

INSPECTION REPORT

GLENTHORNE HIGH SCHOOL

Sutton

LEA area: London Borough of Sutton

Unique reference number: 103022

Headteacher: Mr S J Hume

Reporting inspector: Mr T Feast
3650

Dates of inspection: 14th – 18th January 2002

Inspection number: 242874

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 to 19 years
Gender of students:	Mixed
School address:	Sutton Common Road Sutton Surrey
Postcode:	SM3 9PS
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Appropriate authority:	London Borough of Sutton
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Wiggins
Date of previous inspection:	10 th – 14 th March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3650	T Feast	Registered inspector	English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and students' achievements How well are students taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9779	S Smith	Lay inspector		Students' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2715	R Hancock	Team inspector	English	
30699	A Kemp	Team inspector	Mathematics	
8552	W Hart	Team inspector	Science Sixth-form biology	
23880	O Hall	Team inspector	Art and design Special educational needs	
12048	R Patterson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology	
3827	J Knight	Team inspector	Geography	
27407	B Stoneham	Team inspector	History Sixth-form leisure and tourism	
16950	C Orr	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Sixth-form French Equal opportunities	How well does the school care for its students?
12276	T Payne	Team inspector	Music Sixth-form performing arts	
1085	J Laver	Team inspector	Physical education Sixth-form English	
10807	P Quest	Team inspector	Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Glenthorne High School is a mixed, community comprehensive school for students aged 11 to 18 years. There are 1050 students on the school's roll, which is about the same size as other secondary schools nationally. The roll has increased since the last inspection. There are slightly more girls than boys overall. While many of the students come from homes situated close to the school, about one third come from homes in the neighbouring London borough. The family backgrounds of students at the school are broadly in line with those nationally. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is approximately 15 per cent, which is broadly in line with the national average. The school has identified about 27 per cent of the students as having special educational needs which is above the national average, as is the percentage of students (three per cent) provided with statements of special educational needs by the local education authority. Just over four per cent of students are from ethnic minority backgrounds and the number who come from homes where English is not the first language is broadly similar to most schools. The school's intake does cover the full ability range, but students in the very high and above average ranges are under-represented, reflecting the selective system operated by both this and some neighbouring local education authorities. Attainment on entry is below average overall.

The school has found recruitment to some teaching posts difficult over the last year and this has had an adverse impact on the curriculum the school is able to offer and the standards achieved in some subjects. In the week of the inspection, the sixth-form timetable was considerably disrupted by students taking external examinations.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

There are very many positive aspects to Glenthorne High School. The school experienced considerable difficulties in recent terms but since September 2001, there has been considerable improvement. The standards students achieve are improving in many subjects and in the majority of lessons observed, students made good progress. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Leadership and management are good. The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory and it gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in drama overall.
- Standards in mathematics and art and design in the 2001 GCSE examinations.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The provision of extra-curricular activities is good.
- The leadership of the headteacher, key staff and the governors ensures very clear educational direction.
- The development planning for improvement is good.

What could be improved

- Standards in national tests and public examinations.
- Attendance of students.
- Putting the statutory curriculum into place for design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT).
- The provision of specialist accommodation, especially for ICT, physical education, music and design and technology.
- Improving the availability of specialist teachers in ICT, design and technology, and in mathematics, history and geography in Years 7 to 9.
- The consistency with which teachers plan to meet the full range of abilities and needs of students within their classes.
- Provision for personal, social and health education.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997 when it was judged to be an improving school. While there are now signs of considerable improvement since the appointment of the new headteacher in September 2001, overall, the improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. There have been satisfactory improvements in the allocation of time to geography, history, art and design and music in Years 7 to 9. Whilst there had been an improvement in the allocation of time to design and technology, this has now been reversed owing to problems in recruiting sufficient specialist teachers. The school does not meet the statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship. There has been satisfactory improvement in the provision for special educational needs. A new library has been built but there are still weaknesses in the resources which would support independent learning. Whilst a second music room has been provided, other facilities identified at the last inspection have not been provided. There has been a good improvement in the quality of teaching. Standards achieved in external assessments and examinations are not as good as those reported at the last inspection and are often still well below the national average. The rate of attendance has declined since the last inspection and the incidence of exclusions has risen.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The school's results in 2001 were worse overall than they had been the previous year. The standards the students achieved in national tests at the age of 14 in Year 9 in 2001 were below those attained nationally but the trend over time remained broadly in line with the national trend. The results in the GCSE examinations in 2001 saw the average points score per student decline from 36 to 32 and this is below the national average. The boys performed better than the girls in the national tests but in the GCSE examinations, the girls outperformed the boys. At GCSE, the trend over time overall was below the national trend. The average points scores for Advanced Level (AL) and Advanced Supplementary (AS) candidates rose from 14 to 15 and this is in line with the national average. Girls did better than the boys in the sixth-form results. The school did not achieve the statutory targets set for 2001. Challenging statutory targets for 2002 have been set to bring the school closer into line with national results but these are unlikely to be met with the GCSE results. Good work was seen during the inspection in drama, geography, mathematics, ICT and science. Weaknesses were seen in work in some aspects of design and technology and ICT across the curriculum. In many subjects, students were achieving well in relation to their standards in the subjects when they started at the school.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory overall.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. The behaviour of most of the students is good. However, the unsatisfactory and sometimes poor behaviour of a small group of students undermines the overall picture.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory overall.
Attendance	Poor.

