQ and AVCE courses are available in Business studies and GNVQ Intermediate Travel and Tourism. Some students take a package of GCSE and vocational options and this meets learning needs well. Continuity and progression from work in Year 11 are effectively provided. However the small size of groups and the low retention rate into Year 13 mean that the position of some subjects at A2 is insecure, although the links with the consortia are developing and there are clear indications of a better take up from Year 12.
34. Opportunities exist for students to undertake work placements and to participate across extra-curricular activities as listed in the above paragraphs for the main school. There, support is good. Students join in lunchtime activities such as chess and the learning resource centre/library is well used during the lunchtime break. Some students support younger pupils through a range of activities. Additional support courses take place for students who have recently joined the school to develop their command of English. Personal development and careers advice are sound.

### ***Spiritual, moral and cultural development***

35. The overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and students is good although as yet there is no specific planning or monitoring of this provision.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The Section 23 report prepared by the Diocesan inspectors will make judgements about the spiritual and moral development of the pupils and students, and about collective worship.

36. There is good provision for spiritual development through subjects as they provide the opportunity for reflection and a greater awareness of creativity. It also adds to the development of pupils' and students' values and beliefs, for example, in English, drama, history and geography, as well as through art and music. The statutory obligations to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils and students is not met, and tutor time and registration sessions are not used for this purpose.
37. Very good provision is made for moral development. Teachers are often very good role models and the school provides very clear examples of what is acceptable moral behaviour. Many subjects within the curriculum explore moral issues including English and history. Displays remind pupils of the evil of slavery and work in class makes them aware that atmospheric pollution is a by product of new sources of power and that people have to make choices which often have moral implications. Pupils are encouraged to be generous in raising money for charity and to value people of all races and creeds. Representatives of the School Council gain further opportunities as they contribute to the life of the school.
38. Very good provision is now made for social development. Pupils and students work together very well and they are encouraged to share ideas with one another. Social interaction is a feature of the dining hall where pupils and staff share the excellent food and facilities. Pupils and staff work together in the School Council and in planning a variety of activities around the school. Year 9 pupils work with new pupils in Year 7 to help them settle into a new and possibly intimidating environment. This has resulted in a very happy and harmonious atmosphere. It is rare to see so many happy smiling faces and it is a real pleasure to be a visitor in the school. A wide variety of residential and day visits for pupils also contributes to social development. The strong vocational provision is very important for those pupils who find the world of work more interesting and relevant than the classroom. It provides the opportunity for them to develop their social skills in an appropriate environment outside of school.
39. Cultural development is good. Pupils have new links with Japan and a teacher and some pupils are able to participate in this and share their experiences with the rest of the school. Exchange visits are arranged with other European countries and pupils go on a variety of visits outside of London so that they can understand the culture of this country. The school has a strong tradition of music and the provision of Indian dance noted in the last inspection report is continuing. Business studies and vocational education provide pupils with a valuable insight into working culture and pupils benefit from work experience and links with hotels and catering. The rich diversity of the pupils' heritage is effectively used and celebrations of world faiths through art, music and drama reflect the diversity of cultures present in the area.

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

40. The school cares very well for all of its pupils in that they are well known by the staff and enjoy very good relationships. There are still shortcomings in assessment procedures which have a detrimental effect on the overall care. The procedures for assessment are now satisfactory and a number of significant improvements have been put into place since the last inspection. There is still some variation in practice but there is now a much greater awareness of the purpose of assessment and the potential of assessment for target setting. The changes made have put the school clearly on the road towards an inefficient and coherent system.
41. Test and other data are now available at the end of Year 9 for all subjects. Assessment data is being collected for Years 7 and 8. Results are monitored by gender and ethnicity and this is helping to identify underachievement of particular groups, for example, the underachievement amongst some black boys and to ensure that the needs of gifted and talented pupils from all ethnic backgrounds are identified. This activity is having a positive effect on achievement.
42. There is now a coherent assessment system across the school but there is still some inconsistency in its use across departments. Academic reviews have been introduced and they

have been well received by pupils and teachers. Tracking procedures are now being introduced. Pupils in Years 7-9 are assessed against national curriculum standards in most subjects and increasingly pupils show that they understand these grades and that this helps them to learn how to improve. Groups of pupils are involved in some assessment of their own work in some subjects but this is not common practice across the school. The school is moving towards a common system for marking and a system in which both achievement and effort are recognized. In most subjects work is marked regularly but there is some variation in procedure across the school and within departments as many teachers are new to the school. However pupils' notebooks do not include an explanation of the grades or the system used. Procedures for assessing work in academic and vocational courses taken in Years 10 and 11 have been effectively developed. These are clearly understood by pupils and they understand the difference in assessment between vocational and academic courses.

43. The needs of pupils across a broad range of learning, behaviour, social, medical and physical needs are understood and identified appropriately. Annual reviews for pupils with special needs are carried out as required. Data available to teachers includes the results of regular assessments of reading ages, spelling, numeracy and behaviour. Individual education plans identify needs very well and provide accurate and useful profiles of each pupil. They provide evidence of good practice in producing realistic, helpful and measurable targets. These targets are useful for ensuring pupils receive full support from everyone through the code of practice, linking short and long term objectives for the pupil, teaching strategies and review arrangements, and reflecting a variety of needs for some pupils. The recording of special needs data is not effectively dovetailed with the whole-school database. Thus, results from all national and diagnostic school assessments, the special needs register, classes and groups, background and behaviour and attendance records do not facilitate the creation of a useful working profile of pupils for all teachers. Pastoral support plans are used for pupils with behaviour problems and are administered by heads of year in consultation with the learning support unit. The school is now well placed for reviewing pupils and the special needs coordinator has developed an informal network for giving and receiving updates on pupils from learning support assistants and other staff. There is a need to formalise special needs links with other support providers with responsibilities for special needs pupils, in order to avoid overlap and duplication and to co-ordinate and evaluate the quality of provision. These include the learning support unit for behaviour and the support for pupils with English as an additional language. Assessment procedures for the latter are effective.
44. Pastoral support for pupils is generally good. Procedures for monitoring personal development are good. There is very good support and guidance to raise their level of achievement. The pupils are well known by the staff and the high quality of relationships is a notable strength. There are high expectations of the standards of behaviour of pupils and these are clearly conveyed to them as part of their induction. The behaviour policy is well understood by pupils and applied consistently by staff throughout the school. The effectiveness of this policy, which includes sanctions and rewards, combined with the very good relationships and response of pupils, has a positive effect on both learning and levels of achievement. Whilst bullying or other oppressive behaviour is not a significant problem, the school is rigorous in resolving problems and mediating in the case of difficulties which may arise in relationships.
45. A small unit provides very good learning support for up to 12 pupils who experience learning difficulties, often associated with poor behaviour. This inclusive strategy identifies which lessons give rise to particular concern and provides a structured environment for these pupils. The unit focuses on literacy and numeracy skills, raising pupils' self-esteem and addressing offending behaviour, for example, managing their anger effectively. Sessions in Tai Chi and yoga help to calm pupils. Opportunities to undertake short visits to places such as the Brecons where they abseil, orienteer and pot-hole help them to develop personal, social and teamwork skills. The head of the unit works very closely with parents and meets with them at least twice per term as well as having one-to-one sessions with pupils every two weeks. The tracking and monitoring of pupils from the initial referral are very good and targets are very well shared with pupils and parents.
46. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory and the school uses the local area protection committee's procedures which comply with requirements. One male and one female senior

teacher are responsible for child protection and have received appropriate training and updates. There are satisfactory liaison arrangements with outside agencies although the number of local authorities involved and changes of staff within their departments do affect continuity. Staff are aware of the procedures to be followed in the case of any concern and the school exercises its responsibilities with care. There is an appropriate policy for the restraint of pupils and staff have received basic training in the use of restraint to prevent pupils or students from harming themselves or others.

47. The overall management of health and safety is unsatisfactory, although there is a health and safety policy which meets requirements and is supported by departmental policies. Concerns expressed about risk assessments and elements of the physical care of pupils and students that were identified at the time of the previous inspection have not been satisfactorily addressed. The school responded very positively to issues identified during the course of this inspection and is to establish a structure for the implementation, monitoring and management of health and safety throughout the school. Although generic risk assessments are available within departments, there is no strategic overview practice and whole school risk assessments are not formally completed and recorded. There are shortcomings in the monitoring and maintenance of fire equipment. Records of tests of the fire alarm system are not recorded appropriately and there is no record of work being completed to resolve identified issues such as problems in hearing the alarms in parts of the building. Care provided for pupils who are unwell or in need of first aid is satisfactory. Adequate first aid supplies are available throughout the school, but the main supplies are kept in an unmarked cupboard. Accident records for serious accidents are fully documented but detail in respect of minor accidents is very brief and does not facilitate any review to identify potential risks.
48. Procedures to record, monitor and promote attendance are satisfactory. Some good initiatives have recently been introduced. To enable the school to be more proactive in working with pupils, parents and carers to address identified concerns, it has recently appointed a home liaison/education welfare officer to support the member of the senior management team responsible for monitoring and raising levels of attendance, punctuality and consequent achievement. Detailed analysis is made of attendance and all cases of attendance below 90% are followed up, involving the education welfare officer when necessary. The school dining hall provides an excellent facility which contributes to the care of pupils and students and offers a breakfast facility which is appreciated by pupils, students, staff and visitors and is recognised as making a positive impact on pupils' and students' ability to learn when they have left for school without taking breakfast. The school is inclusive in its work and seeks to ensure that those pupils who join the school other than at the age of 11 are provided with good support and full induction to ensure that they may quickly become part of the school community.

## **Sixth form**

### **Assessment**

49. A thorough analysis of examination data is carried out and GCSE results are used to set targets and evaluate progress, reflecting procedures in Years 7-11. Likewise, there are variations in practice and the new coordinator recognises the need to be more rigorous as a development priority. Procedures for reviews mirror developments in the previous year groups. There are often good procedures to obtain the information but the use of the data to set targets in subjects across the curriculum, and to keep students well informed, is a shortcoming. A significant minority of students are new to the school and there is some mobility in the sixth form population as pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds join and leave the school. Those with English as an additional language are correctly identified and given good support to extend their command of the English language.

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

50. Students have good views of the school and particularly appreciate the accessibility of teachers to provide support, guidance and assistance in settling into their sixth form studies. They also acknowledge independent learning skills, being treated as responsible young adults and the quality of teaching and the printed information with which they are provided. They would, however, like to have more information about their progress and better assessment of their



work, together with more advice about future options and a wider range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment to the curriculum. Inspection findings support the positive views of students and judged that the quality and use of ongoing assessment have shortcomings. However, inspectors judged that the range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities offered to students is good.

51. Educational support and guidance for students are satisfactory. Students have tutors and meet with them twice a day. A period of personal, social and moral education is also timetabled in every week. During the inspection week the activity focused on study skills and provided valuable help and support for students. They also have the benefit of the advice, support and guidance of the sixth form coordinator. She is new to the school but she has already been able to establish a good rapport with the students. She is aware that many aspects of the experience of students require improvement and is determined to provide an effective service to them. There is an enrichment programme including sport. This provides some wider experience for students but the range of activities is not extensive.
52. The information available for students on academic and vocational courses is limited and induction procedures are not fully in place. There is no handbook to inform students about procedures in the school. Help on study skills and careers advice is available and students have good access to information and support in their applications for higher education. They have the opportunity to change courses and access to consortium subjects is well structured. The students have expressed concern about subjects that clash on the timetable.
53. Students are registered at the beginning and end of the day but systems for registration are not sufficiently rigorous. The school would not easily be able to identify which students should be on the premises at any one time.
54. There is a Sixth Form Council which has the potential to give students a valuable role within the school. They plan activities for themselves and provide good role models to younger pupils. They feel that they are being listened to but they do feel that there are important issues such as timetable clashes, areas for private study and access to computers that have yet to be resolved

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

55. There is an effective partnership with parents and initiatives to further this partnership, developed since the previous inspection, are showing positive results. For example, the school has changed from providing a consultation evening for parents/carers to an academic review during which targets are discussed. As a consequence, attendance has increased from just under 50 per cent to more than 90 per cent. The partnership is reinforced through very good information about the life and work of the school and a school/home agreement which has been completed and returned by the significant majority of parents/carers.
56. A minority of parents and carers attended a meeting with inspectors and returned the questionnaire prior to the inspection. The views expressed were generally positive. Parents and carers are particularly pleased with the progress which pupils and students make at school because of its high expectations. They also praise their children's attitudes to school, the ease with which they feel that they can approach the school with any questions or concerns and the quality of leadership and management. A minority of those responding would like improvements in the arrangements for homework, the information which they receive about their child's progress and an extension to the range of activities outside lessons. Inspectors support the positive views of parents and carers. Inspectors also found that the range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities to enrich the curriculum offered to pupils and students is good. However, the inspection team judged that the information provided to parents and carers about pupils' and students' progress is unsatisfactory.
57. The previous inspection described annual written reports to parents/carers as being of 'poor quality' and a review of reports indicates that they are still unsatisfactory and that some of the issues identified in February 2000 have not been addressed adequately. Reports are written in a pleasant style, providing praise and encouragement, but they generally fail to identify specific targets which could help parents/carers understand what pupils have to do to improve

standards further. They often contain general comments such as 'could work a little harder to improve grades still further and there are inconsistencies in including detail such as attainment levels at the end of Year 9. The arrangements for communicating with parents whose first language is not English are satisfactory, with access to translators as required.

58. Parents/carers generally support pupils in their work at school and at home and their wider activities, although their use of the homework diary is inconsistent and there is no parent teacher association. Parents do not provide assistance at school events. However, parents/carers are very responsive when the school contacts them to discuss concerns and approximately one half of the parents/carers attend events such as a 'Year 10 – Raising Achievement Evening' at which they are provided with information about coursework and the school's expectations of pupils whilst they study for their GCSE's. The support of parents is much valued by pupils and staff and makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.

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

59. The improvement which has taken place since the last inspection has been very good. From a situation in which there was a range of serious weaknesses, there are now none. This reflects the very rigorous and appropriate changes in the leadership and management which have had a very positive impact on standards and the quality of education. The school's aims are being increasingly met so that the provision for all of its pupils and students is enhanced.
60. The headteacher has a very clear educational vision and provides very good direction for the development of the school. He has been in post for just over a year and has a very good partnership with the governors and his colleagues in the senior management team, with teaching staff and pupils and students. The governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to challenge proposals effectively and to make a good contribution to shaping the direction of the work of the school. They operate effectively through an established committee structure and are developing their roles in the overall monitoring of standards and quality of education. The governors contribute significantly to the planning process by maintaining a strategic overview and bringing to discussions a wide range of experience and expertise. The school's development plan extends over a three year period, to 2004. Priorities for development are very appropriate, and there is a very close link between educational and financial planning, and specific proposals are costed appropriately. Success criteria are clearly identified and linked to raising standards. Priorities are related to raising pupils' and students' self-esteem and standards of attainment.
61. Two deputy headteachers were initially appointed with the headteacher; one on a permanent basis and the other in a consultative role. Together with two assistant headteachers and the bursar, they form the senior staff team. There has been a substantial number of changes in subject leadership and in general teaching appointments. The cohesive and appropriate changes in the quality of management and teaching have led to the improvement in standards and ethos.
62. Improvement has been at a good pace, reflecting the approach of the senior staff, who are very aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. In the curriculum, the breadth and balance have been addressed and whilst there are still shortcomings in information and communication technology, art, music and design and technology, there has been improvement and plans are set to continue this process. The links with the Educational Action Zone and the North Westminster Consortium have been beneficial and the partnership with these initiatives is very good. It has initiated staff training, curriculum development and funding resources. Procedures for assessment show improvement and are satisfactory overall, with further developments taking place. The improvement is recognised by parents and carers but not least by the pupils and students who speak warmly and with pride about their school.
63. Leadership and management of departments are generally good, and pastoral staff operate effectively. A significant number of these staff have been appointed over the last year and they are instrumental in supporting developments. Whilst some inconsistencies in staffing still exist they have the potential to maintain the improvement, although they all recognise that there is no room for complacency. Leadership and management in special educational needs are good.

The present members of the team were appointed in September and have been very effective in evaluating and developing the situation they inherited. Within a short space of time they have ensured the code of practice requirements are met for annual reviews and for distributing information on pupils' targets and reviewing progress outlined in individual education plans. Relevant information and data is being used to identify pupils' needs on entry, supported by liaison coordinators with feeder schools. The special needs coordinator and teacher are working effectively to reassess all the pupils on the special needs register to ensure their needs are appropriately met. Since last year pupils have moved up and down the register, and identification is more rigorous. The coordinator is aware that further improvement is required by establishing a formal framework to share out responsibilities for supporting pupils in the classroom and in small groups, and for better line management to inform departmental planning. It is also recognised that the handbook needs revising. The head of department for English as an additional language has only recently taken up the post but is effectively prioritising and planning for improvement. The documents and procedures are sound and effective. To develop a more consistent practice the monitoring of the EAL teaching requires further development. Again it is recognised that further developments are required and the potential exists for both special educational needs and English as an additional language to have a positive impact on the raising of standards.

64. Since the previous inspection there has been very good progress in reviewing financial procedures to address fully the weaknesses that were identified. Although there is still a deficit, it is being managed very effectively and reduced in accordance with a carefully structured plan, whilst focusing on priorities for raising standards of attainment. The new bursar has a very clear view of funding and is ensuring that the school obtains best value for money before committing itself to expenditure. She compares the school's effectiveness against that of other schools. She is very efficient and there is very good liaison between the headteacher, bursar and other members of the senior management team, heads of department and governors. There is considerable additional funding from specific grants, for example, for special needs and English as an additional language, standards funds and for 'Excellence in Cities'. These are used well for their designated purpose, supporting the school's work and inclusion strategies to ensure that every pupil and student is able to take advantage of the educational opportunities provided. The local education authority has recently established a consortium of schools to provide post-16 education for students in Westminster. The scope of this inspection does not enable an assessment to be made of the overall efficiency of post-16 arrangements but an analysis of income and expenditure on sixth form provision at St Augustine's indicates that monies received to support work in that area are appropriately used. There are very good relationships with the business community which provides valuable financial resources and specialist expertise to support the extension of learning opportunities and an improvement of facilities. Good use is made of staffing, accommodation and other resources. Overall, in terms of its level of expenditure, the quality of education provided and the achievement of pupils in relation to their prior attainment, the school is providing good value for money.
65. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory. Since the last inspection there has been a significant turn-over of staff. There is a good mix of experienced staff and those relatively new to the profession. The school places emphasis on the provision of support staff for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. However the demands of these two categories outweigh supply. Administrative staff, including maintenance, provide good support to the school in maintaining a well organised community. The induction of staff new to the school and effectiveness of provision, or potential for training of new teachers, are good. They are supported by the coordinator and a mentor within their department. They take part in the scheme organised by the local authority as well as a school-based programme which provides additional periods of non-contact time. Discussions with newly-qualified teachers revealed praise for the school's induction programme. The school has an established link with the University of North London for the initial training of teachers. The last three trainee teachers have subsequently joined the teaching staff. Professional development is well organised and based on meeting the needs of the school.
66. The accommodation overall is unsatisfactory, although considerable efforts have been made to improve it. The dining area is excellent. There are six updated laboratories in the science

department, one of which is for sixth form work. New floors have been laid, new ceilings, new lighting and improved security measures installed. There has been some internal decoration and good attention given to the quality of displays. The displays enhance the learning environment. Cleaning is now contracted out and is effective in maintaining a pleasant working environment. Two new teaching spaces have been created on the ground floor. However, there are no facilities to cater for the disabled, no lift for access to upper floors and no toilets for the disabled. The facilities for physical education are inadequate as there is insufficient external play area for the development of the curriculum and teaching of all skills. Travel off site is needed resulting in additional expenditure and a loss of time for teaching. The surfaces of many paths are hazardous because of broken paving stones and generally uneven surfaces. Library facilities and the ratio of computers to pupils are good, although access is difficult in some departments. Learning resources are adequate for the teaching in all curriculum areas. There is very good provision in mathematics and art, but insufficient numbers of books for all pupils in science and French.

## **Sixth form**

### ***Leadership and management***

67. Leadership and management are sound overall. The new sixth form coordinator, appointed from September, is providing sound support and guidance and most of the subject and vocational areas are managed well. Links with the consortium are developing effectively. The overall curriculum management is sound. There is a clear vision for a comprehensive and inclusive provision that fits very well within the local community. The arrangements made for registration do not ensure that the school knows which students are on site.

### ***Resources***

68. The overall provision of accommodation is satisfactory. There is a designated sixth form area with several smaller teaching rooms. The main area has to be used for some teaching and it is not adequately furnished for private study. Access to computers is very limited, inhibiting the opportunities for students to develop their independent learning skills. Accommodation for subjects is generally satisfactory, although that for business students is unsatisfactory.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

**The governors, headteacher and staff now need to raise the standards of achievement of all students by:**

- increasing the proportion of students achieving the national average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 3;
- increasing the proportion of students achieving five passes at A\*-C and at A\*-G in GCSE examinations;
- developing reports to widen the involvement of pupils and students and to fully inform parents of the progress being made.

*Paragraphs 2, 3, 7, 74, 75, 81, 87, 94, 97, 105, 110, 116, 154*

**Improving the overall opportunities for pupils in their learning by:**

- ensuring that work set is appropriate to meet the differing needs of the pupils;
- ensuring that procedures for assessment and marking are consistently implemented so that they inform lesson planning and help students to understand their own performance.

*Paragraphs 24, 40-42, 49, 76, 86, 103, 109, 114, 119, 141, 147, 168, 175*

**Meet the statutory requirements, where applicable, and improve the learning opportunities for all pupils in:**

- art, design and technology, geography, information communication technology and music.

*Paragraphs 28, 95, 97-104, 106, 107, 109, 110 – 115, 119, 123, 125, 133, 137, 153, 158*

**Seek to address the shortcomings in the accommodation with particular reference to:**

- facilities for physical education;
- the issues relating to health and safety and risk assessment;
- access and accommodation for the physically disabled.

*Paragraphs 47, 66, 146*

## **SIXTH FORM**

Improving:

- The provision in history.
- Management of assessment data.
- Timetabling arrangements to extend the opportunities for students to attend all lessons in their subjects.
- Accommodation as there is limited space for private study.
- Access to computers.
- Arrangements registration to ensure that the school knows which students are on site.

*Paragraphs 33, 50, 53, 54, 68, 173, 175, 177–180*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	Years 7-11	119
	Sixth form	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		46

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Years 7-11</b>							
Number	4	37	42	32	2	2	0
Percentage	3	31	35	28	1.5	1.5	0
<b>Sixth form</b>							
Number	2	2	15	5	1	0	0
Percentage	8	8	60	20	4	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for the sixth form as each lesson represents four percentage points.

### 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	591	93
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	351	0

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	45	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	122	2

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	418

<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	48
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	69

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.7
National comparative data	8.1

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.8
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	55	65	120

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	19	22	18
	Girls	36	28	21
	Total	55	50	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	46(50)	42(44)	32(30)
	National	64(63)	66(65)	66(59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	14(8)	16(19)	7(4)
	National	31(28)	43(42)	34(30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	18	n/a	n/a
	Girls	30	n/a	n/a
	Total	48	0	0
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	43(50)	n/a(52)	n/a (27)
	National	65(64)	68(66)	64(62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	14(8)	n/a (21)	n/a (6)
	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	57	54	111

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	10	45	54
	Girls	15	47	48
	Total	25	92	102
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	23(20)	83(87)	92(98)
	National	48(47)	31(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	27
	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	0	n/a
	National	n/a	n/a

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	15	17	32

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	8	5.6	6	2	2.5	2.8
National	n/a*	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

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	0	0
	National		n/a

\*No figures are available for national comparisons.



### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	144
Black – African heritage	161
Black – other	3
Indian	22
Pakistani	10
Bangladeshi	60
Chinese	5
White	140
Any other minority ethnic group	139

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	19	3
Black – African heritage	16	2
Black – other	8	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	1	0
Chinese	0	0
White	8	0
Other minority ethnic groups	5	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	52
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.2

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

Total number of education support staff	23
Total aggregate hours worked per week	680

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	80
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 - Y 13**

Years 7-9	24
Years 10-11	20
Years 12-13	n/a

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	2753202
Total expenditure	2635524
Expenditure per pupil	3831
Balance brought forward from previous year	-231265
Balance carried forward to next year	-113587

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	32.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	35.6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
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	684
Number of questionnaires returned	92

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	34	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	55	43	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	37	7	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	42	11	5	1
The teaching is good.	47	45	4	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	39	9	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	36	2	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	85	14	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	42	41	10	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	58	35	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	35	5	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	32	12	7	7

Only a minority of parents attended the pre-inspection meeting, and about 10 per cent returned the questionnaire. Inspection evidence supports all of the points that please parents and carers most. Reports are unsatisfactory. The large majority of parents who responded find that they can approach the school with questions or problems, and although a minority expressed some concerns, inspectors do consider that the school is seeking to work closely with parents and carers. Homework is generally well used, and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities. Overall parents are very positive about the school.

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

### ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

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

#### Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Some pupils performed better in 2001 GCSE examinations than their contemporaries who do not have English as an additional language.
- Work in the withdrawal lessons is particularly strong.

#### Areas for improvement

- Sharing of good practice across the department.
- Monitoring of the teaching.
- Closer links with subject departments to improve lesson preparation.

69. There are 420 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL). There are a significant number of languages spoken as the mother tongue including Arabic, Bengali, Portugese, Farsi and Yobura, as well as several European languages. Approximately a fifth of the pupils are at an early stage of language acquisition and need very considerable support. Although there are no age-related average standards of attainment for pupils who have English as an additional language, the attainment of the pupils at the end of Years 9, 11 and 13 is above what would be expected. For example, of the pupils entered for GCSE examinations in 2001, the results of some, on the higher stages of language learning, were significantly better than some pupils not on the English as an additional language register.
70. Overall the achievement of pupils and students in the sixth form is good. From the low levels of language acquisition at which they arrive in the school, the majority progress steadily and significantly onto the next stages of language acquisition. This progress reflects the consistently good teaching observed during the inspection. Teaching is always at least satisfactory and often very good. In the very good teaching there is careful preparation before any support work in the lessons is carried out. This means that the EAL teacher is knowledgeable about the topic of the lesson and able to prepare supporting materials, as they are of the same ethnic heritage as the pupils they support. In these lessons, the support staff are very active alongside the class teacher, supporting well the key words being written and explained on the board during the lesson. The pupils benefit greatly from this. Where teaching is satisfactory, the pupils receive adequate support but the specialist teachers largely react to the lesson rather than being actively part of it. Links between the department and the subject areas which they support are satisfactory. The links require further development to enhance pupils' progress by enabling all teachers of EAL to prepare a minimum amount of supporting and relevant material before the lessons or units of work are taught. The development of more materials to meet the differing language needs of the pupils is required on a consistent basis by subject teachers as it is not possible for the EAL teachers to be in every lesson.
71. The response of the pupils is very good overall. They are well behaved and concentrate on their work, although where the EAL teachers are less involved in the lesson, some sustained concentration is lost. The pupils are respectful of the teachers and of each other. The pupils are very well motivated and keen to learn and progress through the various stages of language acquisition. This, in addition to the good teaching, explains why the attainment and progress of the pupils in the school and in the Sixth Form are good.
72. The head of department has only recently taken up the post but is effectively prioritising and planning for improvement. The department is well managed. The documents and procedures, such as monitoring and reporting, are sound and effective. There is some very good practice in the department but it is not always shared. To develop a more consistent practice, the monitoring of the EAL teaching requires further development. A significant number of the

teachers are part-time, and the large number of pupils who have EAL means that the resources of staffing are considerably stretched.