The poor attendance of a significant number and the unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour of some, which is reflected in a high incidence of exclusions, has had an adverse impact on the attainment and achievement of many of the students.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection, both in the reduction of the amount of unsatisfactory teaching observed and an improvement in the teaching observed that was good or better. Excellent teaching was seen in music, drama and ICT. Examples of very good teaching were seen in art and design, biology, English, French, geography, history, mathematics, physical education and religious education. Teaching in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science was good overall in Years 7 to 11. The teaching of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum was satisfactory. Relatively little unsatisfactory or poor teaching was observed and it was not concentrated in any particular subjects, but usually linked either to the management of students or the lack of sufficient challenge in the work.

In nearly two-thirds of lessons observed, teaching was good or better. The improvement in the quality of teaching throughout the school is reflected in good learning overall. Students acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding well in most lessons, working at a good pace and with good effort. The good teaching helps to meet the needs of all students.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall despite current problems with design and technology and ICT.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Satisfactory provision overall but unsatisfactory provision in some classes in Years 10 and 11 where there is insufficient in-class support.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	There is now good provision for the small number of students in the school who have been identified as requiring support.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision overall. Good moral, cultural and social provision. Satisfactory provision for spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its students	The procedures for caring for students are satisfactory overall.

The school has good, effective links with the parents overall. Parents indicated how the school has improved since September 2001 and they now have good positive views of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. There has been a significant shift since September 2001 in improving the quality of teaching and learning, and the actions taken are having a positive impact in many, but not yet all, areas.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory overall. While the governing body has had a good impact in shaping the direction of the school and in holding the school to account, there are still too many statutory requirements which are not being met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	It is good overall and much improved since the last inspection.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The principles of best value are applied well.

The change in emphasis has been brought about by the vision, drive and commitment of the new headteacher supported by governors and members of the leadership team. The present accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. Staffing is unsatisfactory overall because of problems of recruitment in design and technology, ICT and the use of non-specialist teachers in subjects in Years 7 to 9.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school expects the children to work hard.• The children are making good progress.• They would feel comfortable approaching the school.• The teaching is good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behaviour in the school.• The children getting the right amount of work.• The information which tells them how their children are getting on.• The school working closely with parents.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views of the school. Children generally are expected to work hard. The school is very approachable. The teaching is good and children are now making good progress in most areas. There has been an improvement in the information given to parents on how well their child is doing but there is not yet sufficient consistency across all subjects in giving guidance on how their sons and daughters can improve the quality of their work. The school works effectively with parents but there is a high level of holidays being taken in school time which affects the attendance of a significant percentage of students. Behaviour in school is improving but the rate of exclusions shows that there is still a significant group of students whose behaviour is not yet satisfactory. Homework is set regularly but there is not yet sufficient consistency in setting homework which challenges the children and extends the learning they have done in school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

At the time of the inspection there were 105 students in the sixth form. This is slightly smaller than most schools nationally. There are more female than male students, and more students in Year 12 than Year 13. This is partly as a result of a significant number of students leaving the school at the end of Year 12 with AS-level or vocational qualifications. Very few students join the sixth form from other schools. In addition to opting for a range of AS-level, A2-level and vocational courses, the majority of students study key skills, general studies and a programme of personal, moral and social education. The attainment of most students on entry into the sixth form is broadly below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form provides a very good education for its students. The cost of the sixth form is relatively high but it provides satisfactory value for money because the majority of students join the sixth form with below average attainment, yet by the end of both Year 12 and Year 13, they achieve well in relation to this prior attainment. Students are taught well and they learn well. Their personal development is also good, and students have very positive attitudes towards the sixth form. The main strengths and areas that could be improved in the sixth form are:

Strengths

- Leadership and management of the sixth form are good; the leadership is committed and is characterised by clear educational direction.
- There is good teaching leading to good learning.
- The sixth form provides very good guidance to its students, and the school monitors their progress well.
- The school encourages independence, personal development and a tradition of service to the community by giving students important responsibilities such as peer mentoring.
- A good range of courses is offered within the constraints of a small sixth form.
- Students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment before joining the sixth form.