73. There has been good progress since the last inspection, particularly as general subject teachers are now more aware how best to support the pupils when specialist support is not available. There have been improvements in the provision in the sixth form and more attention is now paid to the development of the four main skills of speaking, reading, listening and writing. The provision of materials to meet differing needs and the use of information and communication technology is limited. The department plays a significant part in developing pupils' literacy and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly in the lessons where pupils are withdrawn for support, both in the main school and the Sixth Form. These lessons have a very pleasant and friendly atmosphere and the pupils respond very positively to this. The accommodation and resources are good.

## ENGLISH

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

### Strengths

- Teaching, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Very good management of behaviour and learning.
- Very good relationships.

### Areas for improvement

- The standards achieved in reading aloud.
- The consistency of individual target setting.
- Access to ICT.
- Accommodation.
- Continued review of the scheme of work and teaching approaches to raise standards of literacy.

74. On entry, pupils' literacy skills are well below average, and many arrive in Year 7 or later with English as an additional language, often at an early stage of learning. This reflects the wide range of ethnic diversity. By the end of Year 9 results in National Curriculum tests have been well below the national average in recent years, but there has been a steady improvement over time in the performance of boys, so they are now in line with the girls. Compared to similar schools, the results in 2000 and 2001 were well above average. In the same year mathematics results were above similar schools and science, below. Standards of work seen during the inspection were below average, although pupils make good progress from Year 7 to Year 9. Pupils improve their ability to speak clearly and at length for different purposes, and they become better at listening to the teacher and to each other. Many continue to have difficulty in reading an unfamiliar text aloud, although they can extract meaning from the words and they enjoy listening to reading by the teacher. Higher attainers in Year 8 show their understanding of Hamlet's problems in letters they wrote to an imaginary friend, and some pieces of extended personal writing have a good eye for telling detail. Most students have an average level of skill in word-processing their work, and a Year 7 class enhanced their magazine articles on bullying with different fonts and clip art. Pupils with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress, producing short but accurately punctuated sentences and using a broader vocabulary as they move up through the school. Standards of handwriting and presentation are generally high even when the content is well below average.
75. Standards attained at the end of Year 11 in 2001 were well below the national average in GCSE English and below average in literature, but above those for similar schools in both subjects. These students achieved a higher proportion of the higher grades than they did in science, but fewer than in mathematics. Over time, standards have not significantly varied in English but there has been a steady improvement in the results achieved by boys in literature. Overall the performance of boys has been lower than that of girls in both subjects. During the inspection the standards seen were below average overall, but with most students continuing to make good progress. The quality of their speaking and listening improves, and Year 11

students in a higher set made brief but well-focused presentations to the class that were of an average standard. Reading aloud becomes more accurate but often lacks expression. In a study of the film 'Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves' a Year 11 student showed enthusiastic and detailed knowledge of the plot and characters but did not analyse the film in terms of media techniques and effects. A higher attainer's analysis of 'The Speckled Band' showed good understanding of the mechanics of the plot but used very little quotation from the text. Some Year 10 essays made very well managed comparisons between characters in Dickens and modern short stories. Students in a lower Year 10 set showed good understanding of a demanding play, 'An Inspector Calls' but their written expression was unclear and inaccurate. Pupils in the Year 10 upper band have made very good progress in the breadth of their vocabulary and the maturity of their style, some attaining a very high level of written work. Pupils with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress. Overall, the extent to which pupils are able to enhance their written work with information and communication technology is less than would normally be seen in Years 10 and 11.

76. The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Lessons are very well planned and so pupils are given appropriate tasks that enable them to build on their previous knowledge and understanding. Clear instructions and skilful management of resources enable lessons to go at a good pace. The teachers' enthusiasm for literature is infectious, and in a Year 10 upper band lesson several gifted and talented pupils were using a high level of critical vocabulary to express their views on the poem they were studying. Joint planning and very good teamwork enable support staff to provide pupils with special needs and those who are learning English as an additional language with suitable tasks whilst still being included in the overall work of the class. Very good planning and skilful use of the overhead projector enable a lower band Year 9 class to make visible progress in their understanding of 'Macbeth'. In nearly every lesson the teacher began by sharing the objectives so that pupils knew what was expected of them. Time was not always allowed for reviewing the objectives and checking progress at the end of the lesson, however. When this was done, it was clear that learning and progress had been good or better. In a Year 11 lower band group in which most of the pupils had special needs, very effective teamwork between the teacher and the support staff enabled them to improve their understanding of poetic structure and imagery. Marking of pupils' work is detailed, encouraging and often helpful, although the setting of individual short-term learning targets is inconsistent.
77. Pupils' attitudes are very good in Years 7 to 9. They are very keen to succeed and pleased when they do, as in Year 7 library and ICT lessons. In Year 9 they readily volunteer to read and are tolerant when fellow-pupils make mistakes. They settle quickly to tasks and generally work together very well in pairs and groups. In Years 10 and 11 overall attitudes are good. The great majority of pupils are very positive and try hard to do well. There are some pupils in Year 10 who are reluctant to work and can be mildly disruptive, taking more than their share of the teacher's attention. By Year 11 all pupils show good levels of concentration throughout the lesson. They are co-operative in group work and many have begun to manage their own learning by making their own notes and reading more widely. There is no significant difference in the attitudes or behaviour of pupils from different ethnic groups.
78. The programme of study for English in Years 7 to 9 is currently under review, as the literacy strategies previously experienced at primary school are to be adopted in early secondary years. The work in this direction has been good within English lessons, and there is also good practice in most other curriculum subjects. Key words for each subject are emphasised in lessons and many opportunities for pupils to use language with a learning purpose are given. Drama, modern foreign languages and physical education are particularly successful in encouraging speaking and listening skills. Geography and design and technology contribute well to developing research skills and the use of information from sources that include CD-ROMs and library books.
79. Leadership and management are both very good. The programme of study is regularly reviewed and adapted to new demands. The priorities identified and pursued reflect the school's overall commitment to success for every pupil. Teachers take training opportunities to support new developments, and the team of teachers has successfully incorporated drama and

literacy into the curriculum. The quality of teaching and learning is rigorously monitored to ensure that every pupil gets a fair deal. The department's recent audit of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 shows a very good level of awareness of pupils' achievement and constructive self-evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. Resources in terms of books and other materials are adequate and the library is an effective resource both for English classes and other students pursuing independent study. Other accommodation is unsatisfactory, however. Two of the full-time teachers do not have a permanent base in which to set up a really effective environment for learning this key subject. It is to their credit that such high standards of teaching and learning are achieved against the odds.

80. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Standards of work seen in lessons are better, particularly in Year 10. The margin between boys' and girls' achievement has been narrowed at the end of Year 9, but not yet at the end of Year 11. Teaching has greatly improved, particularly for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Learning objectives are now shared with pupils, whose behaviour and attitude are much better. The curriculum has been enriched with the inclusion of drama in Years 7 to 9. All the good features of teaching that were reported in 2000 have been maintained and the department is making a very significant contribution to the personal and academic development of the pupils at every stage.

## MATHEMATICS

Overall, provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Strengths

- The quality of leadership and management.
- Early entry in GCSE for the high attaining pupils.
- Pupils' learning is good.

### Areas for improvement

- Better use of short, sharp mental questions in the teaching, particularly with the low attaining pupils.
- The use of assessment to inform teachers' planning.

81. The proportion of pupils reaching the standard expected for their age in the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 9 was well below the national average for all schools. Results were close to the average for similar schools, showing good attainment. Results were below those in English and above those in science. Pupils achieved well, as their attainment on entry was well below average. In 2001, the proportion of pupils gaining a GCSE A\*-C grade was well below the national average for all schools, but well above the average for similar schools. Performance matches that of English and science. The achievement of many pupils is good, showing that there is good added value to their performance. High attaining pupils enter GCSE in Year 10 and go on to the higher level course, or statistics, in Year 11. Their success is one factor in the increased numbers in the A-level course in Year 12 this year. In tests at the end of Year 9 and 11, boys and girls achieve equally well. There is no significant difference in the performance of different ethnic groups. Standards have improved since the last inspection.
82. Although the standard of the work seen in the inspection in Years 9 and 11 is below the national average overall, most pupils are achieving well. This reflects the previous test and examination results. Pupils with special educational needs, those who need support in learning in English, gifted and talented pupils and those from different ethnic backgrounds all achieve well. Provision for their learning is good and their good progress is due to the support of teachers and learning support staff. There is occasionally some underachievement when the level of work is too easy for pupils, as in Year 7 for the higher attaining pupils at the start of their course. Very occasionally the work set is too difficult for pupils, as in a revision lesson in Year 11 on fractions for low attaining pupils.
83. In Year 9, high attaining pupils use appropriate formulae to calculate one side of a triangle, given the other two. They plot points accurately and use appropriate scales to draw graphs in statistics for estimation purposes. Average attaining pupils can use the formula for the area of a

circle accurately. Their work is not always set out well and this inhibits their learning. Low attaining pupils enjoy their work on the computers. They can display data in a variety of ways and are careful and competent users of the equipment. High attaining pupils in Year 11 use circle theorems well in solving problems in geometry. They solve equations well in algebra, but find the use of the formula to solve quadratic equations more difficult. Average attaining pupils solve simultaneous equations in a variety of different ways. They have a good understanding of place value in the use of numbers. Pupils can calculate simple percentages and fractions. More complicated questions are too difficult for them as the basic concepts are insecure. Year 10 pupils are making a good start to their investigatory work in statistics because the teaching ensures they know what they have to do and how to set about it.

84. The effectiveness of the strategy for teaching numeracy skills is satisfactory overall. The teaching of basic skills in mathematics is good, although standards in numeracy overall are below average at the end of Year 11. The numeracy policy is not reflected across all subjects, and this inhibits pupils' progress. Although there is a policy in geography, its application does not give rise to any higher analysis in graph work. In art there is no opportunity for pupils to become involved in three-dimensional work and this restricts pupils' spatial development. Strategies are good in design and technology, providing pupils with plenty of opportunities to develop skills in measurement and calculation. Good graphical skills are being developed in science. Calculators are used appropriately and accurately. Spreadsheets and databases are used well in information and communication technology.
85. The standard of teaching and learning is good overall. Approximately three fifths of the teaching is good or better. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. The very good subject expertise seen in the teaching makes pupils think, and so learn. This is often seen in the mental work at the start of lessons. Assessment in the best lessons is good, identifying gaps in pupils' understanding. Such gaps become the focus of the next stage of pupils' learning in the good teaching seen, as in a lesson on algebra on the equivalence of two simple expressions. In lessons that are satisfactory overall, such opportunities are missed. The use of assessment in the planning of these lessons does not always match the level of pupils' attainment. The result is that some pupils underachieve. Learning in some lessons is only satisfactory, when there is a lack of short, sharp mental questions in line with the National Numeracy Strategy. The teaching of basic skills is good, as seen in a Year 9 lesson multiplying 58 by 26 where simple errors were discussed. In all lessons the introduction of new mathematical words is good, particularly helpful to pupils who have difficulty in learning in English. The whole-class discussions promoted learning very well in those lessons where the teaching was very good. Pupils explain what they know, or do not know, clearly and well. In this way they learn from each other. Overall pupils behave very well, and the management of pupils is very good. Pupils' personal and learning skills are developing well, as seen in a Year 10 lesson where the higher attaining pupils in the class have good study skills. Most pupils do their homework. It is set regularly and complements the classwork well. Pupils have good attitudes to their work, an improvement since the last inspection. Marking of pupils' work is good overall as pupils are aware of their level.
86. The quality of leadership and management is good, as there has been a good improvement since the last inspection. Staffing arrangements have been difficult; there are three new teachers this term, for example. However, the teachers work hard and well as a team, shown through their coherent approach to the planning of mental work at the start of lessons. Monitoring the subject's performance is good, raising the standards in teaching and learning. There is still some inconsistency in the use of assessment in lesson planning, and where this lacks rigour work set is not always at the correct level for pupils to learn. National Curriculum requirements are met and the use of computers in the teaching is good.

## SCIENCE

The quality of provision is **good**.

### Strengths

- Leadership and management.
- Staff work well together and are committed to raising standards.
- Relationship with the pupils.
- Accommodation that enhances the learning environment.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment at the end of both key stages.
- The use of ICT to support teaching and learning.
- The guidance given to pupils through marking.
- Support for the large numbers of pupils in the relatively early stages of learning English as an additional language.