What could be improved

- Sixth-form accommodation, which is not attractive. It includes a quiet study area which is too small and lacks sufficient facilities for independent learning.
- The retention rate of students on some courses.
- The attendance of students.
- The provision of religious education in the sixth form.

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

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
English	Very good provision. Examination results have been average or better, particularly in the higher grades. This represents good achievement for students. Students are well motivated and respond well to the good teaching they receive.
Mathematics	Good provision. A-level entries have been too low to make national comparisons of results appropriate. Although the teaching is good, few candidates achieve the highest grades. The department is tackling this issue.
Biology	Good provision. In 2001, all students achieved their expected grades. Students develop in confidence as a result of the good teaching they receive.
Geography	Very good provision. Standards are above average. Teaching and learning are very good and students achieve well. There is good leadership.
French	Satisfactory provision. Past results have mainly been below the expectations based on the GCSE grades. Teaching is good and teachers are very supportive of students. Students do not produce sufficient extended written work.
Leisure and tourism	Satisfactory provision. Retention and completion rates are excellent, and most students improve their qualifications. Limited access to computer facilities restricts research and has a detrimental effect upon standards.
Information and communication technology	Good provision. Standards at AS-level, on vocational courses and in key skills meet expectations. Teaching is good and students achieve well. There is good leadership. There is limited access to computer facilities outside lessons.
Performing arts	Good provision. There is some excellent teaching and good learning. The course is well organised, although standards have been affected by irregular attendance and are broadly average.

Teaching and learning are good overall, and are very good in geography and excellent in drama. In drama, standards are high and students develop a wide range of skills. Students receive a good programme of personal and social education, including careers education. In addition to their optional subject choices, many students also benefit from key skills and general studies, which adds breadth to their programme of studies, although timetable constraints prevent a minority of students from taking up these opportunities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Good. The progress of individual students is regularly monitored, and they are involved in the process of setting targets for further improvement. Parents are quickly consulted when there are problems, and the school works hard to improve attendance. Students are pleased with the quality of advice and support which they receive from teachers and tutors, and they are prepared well for the choices available to them in higher education or employment when they finally leave school.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Good. The school is committed to expanding the sixth form and this is an important part of its development planning. The head of the sixth form provides effective leadership. The relatively small subsidy for the sixth form provides satisfactory value for money as provision is good and sixth-form students achieve well, taking good advantage of the opportunities offered.

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"> • They are treated as adults. • Classes are small and they receive individual attention. • Target setting and marking are helpful. • Relationships with teachers. • The quality of teaching. • They mostly get the choice of subjects they want. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of personal, moral and social education. • The library. • Access to computer facilities. • Better common room and study facilities.

Students are very positive about the sixth form and would recommend it to their friends. Their comments about the strengths of sixth-form provision are justified. Relationships between sixth-formers and teachers were good in all classes observed, and teachers do give good advice and support to individual students. Very few students do not get the choice of subjects they prefer, although a small minority cannot attend key skills or general studies lessons because of timetable clashes. Many sixth-formers take up positions of responsibility in the school, often in support of younger students. There were limited opportunities during the inspection to observe the personal, moral and social education programme, although some useful careers advice was offered during that week. The inspectors agree with the students that several aspects of the sixth-form accommodation are unsatisfactory, both from the point of view of facilities for lessons and also for social and study provision.