87. Results in the Year 9 tests in 2001 were very low when compared to the national average for all schools while being below average for similar schools. In the past few years, girls have achieved better results than boys at this stage. Results in science were not as good as those for English and mathematics. GCSE results in 2001 (combining single and double award entries) were just below the national average for all schools. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher A\* to C grades was below the average. When compared with similar schools, these results were above the national average. Girls' performance was better than that for boys overall. The 2000 results show a slight improvement over those in 1999, while those in 2001 show a further but more substantial increase. Pupils are doing better in science now than they do in some of their other subjects. This is reflected in the performance of pupils from different ethnic heritages, although those with English as an additional language do not always receive sufficient support to maximise their performance. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall and achieve well in relation to their individual education plans.
88. At the time of the last inspection, there were just two full time teachers in the department being helped with numerous supply staff. Since September 2001, the department has come under new management and there is now a full complement of permanent staff. The ethos has improved dramatically, having an immense impact on pupils' attitude to learning and their behaviour. The results of these changes have yet to be fully reflected in test and examination results, but standards being achieved from inspection evidence show improvement.
89. In the work seen in Years 7 to 9, standards are below those expected nationally, but are better than test results from previous years. There has been a good improvement in standards since the last inspection, most of which has taken place in the last two terms, so that standards are now closer to the expectation, although still below it. Pupils' practical and investigative skills are not as strong as their science knowledge and remain poor overall. Recently, there has been increased emphasis on investigative work, and the department recognises that there is the need to further develop this work even taking into account the significant improvements and changes it has already made. Some good investigative work was seen during the inspection. For example in a Year 9 lesson about speed, pupils were encouraged to plan, perform and analyse data for an investigation, to find out which member of their class could run the fastest. The teacher questioned them about what a prediction was, so that given a little support, they were able to formulate their own, based on their scientific knowledge and understanding gained in a previous lesson. Further guidance enabled them to plan their own experiment, selecting appropriate equipment and identifying the essential data to collect. Pupils made good progress in developing their investigative skills. Most pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the topics they are studying. For example, a Year 7 class were able to demonstrate a clear understanding of how electricity, which they knew to be a form of energy, could flow through a circuit through role play. Higher attaining pupils knew that there was a voltage across any part of a circuit where energy is entering or leaving, and were able to predict what would happen to the brightness of a bulb if the amount of energy was increased.



90. Many pupils lack confidence in using basic scientific terminology, although teachers help pupils to develop their literacy skill appropriately and rigorously. Pupils' 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, pupils' achievement is good in relation to their prior attainment in the subject which, when they join the school, as 11 year olds, is well below average. Most pupils from all ethnic backgrounds, those for whom English is an additional language and those with special needs make good progress.
91. Standards from the work seen in Years 10 and 11 are below those expected nationally, although better than those suggested by results in recent examinations. Pupils continue to achieve well. They have at least a satisfactory knowledge of the topics which they are studying. Most pupils in a Year 10 class have a good understanding of digestion and can explain what happens during digestion in the various parts of the human digestive system. Higher attaining pupils show a good understanding of the role of enzymes and enzyme specificity. However, weak numeracy and graphical skills often hinder their progress in analysing and interpreting data, for example, the rate of enzyme activity against time for pH and temperature. Pupils' practical and investigative skills improve, but are below their attainment in other areas of science. In some lessons, pupils do not express themselves clearly when answering spoken or written questions. Spelling and sentence construction are often weak, particularly amongst boys. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, continue to achieve standards that are better than might be expected of them. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve good progress overall. For 11 to 14 year olds, although many are proficient English speakers, a substantial number are not, and their level of fluency inhibits learning. A significant minority of these pupils is failing to reach their full potential because there is insufficient support in some lessons. Where there was additional support, learning was good.
92. Pupils have a good attitude to their work, and carry out practical experiments safely. Behaviour is good overall. In Years 7 to 9, pupils are enthusiastic experimenters and although they are keen to answer questions, they are not so ready to ask them. Good relationships lead to effective collaboration in practical work. However, in Years 10 and 11, pupils show less positive attitudes and generally do not put as much effort into their work as they should. When teachers provide challenging and interesting tasks, pupils respond well, use their initiative and show commitment to their learning.
93. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is very good in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 to 11. Teaching was either good or better in all lessons, with one in every three being very good. There was a small amount of excellent teaching. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives. These objectives are invariably displayed on the board for the entire lesson and this helps to keep the pupils on track. Relationships with pupils are good, and humour is often used to good effect. Praise, which helps to raise pupils' self-esteem, is a feature of many lessons. In the most effective lessons, expectations are high and teachers provide a constant challenge which meets the needs of most pupils. In one well-planned Year 8 lesson, for example, pupils learned about elements, molecules and compounds. Following a quick spelling test, the teacher introduced the lesson by asking pupils what an element was and whether they could give an example. One pupil said that nitrogen was an example, whilst another replied, "fire". The teacher immediately seized upon this to point out the historical aspect of science, that Ancient Greek philosophers classified elements as earth, air, fire and water, simply because they did not have the extent of knowledge which we have today. The teacher went on to discuss the periodic table and through a variety of activities, led a pupils to know that all things are made up of particles and to understand the differences between elements and compounds. Higher attaining pupils were able to explain what a molecule was, giving, for example, carbon dioxide and sulphuric acid. They were able to write the formulae in chemical symbols and explain the number of atoms of each element in the molecule. Pupils at all levels of attainment were stimulated by the activities and achievement was excellent as a result. The achievement of pupils with English as an additional language was good, and for some it was very good. Their needs were met largely through the teacher's planning, since no additional support was provided in the lesson. In some lessons which were just 'good', some pupils were too passive. They did not learn through experience and their progress was slower. Overall, learning is

good. It is good in Years 7 to 9, but only satisfactory in Years 10 to 11. Learning in all year groups is not as good as the teaching. This is because there is not always sufficient additional support for pupils in the relatively early stage of learning English as an additional language. In a minority of lessons, teachers' expectations are not always sufficiently high for pupils of all attainment levels and sometimes pupils only put a satisfactory level of effort into their work.

94. Leadership and management are good. Significant changes have taken place very recently, which indicates that necessary improvements can be made. The new Head of Department has a good understanding of the department's strengths and weaknesses, and is drawing up suitable plans to tackle underachievement and to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Whilst planning, monitoring and evaluation have been insufficiently rigorous to raise standards in the past, this is now changing. A new, and better, scheme of work has been introduced into Years 7 and 8, which closely follows the commercially-produced 'Eureka' science course. This course is to be extended to Year 9 next year. Marking is regular, but comments do not always give pupils a clear enough indication of what they have got wrong and what they need to do in order to improve. Reports to parents, although containing detail about pupils' attitudes, do not give sufficient detail about their scientific skills, knowledge and understanding, or how these can be improved.
95. The laboratory technicians provide good support. Equipment is generally adequate, but there are resource shortages for ICT and a lack of text books at each key stage, which restrict pupils' progress. Accommodation is now very good, as the laboratories have been refurbished, and with pupils' work on display it creates an attractive working environment.
96. Both the school and the department have responded well to the last report. Most of the improvements have taken place very recently and have yet to be reflected in terms of improved test and examination results. Pupils' skill of scientific investigation are showing signs of improvement. Use of ICT is improving. Staffing has stabilised and the quality of teaching has improved.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- Standards have been raised in some teaching.
- The introduction of sketchbooks is providing new opportunities to develop pupils' research abilities.
- There is now a generous allocation of curriculum time for the subject.

### Areas for improvement

- Raising standards in all year groups.
- Broadening the range of the curriculum to include three-dimensional work and the use of clay.
- Further raising standards in teaching.
- Displays around the school to celebrate pupils' achievements.

97. Overall standards by the end of Years 9 and 11, which were a key concern in the last inspection, remain unsatisfactory. Results in GCSE examinations are well below national averages and have declined progressively in the two years since the last inspection.
98. Standards in Year 9 are below average. Drawing skills are not developing sufficiently in Years 7-9 and the range of drawing is limited. Pupils are not developing an understanding of the properties of paint, constraining their effective use of tools and range of methods of application. Their acquisition of the visual vocabulary of art is slow. However, standards of work in some lessons observed, in which the new teaching programme was being introduced, show some improvement, as in a lesson concentrating on the observational drawing of still-life objects, for instance.

99. In Years 10 and 11, standards are also below average overall, although the recent improvement in some teaching is raising standards. By the end of Year 11, pupils have not acquired an adequate mastery of tools or understanding of the potential of media, nor have they developed the necessary visual vocabulary to produce original responses to stimuli. Research skills are underdeveloped. There is over-dependence on copying and limited ability in analysis of imagery, even in the case of gifted and talented pupils, who are making little progress. Work by the majority of current Year 11 pupils shows that there has been limited progress across Years 10 and 11 and standards remain low. A minority of students from all ethnic backgrounds are responding to good teaching and developing their own ideas well. Pupils with special educational needs make broadly satisfactory progress.
100. Attitudes are generally satisfactory and often good. In most cases pupils are motivated and responsive. Relationships and behaviour are generally good. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language are positively involved in lessons. Most pupils now have a positive attitude to homework. In a minority of lessons, however, attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory, particularly by some boys, who make little effort and disrupt others. In these lessons pupils were evidently bored by the task and unmotivated.
101. The quality of teaching is variable, although satisfactory overall. The best teaching is characterised by thorough preparation, lessons being introduced clearly and with confidence by the teacher, identifying key artistic terms and targeting pupils' literacy development. Questions are used effectively to ascertain the level of pupil understanding, and lesson content presented with interest. During these good lessons, pace is maintained by using an appropriate range of teaching styles, linked with efficient classroom management and firm discipline. Pupils with special educational needs and those with EAL are given appropriate support by the teacher. In a significant minority of lessons, where standards are unsatisfactory, lessons are introduced without adequate explanation of the task, questioning techniques are underused and lesson pace is slow. Some boys who were off task were not clearly targeted or effectively challenged by the teacher and, although lesson time was longer than national averages, activities were not evaluated before the end. Sketch books are provided, the hard backed ones given to older pupils being of good quality, and staff are providing clear guidance and encouragement in their use. Home work is now set consistently.
102. Although the curriculum is being revised, it remains centred on two dimensional work, limiting the range of learning opportunities for pupils. The breadth of experiences in two dimensions is satisfactory but while it is intended to offer a Year 8 card construction project, the lack of consistent three-dimensional experience in Years 7-9, and particularly the absence of any modelling activity with clay, is unsatisfactory. The contribution of the subject to pupils' cultural development has the potential to improve through the planned programme of visits to art galleries and places of cultural interest. A new development is the introduction of content reflecting black history and culture. A project on the carnival is also planned. Time for the subject is generous, and in Years 7-9 all pupils have regular opportunities to engage in art activities and take up for the subject is increasing in Years 10 and 11.
103. A recently appointed head of department has made an impressive start to her new responsibilities, providing good leadership. A prioritised plan for change, addressing key issues from the last inspection report, has been produced and, although it is too early in its implementation to show significant evidence of improving standards, is providing the framework for development. Regular departmental meetings now take place, staff relationships are good, and they share a common commitment to improvement and subject development. Monitoring evaluation and development of teaching in the subject have commenced. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are being developed from an unsatisfactory situation. The purchase of new equipment is providing new opportunities for the use of ICT to support critical studies research. A new scheme of work is being introduced, and when completed will provide a good framework for the progressive development of pupils' skills knowledge and understanding. Accommodation is satisfactory, with two large art rooms, although the kiln is inoperative and dangerously located. Work is well mounted in these rooms but there is at present little art work displayed throughout the rest of the school.

104. Provision for the subject has not shown sufficient improvement since the last inspection although there is now a clear focus to raise standards. The active pursuit of key development priorities, as identified in the departmental development plan, has the potential to enhance the progress that has recently been made.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Standards in Years 7-9.
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress, including those with special education needs.
- Teaching is consistently good.
- Leadership and management.

### Areas for improvement

- The access and opportunity for all pupils to study design and technology in Years 10 and 11.
- Extending the use of computers.

105. In 2001 GCSE examinations, results were well below the national average in both graphic products and resistant materials. The results at A\*-C show that there has been a significant improvement for resistant materials over the previous year. The pupils have made progress and achieved the results expected from their prior attainment. Pupils studying food technology took a NVQ basic skills certificate. The overall results are above the average achieved by all subjects in the school. There are no teacher assessments available at the end of Years 7-9 in 2001 to make comparisons with national standards and the progress made over previous years.
106. Inspection evidence shows that standards are average by the end of Year 9. Pupils are very enthusiastic and well motivated by the activities provided because learning is relevant and they are successful. They learn about a wide range of materials and they use a good range of small and large equipment competently and safely, for example, when making clocks in Year 8. They demonstrate very good graphical skills in Year 9 when they use techniques for producing three-dimensional scale models. They are extremely proud of new products they have developed in food lessons. Higher achieving pupils plan their work and evaluate it objectively against specific criteria. Lower achieving pupils carefully evaluate how well they have worked. Boys and girls achieve similar levels of attainment.
107. By the end of Year 11, standards are average, reflecting the overall improvement in teaching and the impact of the higher expectations in the school. Pupils systematically solve problems. They can question and have sufficient confidence to experiment and explore materials and processes when they develop their designs. The higher achieving pupils work well independently and are very well motivated to succeed. Their work is thoughtfully and professionally presented. Pupils have few opportunities to use information and communication technology, particularly to present their work but also when they are designing. Their design work shows progression in development and a satisfactory level of craftsmanship in execution. The higher achieving pupils critically analyse their work well. All pupils, regardless of prior attainment, ethnicity or gender, achieve well because teachers expect them to learn well. Standards are higher in the graphic design option. Those pupils taking food technology in Year 10 have the opportunity to take a vocational GCSE and this is effective in developing their practical skills and providing a work related experience which is beneficial.
108. Teaching in all aspects of the subject is good overall, with some being very good. The teachers' enthusiasm and knowledge engage and inspire pupils. Their skilful handling of materials and equipment enables pupils to be successful. All staff work hard to develop productive relationships with classes and these are always good. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. The teaching is well planned and leads to a coherent learning programme that is well supported with prepared lesson notes and work sheets which can then be retained to build up a good picture of individual progress. Students are rightly proud of what they achieve. The

lessons are well structured and teachers' questioning is good. Key learning points are systematically reinforced and the good range of activities ensures that all pupils are actively involved in their learning. New knowledge is introduced as it is needed so that pupils can immediately use it to develop their understanding. In the best lessons there is a collaborative approach to the learning that encourages pupils to become curious and ask questions. The planning and purpose of the lesson are sufficiently focused and the objectives are shared sufficiently with the pupils. There are good introductions to lessons which link with previous work and teachers use technical vocabulary to help pupils understand and extend their vocabulary. The differing needs of pupils are well met and their designing and making skills are sufficiently developed. Teachers work well with pupils with special educational needs and are aware of targets in individual education plans. These pupils good progress and the teachers provide extra support for learning. Teachers support literacy well and are careful to introduce new words and provide writing frames, thus supporting pupils with English as an additional language well. Teaching and learning are well supported by a good technician who provides support for the smooth running of the department. There is an emphasis on health and safety during lessons. Teachers use display well in classrooms and the open areas and this contributes considerably to pupil interest and the development of ideas.