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 students' achievements

1. The standard of work seen in lessons and in the books of the students in Year 9 during the inspection, was in line with the national expectation in English and science and below the national expectations in mathematics. This represents an improvement in science and a similar performance in English and mathematics to the results reported in the national tests for 14-year-olds in Year 9 in 2001. Given their attainment on entering the school, this represents good achievement overall by the students in Years 7 to 9.
2. The standard of work seen in lessons and in the books of the students in Year 11 during the inspection was below the national expectations in many subjects, including science, but was in line with the national expectation in English and above it in mathematics. This represents overall an improved picture to the results reported in the GCSE examinations in 2001 when the results were well below the national average using most of the national benchmarks. The results in 2001 showed a considerable deterioration on those for 2000. The group of students who are currently studying in Year 11 for their GCSEs in 2002 attained standards well below the national average in the national tests for 14-year-olds in 2000 so their current standards represent satisfactory achievement since the start of Year 10.
3. The school's overall performance in the 2001 national tests for 14-year-olds when using average points scores, was below both the national average and that of schools in a similar context. In the 2001 national tests, the results varied across the three subjects tested, being in line with the national average in English and below in science and mathematics. The girls performed better than the boys in English in 2001 but the boys did better in mathematics and science and overall in 2001. Over time, the school's trend using students' average points scores is broadly in line with the national trend. The school did not achieve its statutory targets for the results of the 2001 candidates, this reflecting the turbulence in the school for that year. The targets it has set itself for 2002 are more realistic and are likely to bring the school closer to the national average. The school's targets are 35 per cent of students achieving five grades A*-C and an average points score of 40. The targets the school has set for itself for 2002 are more realistic for the year group and are likely to bring the school closer to the national average.
4. The school's performance in the GCSE examinations in 2001 was well below the national average in terms of the percentage of students attaining five grades A*-C and below in terms of average points scores. These results were well above the national average when compared to schools in a similar context nationally, reflecting the cohort's poor results when taking their national tests in 1999. The percentage of students attaining five grades A*-C fell from 42 to 31 per cent and the average points score fell from 36 to 32.3. In both cases however, they were well above the results of schools in a similar context. The girls overall performed better than the boys at GCSE in 2001, although in individual subjects the reverse was the case. In 2001, the school made no progress in raising the percentage of students who achieved five or more grades A*-G; it declined from 93 per cent in 2000 to 86 per cent but this percentage was well above similar schools.

5. In the GCSE examinations in 2001, the overall results of students in art and design and drama were significantly better than the national average. In design and technology, combined science, English and English Literature, French, geography, German, history and physical education, they were significantly worse. In mathematics, they were broadly in line with the national average.
6. The attainment of students is satisfactory overall, especially in relation to their starting point in the subject. In the current Year 9, attainment is still below expectations in many subjects but it is in line in English, science, art and design and physical education. Attainment seen in drama lessons is high. In the current Year 11, attainment remains below in many subjects but is above in mathematics and drama and is in line in English, art and design, dance, history and information and communication technology (ICT) in the examination classes. Overall, the achievement of students is good. It is good in the core subjects in Years 7 to 9 and in subjects such as mathematics, drama and ICT in examination classes in Years 10 and 11. It is unsatisfactory currently, in aspects of design and technology, ICT across the curriculum and in modern foreign languages in Years 10 and 11.
7. Standards in literacy are satisfactory overall and there are some good strategies to support standards in subjects such as history where there is an emphasis on improving writing in tasks set for all students. Standards in numeracy are in line with those normally seen, but the lack of a co-ordinated approach results in considerable variation across subjects. As yet, the school has not adopted a strategy for raising standards in numeracy but has plans to do so, following the local education authority's training.
8. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall in relation to their prior attainment. In Years 7 and 8, students with lower level reading and comprehension skills are withdrawn in small groups for additional support in reading recovery, paired reading and National Literacy progress unit programmes. They make good progress in co-operative language and social skills development because learning activities are well planned and students are encouraged to take responsibility to behave well in the support room. In mainstream lessons where progress is satisfactory overall, examples of good progress were observed in history where a variety of teaching strategies are effectively used to promote learning. The achievement of students with statements towards their targets is good because they are well supported by learning support assistants. Relationships between students and support staff are good. However, the lack of learning support assistants for students at Stage 3 on the Code of Practice, particularly in English, mathematics and science in Years 10 and 11, is impacting adversely on their progress overall. Achievement of Years 10 and 11 students is satisfactory overall, but in support groups and in Certificate of Achievement classes in mainstream English, their poor attendance and lack of resources are having a detrimental effect on attainment.
9. The school has very few students with English as an additional language. Additional support has just been started for them again by the local education authority and their progress is good in relation to their acquisition of English literacy skills.
10. The school has set itself more realistic targets for 2002 after missing its statutory targets for 2001 and is making good progress towards meeting them. Overall, the trend since the last inspection has been one of decline. The results in 2001 fell sharply. There is now a big push by departments to raise standards and the drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning is having the desired effect on raising students' attainment.