109. The leadership and management are good. As a result, the improvement in standards since the last inspection has been good. The head of department has a clear view for development and the development plan is comprehensive and appropriate. The need for more support for pupils in Years 7 to 9 in the monitoring and assessment of attainment and progress is recognised. Statutory requirements are not met because at present not all pupils can study a technology option in Years 10-11. There is insufficient emphasis on the use of information and communication technology, particularly the coverage of control technology and the use of computer-aided design. The curriculum has been developed to make activities relevant to pupils. Schemes of work give appropriate detail of long term planning to show what knowledge, skills and understanding pupils of differing needs should achieve. The assessment system is satisfactory. The recording of assessment using specific criteria linked to the schemes of work to set targets is beginning to be used effectively to improve standards but is not used consistently to inform all lesson planning.

## GEOGRAPHY

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

### Strengths

- Good relationships between pupils and with staff.
- Good support for pupils with English as an additional language, when provided.
- Very positive attitudes of the pupils to their work with a desire to succeed.

### Areas for improvement

- Management and leadership.
- Standards across all year groups.
- Quality of teaching.
- Consistent support for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.
- Use of computers.
- Curriculum time.

110. Results in National Curriculum assessments at the age of 14 in 2001 were well below average. In GCSE examinations, the percentage of pupils achieving grades A\* to C was well below the national average. The average point score was also well below the national average and the relative performance indicator of the subject within the school was well below the average of other subjects. There has been a downward trend over the past four years. The standard of work seen for pupils by the ages of 14 and 16 is below average for pupils of similar age nationally, being slightly better than previous tests and exam results because of the overall improvement in the school's ethos.

111. Pupils in Year 7 develop their knowledge of mapwork and begin to understand the significance of symbols on ordnance survey maps. They use the information gained in drawing a plan of their classroom and use a scale to measure distances accurately. By the time they reach the age of 14, they have gained some knowledge of farming and the location of industry in Britain. In Year 9 they compare changes in population in less and more economically developed countries by examining statistics for Brazil against England and Wales. They understand some of the reasons for the differences observed. By the time pupils return to their geography lesson a week later they appear to have retained little of what had been taught previously. The case studies carried out by pupils in Years 10 and 11 at GCSE level, as for example on patterns of land use in Waltham Abbey, lack rigour and perceptive evaluation, except in a few cases. The presentation of findings does not reflect the aim for high standards. In general, retention of previous learning varies widely and pupils do not have good recognition of patterns in both physical and human aspects. Pupils at GCSE level show insufficient use of information and communication technology in their limited investigator work.
112. The pupils have a positive attitude and make good efforts to complete their work. They are well behaved even when the work fails to stimulate their interest. They show respect for their teachers and for the views and opinions of one another.
113. The quality of teaching is satisfactory; no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This reflects the fact that classroom management and relationships are generally good. Lessons are generally well planned with clear objectives which are shared with the pupils so that they are aware of what is required by the end of the lesson. However, teaching over time has some shortcomings. The pace of lessons is not brisk enough and the work set is not always structured to take sufficient account of pupils' level of prior attainment, language acquisition or to challenge the higher attainers. All pupils are generally expected to do the same work regardless of their prior knowledge and understanding and this hinders progress. Pupils sometimes complete homework tasks before the lesson ends. Overall, pupils do not make sufficient progress. The teachers give good support to pupils with special educational needs and make a point of ensuring that all pupils are included in discussions and answering questions. These pupils therefore make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress when support is provided by specialist teachers, but when they are not present, pupils' progress is impeded.
114. Management of the department is unsatisfactory. It is currently undertaken by a member of the senior management team in the absence of a head of department. The school has had considerable difficulty in recruiting a suitable candidate, having made an appointment which was not taken up. Staffing is inadequate, the subject being taught by one established member of staff and one other on a short term temporary contract. This affects the stability and contributes to the low profile of the subject and the low standards attained. In order to address issues raised in the last inspection the school sought consultancy advice and acted on some recommendations. The schemes of work are in the process of being modified to take account of the decision to change examination boards for GCSE candidates. Field work is offered to each year group and is now more closely related to the topics being studied, but no residential work is offered because some groups of pupils cannot attend for periods away from home. Assessment procedures are in place and implemented, with tests at the end of each unit of study. The results have yet to be used effectively to guide planning.
115. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. The range of learning opportunities and use of computers is underdeveloped. Significant changes include the provision of two classrooms for geography and the sharing of one room with history for teaching the subject. Resources have been improved through the acquisition of new textbooks. A new syllabus more in line with the needs of the pupils and staff expertise has been introduced. However, standards have not risen, partly reflecting the lack of consistent support for pupils with special educational needs and for the wide range of language needs of pupils with English as an additional language.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- The teaching is very good.
- Pupils' progress and most achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards by the end of Year 9 and 11.
- Leadership and management.
- Opportunities for information and communication technology.

116. When pupils enter the school in Year 7 their standards are below average. In the end of Year 9 teacher assessments, results for 2001 show that attainment is below average. The 2001 GCSE results indicate some improvement in the A\*-C grades but the results overall continue to be among the lowest recorded across the school, although the number of candidates was small. Since September, there has been a rigorous focus on learning and, in relation to prior attainment, pupils are now achieving better. Pupils for whom English is an additional language or have been identified as having special educational need achieve well.
117. Standards are average across Years 7 to 11, which is a sound improvement on previous years. In lessons pupils are very keen to offer responses to questions and they are orally very confident. Their understanding of some of the key historical concepts, such as cause and effect and empathy, is developing. All pupils are now expected to use a wide range of source material to gain a greater understanding of the topic being studied. In a Year 7 class, pupils were analysing four different types of source material to make judgements about the diet followed by wealthier Romans. Pupils in all years are now encouraged to produce extended pieces of written work, benefiting from the effective guidance provided by the teachers. The last inspection report commented on the low expectations of teachers for written work because of an over-emphasis on copying, and the limited range of teaching and learning opportunities. This is no longer the case. In all lessons observed pupils were actively engaged in a variety of tasks, which enabled them to make good progress and enjoy learning about historical events. In a Year 8 class, pupils exploring reasons why the Spanish Armada failed were involved in an intensive whole-class question and answer session led by the teacher; reading aloud to the class and worked in groups on an exercise where they were expected to analyse a set of ten statements to decide which were true and which were false and finally recording their findings in their exercise books. In a Year 11 lesson on examination techniques, in answering a question on the First World War, pupils showed that they could effectively handle a range of primary and secondary source materials to good effect. They shared ideas well and used relevant information in shaping their reasoned answers. Pupils from all ethnic heritage achieved equally well.
118. Teaching throughout the department is very good. The last inspection report referred to the lack of pace and rigour in lessons. This is no longer an issue due to the thorough planning undertaken by all teachers. Pupils are now set a wide range of different tasks to both maintain their interest and extend their knowledge. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to work independently, in pairs and in small groups. Pupils for whom English is an additional language or who have a special learning need make very good progress in lessons due to the wide range of teaching strategies and resources used by subject teachers. High standards of work and behaviour are now demanded and received by all teachers, and this is leading to pupils' often very good progress.
119. The management and leadership of the department are currently under review. The head of department is currently on secondment and a member of the senior management team is acting as the co-ordinator. Improvement since the last inspection has been broadly satisfactory but the impetus has increased this academic year. Since September, a range of initiatives is having a very positive impact on standards and beginning to address some issues outstanding

from the last report. Resources are now centralised, making access to them much easier. A department development plan provides structure for improvement, and greater emphasis is being placed on the importance of coursework in Years 10 and 11. All teachers are encouraged to use a wide range of teaching styles to meet the needs of all pupils within lessons. The upward trend in pupil learning can be attributed to the skills and expertise of the co-ordinator and the shared commitment to raising standards which now exists. High levels of expectation and consistency are in evidence within lessons with regard to lesson planning and teaching, although the use of assessment requires further development. Statutory requirements are met, but there are limited opportunities for pupils to make use of information and communication technology in lessons.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Standards in Years 7-9 are above average.
- Teaching is consistently good.
- The needs of differing pupils are well met.

### Areas for improvement

- The coordination and management of information and communication technology across the curriculum.
- Use of assessment to inform planning.

120. Teacher assessments at the end of Years 7-9 show that the attainment of pupils is above average. The results are a significant improvement on the previous years. The standards achieved reflect the level of work seen in the current Year 10 and Year 11, which is in line with what might be expected. There were no examinations at age 16 in information and communication technology for the year 2001.
121. There are timetabled lessons in Years 7, 8 and 9. Inspection evidence shows that attainment by the end of Year 9 in these specific information and communication technology lessons is above average. Pupils demonstrate skills in word processing, helping to improve their spelling and presentation of work. In English lessons they are familiar with processing text and images and in mathematics, presenting information and handling data. They can also access the Internet and use this to carry out research and download images. The scheme of work provides a sound basis for applying skills in other subjects, but opportunities are not always taken. There are opportunities to use control systems but the use of computer-aided design is limited.
122. In Year 11, pupils' attainment is in line with the expected standard for 16 year olds. In ICT lessons, higher attaining pupils are confident enough to work independently, using a range of software, including desk top publishing, data handling and spreadsheets to simulate business practice. Pupils working at a lower level need constant support to develop the necessary skills and understanding. This is very well provided by class teachers. Very few specialist assistants are provided for pupils who need learning support. Good use is made of computers to promote individual learning. By the end of Year 11, the majority of pupils now attain basic competence in various computer applications in other subjects. In GCSE lessons they use a variety of software packages fluently and independently and pupils achieve well in the opportunities available. Computers are used in English, mathematics, science, art and design and technology lessons and, very recently, in modern foreign languages. These subjects extend pupils' skills in the use of computers and pupils use them to develop their coursework assignments. They have opportunities to apply their skills to solve more complex problems, particularly in handling information and data. The higher attaining pupils understand and use applications to organise, refine and present information for different purposes and produce results of good quality. They are able to discuss their work with confidence, solve problems and come to reasonable conclusions when given a task to complete.



123. Pupils make good progress in their knowledge and application of a range of skills. There are opportunities for pupils to use computers and practice these skills in other subjects, which helps their progress. In all year groups, the majority of pupils make good progress through opportunities which develop aspects of publishing, use of spreadsheets and word processing. Their progress in other strands specified in the National Curriculum programmes of study is satisfactory, but insufficient attention is paid to the aspects of control systems and computer aided drawing.
124. Pupils have satisfactory attitudes to the subject and behave well in lessons. They treat equipment with care and the majority work hard to master new skills. All lessons include much independent work, which pupils enjoy as their confidence grows. Pupils turn up promptly for lessons and are prepared to use their own time to complete work. They are co-operative and responsive and generally listen carefully to teachers' instructions and guidance. They enjoy discussions about their work, set themselves suitable targets to achieve and try to meet them.
125. In specialist lessons the quality of teaching is good. There are also examples of competent teaching in other subjects, which contributes to pupils' acquisition of subject knowledge and skills. These lessons are planned to a high standard and have suitable challenge. The management of classes is good. Clear targets are set for pupils of similar levels of attainment. This careful matching of work motivates pupils and maintains their interest. This aspect has improved since the last inspection. Relationships are very good and the skilled support given to pupils in their work quickly builds their confidence. There is a formal programme of monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching, including observation of lessons. However, there is sufficient support given to teachers in other subjects. Opportunities for the consistent application and development of information and communication technology are sufficiently planned across the curriculum to achieve coherence and progression, but the coordination and management are underdeveloped.
126. Leadership and management provide a clear vision and direction for strategies to promote improvements. There has been good progress in the areas identified for development in the last inspection. A development plan has been produced identifying key areas for improvement. Training has been provided for staff so that they can use applications and access the network. There is a shared commitment to improvement and the capacity to succeed. The specific aims and values, including educational inclusion, are reflected in the department's work. There is an increased challenge in work set for pupils and their achievements across the curriculum are assessed but the information is not always well used to inform planning. There are opportunities for pupils to use computers during the lunchtime and at other times when pupils can develop their computer skills and have access to the Internet. Although National Curriculum requirements are not fully met by the end of Year 9 and Year 11, the school is taking steps to improve this further. The level of resources and equipment available in the school is satisfactory. Because of the limited technical support, too much time is taken up with the day to day management of hardware and maintenance of equipment, leading to insufficient time to monitor the use of computers across the curriculum.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching.
- The permanent staff, all fluent native French speakers.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching within the department.

### Areas for improvement

- More frequent and regular opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology.

## French

127. At the end of Year 9, 2001 teacher assessments showed a high proportion of pupils attaining standards at or above expectations, with girls again performing better than boys. Results in GCSE in 2000 at A\*-C were below national averages, but represented an improvement over the previous year. In 2001 there was a significant rise in standards, with half the entry gaining A\*-C grades, and all candidates gaining A\*-G grades. Results are still below average in comparison with all schools but in line with similar schools. In both years girls performed better than boys. French has maintained its higher level of performance in comparison to other subjects in the school.
128. The work seen in the inspection reflects the improving standards. Higher attaining pupils in Years 7 and 8 are showing fluency in all four skills and reaching above average standards. Others are at least in line with the average. Overall there is good accuracy in writing, and those pupils with special educational needs are making good progress in the mixed-ability groups, owing to careful encouragement and inclusion on the part of their teachers. In Year 9 higher attaining pupils manipulate grammatical patterns with confidence, but with less opportunity for extended writing. Middle and lower attaining pupils are particularly strong in listening, but their performance in writing is less consistent. Indeed, in major assessments it is the weakest skill. The achievement in speaking at Years 7-9 is good overall: pupils are hearing the language consistently and using it confidently.
129. Standards for higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 are above average, and they are working competently at higher level GCSE tasks. Writing is good in both years, but the Year 10 pupils are still experiencing some problems manipulating the past tense. Accuracy amongst other pupils is good, but they achieve less well overall, as the quality and range of their language are more restricted. This affects the content and volume of their finished product. Speaking continues to be strong in Years 10-11. Overall, the improvement in standards compared to previous results reflects the improved quality of teaching. Pupils from Afro-Caribbean, Asian and European heritage achieve equally well.
130. Pupils' attitudes are positive in the majority of lessons. Apart from occasional restlessness at the beginning of the lesson, they maintain interest and concentration, are generally well behaved and listen attentively to the contributions of others. When called upon, they work well together in pairs. As many pupils have English as an additional language, they have a strong awareness of the importance of languages. They start a new language on a par with their peers and have equal opportunity to achieve success.
131. Teaching is good overall and there were no unsatisfactory lessons. All teachers, including a non-specialist supply teacher covering for prolonged absence, have native fluency in French. The constant use of the foreign language means that pupils become quickly accustomed to hearing it and accept it as the normal means of communication in the classroom. Teachers maintain a sensible balance, however, allowing English to be used to check understanding or to reinforce instructions. Good teaching was characterised by varied activities recalling prior knowledge. These were carefully planned to extend that knowledge, to increase level of attainment, to become more challenging and to cover as many skills as possible. For instance, in a Year 8 middle to lower attaining group, pupils were revising numbers and the names of household objects, to bring them together in choosing items from a catalogue. The tasks concentrated on recognising the object and asking how much it cost and took the numbers beyond one hundred, challenging pupils to work out the new higher numbers from established knowledge and patterns. Effective use of overhead projection and magnetic whiteboard focused pupils' attention well and supported a brisk pace and strict timing of activities. In a Year 10 group of mainly higher attainers, the use of flashcards and sentence components fixed to the whiteboard helped to practise and reinforce new vocabulary on the topic of household chores. Pupils were invited individually to choose the correct components of the sentence and put them next to the image. This introduced the added stimulus of recognising and correcting each other's mistakes.
132. Teachers show an astute awareness of the needs of their pupils and are not afraid to modify their planning within the lesson in order to ensure that the sequence of tasks has the maximum

impact on pupils' learning. Similarly, some materials are effectively modified to aid pupils with special educational needs, as well as to provide extension for the higher attainers and the gifted and talented. At all times teachers take care to ensure that all pupils are involved in class dialogue. Homework is appropriate and designed to extend and consolidate work done in class.

133. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. In the very detailed scheme of work opportunities for enhancement through information and communication technology are clearly identified, and software resources exist to support them. However, access to central computer facilities is restricted to certain times and groups, and the department does not have its own hardware resources. Every opportunity is taken to offer ICT experience to pupils, but provision remains unequal. Extra-curricular provision is good: a weekly club provides help and opportunities to extend reading. Each year there are trips to Boulogne for Year 7, and a longer stay in families in Normandy or Champagne for Years 9 and 10.
134. The head of department has received training in the use of attainment statistics and other tracking and predicting systems, to improve individual target setting. The department holds accurate records of pupil progress and attainment, and is developing their use in establishing pupil targets. The assessment of work in French follows departmental policy, and marking is frequent, consistent and thorough. Pupils track their own progress on sheets provided with the established course books, but new courses adopted in Years 7 and 10 need to be brought into the system. Pupils are made aware of their National Curriculum levels at each major assessment at the end-of-module tests.
135. The department is well led, managed and organised. There is a strong team spirit and clear educational direction. French has maintained high standards in the school over the past six years, with significant improvement in 2001. A very effective and detailed system of monitoring and evaluating teaching is in place, with members observing each other and sharing good practice.
136. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Improvement in standards has been brought about by elimination of unsatisfactory teaching, policies supporting good practice, strategies with specific focus and a system of rewards. Teaching rooms are now grouped together and the learning environment is enhanced with effective displays of pupils' work, classroom vocabulary and basic words and phrases. A very detailed scheme of work has been written, which is under review in the light of new, more relevant courses adopted for all year groups. The department has introduced "Reading for Pleasure", a system of readers for all year groups, which provide extended reading, backed up by home-produced questionnaires at different levels. In a Year 9 lesson pupils completed a challenging gap-filling exercise on the subject of holidays, before reading an illustrated story and completing a questionnaire. All activities required recognition of a wide variety of past tenses and new vocabulary items.

## **Other languages**

As part of its inclusion policy, the school offers support to pupils who wish to gain qualifications in their mother tongue. This happens through Saturday clubs or sessions after school, where they can practise from past papers and through entry to public examinations. In 2001 small groups of pupils from Years 10 to 13 entered for Arabic, Gujarati, Persian/Farsi, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Urdu and Bengali. Numbers were too small for reliable comparisons to be made, but, apart from absentees, only 2 candidates failed to receive a grade.

## MUSIC

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

### Strengths

- Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well supported by the teacher.
- Relationships are a key feature of the department.
- Good support for literacy and a positive contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Good extra-curricular activities.

### Areas for improvement

- Formalising assessment procedures and introducing individual targets.
- A more diagnostic approach to marking.
- Listening opportunities.
- Use of information and communication technology.

137. Although standards by the age of 14 for the majority of pupils are below average, pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils enter the school with a varied previous musical background. There is an emphasis on practical work and pupils can use graphic and standard musical notation to compose and perform. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on Chinese music, pupils could follow graphic scores and talk about how the various sounds were represented through the written symbols. Pupils find playing the keyboard both enjoyable and challenging. For example, in a Year 9 lesson pupils worked well on composing a melody for a Negro spiritual, fitting the words to their own melody and learning to play and sing the composition in time. However, performing standards of many pupils on the keyboards are still underdeveloped, leading them to play melodies and their composition with just one finger. Pupils enjoy singing and sing expressively, in tune and from memory. The standard of singing is good. Pupils develop good rhythmic skills from Year 7 and can maintain a steady beat in their music making. Throughout Years 7-9, pupils can identify and use correct musical language to describe their compositions and performances. The use of information and communication technology to develop pupils' skills is underdeveloped and National Curriculum requirements are not met. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make satisfactory progress and are well supported by the teacher. They are given sufficient opportunities to develop performing and composing skills using keyboards, percussion and other instruments, although there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to notate their compositions and develop them from one lesson to the next.
138. It is difficult to report on standards at the end of Years 10-11 as pupils have not chosen the subject for a number of years. However, there is a small GCSE class in Year 10. In composition work pupils work in an independent manner and can talk knowledgeably about the work they undertake in lessons. For example, when pupils are composing a ground bass, they can place a melody over their bass line. Some of these melodies show shape and structure, although there is an over-reliance on triadic structure and not enough development of original ideas. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well supported by the teacher within the lesson and make satisfactory progress. Pupils listen carefully to music and recognise simple musical features such as different instruments.
139. The quality of teaching is good overall, and where the pace of the lesson was brisk, targets set and pupils suitably challenged, the teaching was very good. The teacher has excellent subject knowledge across a wide range of musical styles. This ensures that the curriculum meets the needs and interests of the pupils. The teacher is successful in presenting new concepts in music to the pupils in a variety of ways, for example, through class discussions, playing musical examples on the piano, individual conversations with pupils and plenary sessions. Lessons are well planned and, with the exception of information and communication technology, they are suitably resourced. This ensures that pupils make a quick start to practical sessions and that time is used effectively. The pupils are very well cared for in the music lessons and classroom management is very good with the teacher always insisting on high standards of behaviour in

the lessons. Challenging behaviour is quickly and effectively dealt with and a positive learning environment is quickly established. This enables the teacher to spend time with small groups of pupils, helping them to progress further in their work. Pupils are carefully placed into groups for ensemble work which encourages good learning. There is good provision for developing pupils' literary skills through the use of key words but marking of pupils' written work is not always systematically done and comments on how to improve are lacking.

140. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The peripatetic teachers are well supported by the head of department and play an important part in the life of the department. Work undertaken in instrumental lessons fully supports the curriculum work in the classroom and nearly 50 pupils receive instrumental lessons. The department runs various ensemble groups and presents regular concerts which give pupils of all ethnic heritages the opportunity to perform the pieces they have worked on in lessons. Schemes of work for Years 7-9 contain opportunities for progression in performing and composing skills. Schemes of work for Years 10-11 are satisfactory but do not focus sufficiently on monitoring and assessment procedures. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Resources are adequate but there are no computers in the department.
141. With the exception of information and communication technology, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. All pupils in Years 7-9 now receive the correct allocation of curriculum time and although the composing and performing skills seen in Year 9 are below average, there is good evidence to show that the increased curriculum time is having a positive effect on these skills in Years 7 and 8. Pupils in all year groups now have opportunities to reflect and evaluate their practical work through the use of class discussion, self evaluation sheets and verbal teacher assessments. The use of informal target setting ensures that pupils make good progress within lessons but formal targets and assessment are underdeveloped.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall the provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Teaching, overall, is good.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good.
- Management is a developing strength.

### Areas for Improvement

- Grouping arrangements to broaden the range of experiences.
- Use of specialist accommodation both on and off site.
- Assessment arrangements to ensure closer tracking of pupil progress.

142. In the year 2000, GCSE results were good, being above the national average and amongst the most successful across the whole school subject range. These levels were reached by a special pilot group as the school's first GCSE entry in the subject. From a more typical population in the year 2001, results were much lower and below average. Boys were more successful than girls, achieving at a similar level to the school's overall average, but well below national average for A\*-C grades.
143. Attainment on entry is variable, reflecting the pupils' prior experience. Overall, it is below average. By the age of 14, achievement is good and standards have been raised to much nearer the national average, especially in terms of overall physical fitness and some games playing. This good progress over time is a result of good teaching and a positive approach from almost all pupils. Within the age range 11-14, achievement in lessons and over time is good. In a gymnastics lesson, for example, most girls and boys can produce well controlled sequences of movement including a variety of well-sustained balances. Many know and understand well how to vary the speed, level or shape of their movements.
144. By the age of 16, pupils' overall personal physical fitness is at least average. On evidence drawn mainly from Year 10, handling skills in basketball are well developed and the approach

to the activity is keen and enthusiastic, equally so from boys and girls. Work seen in the folders of GCSE pupils is generally below average at this early stage of the course. There is evidence of higher standards in some individual folders where the work is well presented, accurate and detailed.

145. The quality of teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory, and more often it is good or very good. Most teachers know the activities of their subject very well and this enables them to devise and plan tasks that are clearly designed to challenge for improvement. Consequently pupils know what is expected of them as teachers set out clearly the objectives for their learning. Pupils work eagerly having been given good clear explanations or demonstrations of what to do in order to improve. For example in a gymnastics lesson improvement came in most sequences as a result of pupils watching both the teacher and other pupils demonstrate variety in balances. By using demonstration teachers give clear attention to the need to include all pupils, especially those with English as an additional language or special educational needs. Language difficulties are clearly overcome by such demonstrations and this feature complements attention given to literacy by teachers in using key words like 'levels' and ensuring that pupils know their meaning and can use them confidently. Most teachers know the pupils well and enjoy strong and positive relations with them. The relationships amongst pupils are equally good and support the work in the department. Teachers emphasise clearly the important links between practical and theoretical aspects of the subject in examination classes, supporting equally those whose strengths lie in one or other of these aspects. Where teaching is less strong tasks are often too prescriptive and demand unrealistic targets for learners, especially in all-ability and mixed gender groups.
146. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met, although one long session of physical activity each week limits the effectiveness of continuity and progression. The range of activities available is narrowed and this is not helped by the lack of access to outdoor teaching areas. Too much time is lost in travelling to off-site venues for games. This practice is expensive and the risks of serious accidents are increased regardless of the procedures that are in place to deal with emergencies. Nevertheless, there is a good range of extra-curricular activities and fixtures with other schools in a wide range of sports. Pupils from Afro-Caribbean, Asian and other ethnic heritages participate well and enjoy the opportunities to represent their school. Pupils have achieved representative honours for the local area.
147. The work of the department is well organised and based on comprehensively written plans and policies. The new head of department has clear views on how the department should develop in the future and has already successfully tackled key development tasks in a committed and capable manner. Assessment arrangements are much improved since the last inspection, although tracking all pupils' progress more closely across all five years is an aspect for further development. This will provide information with which all the work in physical education can be judged. It will, together with the good standard of teaching, add to the capacity of the department to raise standards of attainment. A new kit policy has been successfully implemented into Year 7 and the quality of on-site specialist changing and teaching areas has been significantly upgraded.

## Drama

Overall provision for Drama in the school is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is very good.
- The majority of pupils respond enthusiastically .
- Use of the school's literacy policy.

### Areas for improvement

- The consistent application of the homework policy in Years 7 to 9.
- The use of ICT.

148. Drama was introduced as a separate subject in September 2001 following a comment on the matter in the previous inspection. It is taught to all pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 and is an option in Years 10 and 11. No pupils were entered for GCSE Drama in 2000 or 2001.
149. Standards by the age of 14 are average and most pupils achieve well. In the best lessons, pupils in Years 7 to 9 act in group and individual work and identify key words effectively, for example, 'concentration', 'co-operation', 'listening' and 'respect'. They can use mime, improvisation, freeze-framing and 'thought tracking' techniques, and they can talk about their own and each other's work. They generally understand the concept in a lesson on alternative endings to stories, although a minority of pupils do not focus on the task. Attainment by the age of 16 is above average and most pupils achieve well. Pupils respond well in discussions and use speaking and listening techniques effectively to recognise dramatic terms such as mime, narration, symbolism and monologue and to understand the emotive effects of words. They understand why the use of still images and 'hot seating' techniques are important as evaluative strategies. They can extract words which reflect emotional pain in a lesson on a poem entitled 'The Wound'. There is no evidence of significant difference in the standards attained by pupils of either gender or of different ethnic backgrounds.
150. The majority of pupils in all years respond well. In Years 7 to 9 pupils, including those with special educational needs, work co-operatively in groups and take part enthusiastically in lessons, for example, when questioning the role of an outsider in a community in a lesson on 'Ishi'. A minority of pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not take part fully in tasks. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are very enthusiastic and contribute positively, for example, in a discussion on the use of explorative strategies for GCSE examination.
151. Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and is very good in Years 10 and 11. Learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and is very good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of their subject. They plan their lessons effectively, have appropriate expectations of their pupils and use a good variety of teaching methods, including 'Teacher in Role' strategies, effectively. They manage pupils in a satisfactory way and make satisfactory use of time and resources. Teachers use ongoing assessment effectively to set targets for pupils and to demonstrate ways in which work can be improved. Homework is used well to reinforce learning in Years 10 and 11 but there is inconsistency in its use in Years 7 to 9. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 gain the skills to take part in individual and group work and pupils in Years 10 and 11 gain an understanding of the GCSE specification. The pace of work in lessons is generally good but, where teaching is less successful, it is because the pace of work in a limited number of lessons in Years 7 to 9 is less satisfactory.
152. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory in all year groups. The school's literacy policy is applied effectively by focusing on appropriate dramatic terminology in lessons, reinforcing learning by explaining terms such as still images and 'hot seating'. Pupils are offered a number of opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities, for example, visits by the Soho Theatre Company for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and the Hampstead Theatre Company in Years 10 and 11. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have the opportunity to demonstrate GCSE Drama performance work to parents. There are effective links with the English department where there is co-operation in the study of Shakespeare texts for English in Years 7 to 9. There are a number of opportunities for pupils to consider spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues in lessons, for example, in a Year 7 assembly where pupils stage a performance of a play, 'A Drunk Man on My Doorstep', developed in Year 7 Drama lessons, which has a spiritual and moral theme, or in a lesson on 'Dracula' where pupils consider cultural issues in relation to other societies. The monitoring of performance is satisfactory and the department has satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Assessment information is used to guide curricular planning. Pupils with English as an additional language receive assistance from a bilingual assistant provide by the Local Education Authority.
153. Leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory. The teacher responsible is recently appointed and is receiving regular and effective assistance from an Advanced Skills Teacher from another school. Accommodation is satisfactory. Almost all lessons take place in the hall but its effectiveness is limited by the use of the stage as a storage space. Learning

resources are satisfactory as the department has a reasonable collection of drama texts, props and costumes. Limited use is made of IT in the subject at present.

## BUSINESS

Overall provision in business is **sound**.

### Strengths

- Students achieve well in relation to their results in earlier tests.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and experience in industry or commerce.
- Skills in the use of information and communication technology.
- The number of students opting for the GCSE course is increasing.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards of achievement.
- The access to computers and the overall quality of accommodation and resources.
- The provision for the wide range of differing needs of students and their proficiency in English.

154. In GCSE examinations in the last three years results have been below the national average and in 2001 they were well below at A\*-C and A\*-G grades. The number of students taking the examination has sometimes been too small for a statistically valid sample. In 2001 all pupils gained A\*- G grades, which is better than the national picture.
155. The standard of work of students currently in Year 11 is below average but pupils' achievement is at least sound in relation to their attainment at the start of the course. Many pupils have English as an additional language, which inhibits their progress although most are acquiring a good understanding of basic business related vocabulary. They understand and use terms such as "sole trader" and know the difference between the public and private sectors. However many pupils have difficulty in remembering detail and in organising their knowledge into appropriate answers to GCSE questions. The highest attaining pupils show a clear understanding of the difference between visible and invisible imports and exports but others find great difficulty in differentiating between goods and services. Pupils can use information and communication technology to support their learning. Pupils in Year 10 are making good progress in some aspects of the course as a direct result of the good use of computers and other resources. They can produce graphs and spread sheets to help them to understand the finances of a company by looking at profit and loss and the concept of the "break even" point in a company's financial position.
156. Pupils work hard in lessons and behaviour is usually sound or better. The subject is gaining in popularity and far more pupils are choosing to take the subject at GCSE. They enjoy the activities and visits organised by the department. However, the area used for most lessons is unattractive and does not compare well with the facilities usually found in business studies departments elsewhere. This does have a detrimental effect both on learning and on pupils' response to the subject.
157. Teaching and learning are sound overall. All teachers have a thorough knowledge of the subject. In the most successful lessons, the structure and the range of activities clearly focus on pupils' differing learning needs and the pace of activity promotes a good level of learning. There is a good use of ongoing assessment through questioning and a good balance between consolidating existing skills and knowledge and the introduction of new information. The pupils can recall knowledge gained from previous lessons and this raises their confidence and enables them to learn well. In a lesson based in the computer room a balance between instruction and time to practise skills resulted in a sound level of learning for all. However where teaching is less than satisfactory the pace of lessons is too slow and only a limited range of strategies is used. Pupils copy notes and they do not take any responsibility for their own learning because they are not given the opportunity to think for themselves.
158. The management of the subject is sound and ensures that the two new members of staff, one of whom is a newly qualified teacher, have settled in well. Pupils' progress is monitored but the



assessment procedures, although satisfactory, are in need of review. Departmental documentation, resources and accommodation all require further development. The school has plans to provide a new suite of business studies rooms to improve the learning environment. Improvement since the last inspection is sound in that new courses are being developed and more students are choosing to take the subject. However, standards are low and there is no clear trend towards improvement.

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

In the inspection, five subjects 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
Other social studies	1	100	74	-	11	1.00	1.47

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

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	6	100	96	33	46	6.00	6.57
Biology	5	40	88	-	34	0.80	5.25
Business Studies	5	20	92	-	32	1.20	5.50
Chemistry	6	83	90	-	43	3.00	5.90
Computer Studies	4	50	86	-	23	1.00	4.62
English literature	8	38	95	-	37	1.50	5.91
French	3	67	89	33	38	4.00	5.59
History	2	100	88	-	35	2.00	5.45
Mathematics	6	50	87	-	43	1.33	5.80
Other languages	1	100	93	-	56	2.00	6.84
Physics	4	100	88	-	40	4.50	5.67
Religious studies	4	75	92	-	38	2.00	5.84
Sociology	1	-	86	-	35	-	5.32

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

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business studies	7	71	n/a	66.5	n/a	0	N/a

In the Sixth Form most pupils are intellectually able in group discussions and in practical work they show considerable dedication and determination to improve their personal skills. Work in folders does not match these standards. Overall it is variable in quality and indicates the need for some pupils to improve their learning habits by completing work and ensuring it is handed in on time.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

### MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The inspection concentrated on mathematics and biology.

#### MATHEMATICS

The overall provision in mathematics is **good**.

##### Strengths

- A-level results in the last three years are broadly in line with national averages as all students earned a grade.
- The department is managed well.

##### Areas for improvement

- More opportunities to make extended oral contributions in class discussions in A-level statistics.
- Some GCSE students with English as an additional language need more help in learning.

159. The inspection covered modules in pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics. In addition the GCSE course in Year 12 was inspected.
160. The department does well for its students. Over recent years the number of students at A-level has been too small for national comparisons to be valid. The notable feature has been the 100 per cent pass rate and some of the higher A/B grades. This represents good achievement given the below average standards of students when they started their course. Students from ethnic minorities, including black and Afro-Caribbean, Asian and of white European heritage, achieve well, as do those students who have English as an additional language.
161. The standard of work seen in Year 13 reflects that of previous years, and standards are average. A/S-level results in 2001 were average in pure mathematics and below average in statistics. Simple impulse and friction problems are solved accurately in mechanics. Diagrams in statistics do not always include all the forces acting and the resolution of forces needs further consolidation. In Year 12 the number of students has increased significantly. Their standards seen in the inspection match that of other students at an early stage of their course even though their standard on entry to the course was below average. This good achievement is due to the good quality of the teaching seen in the inspection. Students can factorise cubic expressions and make effective use of series work in algebra. Students taking or re-sitting their GCSE mathematics course do their best to improve. Errors in understanding basic work limit their overall success. Students who are at an early stage in learning English are making good progress from a very low level of prior attainment. Their lack of English reduces the rate at which they learn. They work hard and show very good attitudes in lessons.
162. The standard of teaching and learning is good overall. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. At times the teaching is excellent, stimulating discussion, interest and learning. In a lesson on arithmetical series it was the very good subject expertise and the enthusiasm in the teaching that brought this about, leading to students' subsequent enjoyment in the solution of problems. At other times this whole class discussion is less vibrant and teaching methods lack the short, sharp mental questions to clarify learning and emphasis in significant problem solving techniques, in statistics, for example. The marking of students' tests is good, with sufficient detail to help students improve. The teaching of GCSE to those at an early stage in their learning in English is excellent as a result of the direct methods used. Appropriate emphasis is given to students' own language in the introduction of mathematical words in English. This was used to good effect in deriving a method for finding the sum of the angles in a polygon in the lesson seen, but students will need much more help with their English if they are to earn a grade in the range A\*-G at GCSE. Satisfactory use is made of computers.
163. The department is managed well and teachers work well together. The department monitors A-level students' progress well, as numbers are small. Standards have been maintained despite

staffing difficulties recently. Since the last inspection student attitudes have improved, achievement has improved and student numbers in Year 12 have improved, making improvement satisfactory overall.

## SCIENCE

The focus was on biology, but physics and chemistry were also sampled. In physics, A level examination results in the summer of 2000 and 2001 were better than those in the other two science disciplines. They were below the national average but, as with the other two sciences, there were too few candidates to make comparisons statistically valid. Inspection evidence indicates that students are working at levels appropriate to their prior attainment. Teaching is well organised and students respond to the reassuring way in which the teacher presents work which is sometimes difficult, especially for those whose mathematical ability is limited and for those who are at a relatively early stage of learning English as a second language. In the Year 13 lesson observed, students consolidated the work they had done on the structure of the atom. They could discuss how protons and neutrons were kept in the nucleus, with reference to the work of Rutherford. By the end of the lesson, they had a clear understanding of what an isotope was, and could explain, for example, how the isotopes of hydrogen were similar, and how they were different.

In chemistry, results were better than those in biology. Inspection evidence shows that students in the current Year 12, although only a short way into their course, are doing better than expected in relation to their GCSE results. Teaching is good overall, and students make good progress in knowledge and understanding as a result of the teachers' enthusiasm to share knowledge. In the Year 12 lesson observed, students could explain the difference between an empirical and molecular formula. Most were successful in calculating molecular formulae on the basis of data given. A small number found the work difficult, mainly because of the mathematics content, but were determined to succeed.

The take-up and retention rates in Year 13 are currently low in chemistry and physics, though there are much larger numbers in the Year 12 AS classes. Most of the students in Year 12 are keen to go on to sit A level examinations and then to proceed to further education.

## Biology

The quality of provision in biology is **good**.

### Strengths

- The good quality of teaching.
- Students' positive attitudes to the subject.
- Good use of assessment.

### Areas for improvement

- Use of ICT to support teaching and learning.
- Additional monitoring and marking of students' files.

164. In 2000 and 2001, only small numbers of students were entered for the A level examinations, which makes national comparisons inappropriate. However, results were well below national expectations with no higher A and B grades being obtained. AS results in 2001 were also well below expectations. There are currently no students studying biology in Year 13. In Year 12, there are 18 students following the AS course and their achievement rate, to date, is good in relation to their attainment at GCSE examinations.

165. The standard of work from current students is about average, and is much better than that indicated by students' results in the AS level examinations in 2001. They are only a little way into their course, but their knowledge and understanding of cell structure and cell division by mitosis and meiosis are good overall. In a lesson, students consolidated their knowledge of nuclear division and the cell cycle. The teacher introduced the idea of uncontrolled cell division and a discussion took place, which led students to a clear understanding of how different types

of cancer tissue are formed and of the various groups of carcinogens that might be responsible for their development.

166. Teaching is good, and students learn well as a result. This includes students from all ethnic backgrounds. It is characterised by careful planning; effective use of clear learning objectives to set clear targets for students' attainment; well-chosen introductory material and effective direct teaching. Systematic and helpful intervention by the teachers promotes pace and sustains the students' progress. The teachers' subject knowledge is very good and is well applied in raising the attainment of the students.
167. Students learn well. Most are highly motivated, keen to do well and, when questioned, express positive views about the subject. They are punctual and well prepared to start lessons on time. Relationships are good and students listen intently to each other's views and to those of the teacher. Most show a willingness to engage in independent study and work well when taking part in collaborative activities.
168. Leadership and management, by the new teacher responsible for biology within the overall science department, are now good. There is a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the subject area. Significant changes have recently taken place which enhance the potential for the necessary improvements. There is a strong commitment for success and improvement. Procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress through tests are good. However, monitoring and marking of their files are not as thorough as they could be and there is insufficient written guidance as to how students can improve their work. Insufficient use is made of ICT, including data logging, to support teaching and learning.

## **BUSINESS**

Business Studies at GNVQ Intermediate and AVCE level was inspected.

Overall provision is **sound**.

### Strengths

- Achievement is sound in relation to results in earlier tests and examinations.
- Teachers have a secure subject knowledge and experience in industry or commerce.
- There are good links with local businesses.
- More students are opting for business related courses.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards, which are well below the national average.
- Quality of teaching.
- Timetable arrangements.
- Course information and assessment requirements.
- Quality and access to ICT and the accommodation.

169. Standards in all courses taken by students are below or well below those found nationally. However, numbers have tended to be too small for statistically valid comparisons to be made. Achievement is sound in relation to results in previous tests or examinations, particularly as many students are using English as an additional language. Male and female students do equally well.
170. Each year some students take GCSE examinations. In 2000 two gained a grade C and the other a grade D. In 2001 of the five candidates who entered, three were graded at C. This represents a pass rate of 60 per cent. Students also take academic and vocational courses at a higher level. In 2001, of five candidates, only one passed at A Level with a C grade. At AS the one candidate entered was ungraded and vocational results were also disappointing in that only a few candidates were awarded a pass grade and none a distinction or merit.
171. The standard of work of students currently in Years 12 and 13 is below average. However they are all achieving satisfactorily in relation to predictions based on their GCSE and AS results.

Students are making satisfactory progress as a result of sound teaching in most lessons. They respond well to questioning and all the students present were able to recall knowledge gained from previous lessons. They work well on set tasks and their general knowledge of business practise is often good. However, the majority, in both years, lack the detailed knowledge and the higher levels of understanding required to do well. They are keen and enthusiastic but many do not have the skills in English, often because they are newly arrived in this country, to succeed in examinations. Many students are skilled in using information and communication technology as part of their learning. They are expected to make business presentations and use packages such as PowerPoint to deliver information of high quality. However the department does not have its own computers and both resource and accommodation issues affect student learning and therefore standards.

172. There are four students in Year 13 and 14 in Year 12 taking the AVCE course. In Year 13 they are displaying maturity with regard to the way in which they are approaching their studies and they have acquired some of the skills to enable them to become effective independent learners. They are able to talk about business finance using the appropriate vocabulary and to understand the purpose of a company's mission statement. However, written work is below the required standard at present. In Year 12, the highest attaining students can conduct detailed studies of individual businesses. In class the majority of students can cope with quite complex issues such as the nature of government intervention in the economy. A significant minority of students who have English as an additional language, and some of whom have only recently come to live in England, do encounter difficulties with concepts and vocabulary. Whilst there are programmes to support their language development this situation impedes their progress and attainment. For example, they experience confusion between terms such as government and parliament.
173. The department also teaches the Intermediate level GNVQ course and many students who take this have English as an additional language. Some are in the early stages of acquiring the language skills required. The highest attaining students understand the role of trade unions in industry and can compare large retail organisations with sole traders. However, many students find even basic concepts very difficult and students are taken out of class for extra support in English.
174. Teaching and learning are sound overall. In the lessons observed teachers used an appropriate range of methods and approaches to learning. In the best lessons there was a clear structure and the pace of work was appropriate to the range of students in the class. A good use of subject-specific vocabulary and careful questioning involved all students and helped them to learn. The teachers observed displayed a thorough knowledge of their subject and they showed high expectations of student knowledge and participation. However, in some less satisfactory lessons pace was slow and the work not suited to a number of students in the class. The independent style of working, which is the norm in vocational courses, is more difficult because of language issues. Some teaching is far too directed and lacks the necessary vocational approach or content. The role of the teacher in this situation should be that of a facilitator to successfully guide students through each unit of work.
175. Management is sound, in that new courses have been introduced and resources developed. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. There is a commitment by the staff to build on what has already been achieved and to improve standards. Teachers monitor students' progress and students are involved in discussions with staff on a regular basis about what they can do to improve. However, there is a lack of rigour in assessment procedures and in analysing and using that information. Course guides and student handbooks are inadequate. The accommodation is poor, although there are plans to improve it. The existing accommodation is not well used for displays and frequent changes of room are confusing for students. Timetabling arrangements prevent some students in Year 12 from attending all their lessons, and this is undermining their learning.
176. There is potential for development as the subject is popular with students. There are two new well-qualified members of staff and teachers have real experience of business and commerce, which is essential when teaching vocational courses. Nevertheless, there is the need for greater rigour in management and more vision for the future.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

The focus was on AVCE Information and Communication Technology. One session was observed in Year 12. Standards are average. The teaching was good. During the lessons there was use of questioning and explanation, regular review of student progress and a well structured sequence of activities. This led to students gaining a secure knowledge and understanding of preparing a specification simulating business practice.

## HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Leisure and tourism at GNVQ Intermediate level and physical education at AS level were sampled.

Overall the quality of provision for leisure and tourism is satisfactory. The standard of work seen is at foundation level rather than intermediate, as the prior attainment of a high proportion of the students does not match the requirements of the intermediate course. The majority of students are at an early stage of English acquisition and this slows down the understanding of key concepts. Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory, insufficient guidance is given through marking and independent work to reach the required standard.

The provision for AS level in physical education is satisfactory. Students are very committed to their work in practical lessons and achieve well. In theory lessons the teacher draws skilfully on pupils' own experiences to strengthen or challenge their views, for example, on 'personality traits'. Standards seen in written work are more variable, reflecting the differing skill levels in the use of vocabulary. Teaching is good and the teacher knows the subject well. Arrangements for practical work need to be improved but the subject is hampered by its limited accommodation.

## HUMANITIES

The overall provision in history is **unsatisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Resources are good.
- Assessment procedures are good.

### Areas for improvement

- Leadership and management.
- Progression and continuity from AS to A2.
- Provision of course and study guides available for students.
- The use of ICT.

177. GCE A-Level examination results were satisfactory in 2001 in that all students were able to meet course requirements. Two students took the examination and both gained E grades; this represents very real achievement for the students concerned because neither had English as their first language. No students were entered for AS examinations and there are therefore no A2 students at present. In 2000 there were no candidates. The number of students taking A Level and now the new AS examinations has been too small to make a valid comparison with the national picture. Students achieve appropriately or better in relation to their results at GCSE and they show the ability to approach new subject areas such as European history with confidence because of the quality of teaching and support available to them.

178. A student in Year 12 shows that, despite a lack of familiarity with twentieth century European history, she has gained a good grasp of factors that promote political change. She can discuss the political and economic developments that contributed to the undermining of democracy in Italy and contributed to the fascist dictatorship of Mussolini. The other student has only recently started the course. Both are confident in completing investigations. The student who is new to the group has clearly settled in well and is already able to contribute to class discussion and

share information in a way that benefits both students. This mutual support is beneficial to both students and is an indication of the inclusive nature of the work even in this very small group. Students prepare well for classroom discussion and they use an appropriate range of books provided by the department as well as information downloaded from history websites. They plan their work well and are able to play an active role in lessons. They are experiencing difficulty with unfamiliar names and terminology but are tackling this in a methodical way that is ensuring that this problem is not impeding their long- term progress. They are establishing skills, both in scanning extracts for information and in reading comprehension. Students do show good levels of understanding in evaluating the tactics used by different groups seeking to extend voting rights to women in the period before the First World War. They enjoy the subject, and work hard. Tasks are completed on time. If a lesson depends on student research and participation then they can be relied upon to prepare and contribute well.

179. Teaching is good and students learn well, although in some circumstance learning is affected by the very small size of the group. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject and students share in this enthusiasm. They are using strategies that promote a high level of participation, but the small size of the groups limits the opportunities to share ideas. Students do have the advantage of frequent individual support and access to a good range of resources but are unable to enjoy the wide range of discussion and intellectual stimulation found in a larger group. Teachers have also developed effective assessment procedures that really contribute to student achievement and motivation. Students are encouraged to research and to make decisions about the past based on what they have read rather than to rely on class notes. Students are familiar with computers and they are confident in their use but these skills are not fully used to promote higher standards of learning.
180. The management of the subject is unsatisfactory despite the efforts made by those who teach in the Sixth Form. The department has a good balance of responsibility for different aspects of the course and resources and assessment procedures are being used well. However there is almost a complete lack of planning documentation or student guides. Planning decisions cannot be taken at present because the arrangements for managing the department are temporary. There is a clear need to develop the subject by reviewing some aspects of the course content which are inappropriate for the students who are likely to choose to take history or related subjects. It is essential to recruit and retain students. There has been unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection, despite the development of the new AS course, because of the failure to attract more students. There is no clear progression route to higher-level study at A2.

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The concentration was on English. French is on offer as an AS/A2 subject under the consortium arrangements, but since 2000 there has been no viable group. It will be offered again in September 2002. Two A level students in 2001 achieved grades B and D.

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

### Strengths

- Teachers' very good subject knowledge.
- Varied and appropriate teaching and learning strategies.
- Very good relationships.

### Areas for improvement

- The extent and detail of essay work.
- The accessibility of English within the curriculum framework.
- The scope for display in teaching rooms.

181. In public examinations in the last two years (2000 and 2001) the standards attained were well below average in A Level English, although in 2000 they compared well with other subjects. Over time, results have been uneven, with numbers fluctuating and standards varying between below and well below average. Currently the take up for A Level is lower than previously, with



just four in the Year 12 group and 6 in Year 13. Six students left at the end of Year 12 in 2001 to take up courses elsewhere, and other students do not take English because of timetable clashes. Standards seen in the A Level classes during the inspection were below average, but the students have made good progress from well below average attainment at an earlier stage of their education. Those students who entered the Sixth Form to re-take GCSE literature were seen to be working at a higher level than they achieved in Year 11, although there was a high level of absence in this class that will affect overall attainment if it continues. In their presentations to the class, these students showed sound understanding of the text of 'Macbeth' and they were able to explain the characters' states of mind clearly and make perceptive comments on the power of the language. This group included a high proportion of students for whom English is an additional language and some with special educational needs, and they were showing good progress in their understanding of a difficult text. In a Year 12 A Level lesson, two higher-attaining students chose passages from 'Emma' to illustrate how Jane Austen conveys character through words and actions. Their comments showed above average appreciation of the author's skill. The Year 13 group discussing the madness of 'King Lear' produced a range of responses that showed sound understanding on a factual and narrative level, and the most talented students successfully uncovered several layers of meaning in the dialogue. In another lesson where they were exploring the symbolic meaning of Angela Carter's short stories, some of them stopped short at finding the symbols rather than commenting on their effect. The higher attainers were able to explore the imagery in some depth. In their discussion these students, including those for whom English is an additional language, expressed their ideas in an articulate way. They listened well and showed good understanding of each other's ideas. Their written commentaries are perceptive and well presented, often capably word-processed. The higher attainers write well organised essays, drawing contrasts effectively and illustrating their points with apt quotations. Overall, however, they do not write as extensively or in such detail as would be expected in the second year of A Level study.

182. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good. Objectives for each lesson are shared with the students so they know the purpose of each task. In the GCSE course skilful use is made of the overhead projector so that students have both aural and visual access to the text, a particular help to those for whom English is not their first language. Follow-up questions are skilfully used to develop students' thinking and to extend their answers. Teachers are careful to include all students in presentations and discussions, and relationships are very positive. Very good knowledge of novels enabled a teacher to direct her Year 12 class towards references that would enable them to understand the characters and their social background more clearly. Students are actively encouraged to become independent thinkers through preparing presentations to the class. They do, however, need more guidance and practice in writing the extended essays required in the examination. Otherwise, marking is detailed, helpful and challenging. The range of literature studied is well balanced, covering several centuries and giving a broad view.
183. The students' response to their English teaching is very good. They listen to the teacher and to each other with respect and concentration. They make notes without being told, and follow up suggestions for improvement made by the teacher. There is a high level of interest in every lesson. When interviewed, the students were very positive about English as a useful subject and they praised the quality of teaching and guidance they received. They felt that teachers were always well prepared and keen for them to do well.
184. The subject is very well led and managed at sixth form level. There is a common sense of commitment to the inclusion and achievement of every student. Individual progress is well tracked and the students are given a realistic picture of their current progress and targets for improvement. Accommodation is just adequate. The sixth form classrooms have sufficient room, but there is no scope for display to create a good environment for learning.
185. Improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection. Teachers have raised student progress from sound to good. Standards of work are higher than indicated by recent results. The teachers' enthusiasm, knowledge and skilful questioning that were highlighted in the last report still characterise their approach to English in the sixth form.