Sixth form

11. The standard of work seen overall in lessons and in the books of students in Year 13 during the inspection was broadly in line with those expected nationally. This represents a better performance than in the A-level results reported in 2000 and similar to that reported in 2001. The current group of students studying for A2-level was among a year group that achieved standards in line with the national average in their GCSE examinations in 2000, so this represents good achievement by students in their current subjects given some of the problems the school had in 2000-2001. The standard of work seen in lessons and the books of students taking vocational courses was in line with the standard expected nationally and this represents good achievement by these students.
12. The school's performance in the A-level and AS examinations in 2000 was below the national average when comparing average points scores. In 2001, the position improved, the average points score per candidate rose and the overall result was broadly in line with the national average. There was a considerable increase in the number of students taking AS examinations. The percentage achieving a pass grade increased from 63 per cent to 85 per cent and the average point score per examination rose from 1.5 to 2.4.
13. The school does well to compare similarly with the national average. While nearly all A-level students achieve pass grades, a smaller proportion than nationally gain the highest grades. This is not surprising given the selective entry policy operated by the local education authority which has the result that both on entry to the school and to the sixth form, students' attainment is below the national average. Students demonstrate appropriate standards in key skills overall, but some students are disadvantaged by curriculum clashes which prevent them from taking all the sessions.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Attitudes to school and learning are satisfactory overall. Both students and their parents are aware of the recent raised expectations of all aspects of school life and show an increasing pride in their school. Most students enjoy school and usually focus well on their work. This is particularly so where lessons have been planned well to provide stimulating activities that actively involve them in their own learning as, for example, in drama. Where this is not the case, many remain passive and show little initiative to think and find out for themselves. Throughout the school, although more particularly boys aged 13 to 16 years, there is a small but significant minority of students that have immature attitudes to work and find it hard to settle down. They usually respond suitably to intervention from their teachers, but occasionally, slow learning for others. The ability for students to get on with work on their own and use initiative is not developed well; they often expect to be given help rather than persevering with a task. When organised to work in small groups with clear targets, they usually try hard, often producing good work. Insufficient use of the library is made for independent study. Extra-curricular activities are popular and usually have good levels of attendance, although less so with homework clubs. Homework is usually recorded conscientiously, although there is, overall, too much incomplete work.
15. The behaviour of students makes a satisfactory contribution to learning. Recently revised procedures and the Code of Conduct are well known to everyone at the school. Most students consider them to be fair and agree with the views of parents that they have resulted in an improvement in overall standards of behaviour. Local residents note that this has extended beyond the school gates to the surrounding area. At the

beginning of lessons, some take time to settle but usually respond well to behaviour management strategies that are consistently applied and this supports learning well. A small but significant number of students, usually boys, find it difficult to behave in a mature and responsible manner all the time. As a result, for the last school year, the number of exclusions was high at 273 fixed-term and four permanent. Reasons for exclusion are sound, they are clearly set out and during the current school year, procedures have been applied consistently for all students. This has led to an initial increase in the number of students being excluded. Students are now, however, quite clear about the result of misbehaviour and some are beginning to consider carefully the inevitable result of their actions. Behaviour during lunch and break-times is sometimes boisterous and noisy, but interaction between students is usually good-natured. In the dining room, they behave well, socialising effectively and showing courtesy to staff on duty. Movement around the site and between lessons is usually sensible and safe, for example on the stairs. Suitable levels of respect are shown for school premises and property; there has recently been a significant reduction in litter around the site, there is no graffiti and school equipment is used with respect.

16. Students with special educational needs generally have positive attitudes when they work in the special needs area. The special needs rooms provide a secure area and students enjoy a range of activities during lunch breaks where they are keen to learn, behave and co-operate well with others. In mainstream lessons, their behaviour is generally satisfactory.
17. Relationships throughout the school are satisfactory and between teachers and students often very positive, particularly so between form tutors and their classes; ensuring students are usually confident about approaching staff with concerns. Those from minority ethnic backgrounds are well integrated into the school community; incidents, such as name-calling, are few and dealt with effectively by staff. Although there are occasional instances of bullying, students are usually confident that these will be dealt with well when brought to the attention of staff. A few younger students in Year 7 have reservations about discussing such problems with adults. There is, however, growing confidence in the sixth-form peer mentoring scheme that offers specific support for Year 7 and work done with these students in personal, health and social education that is suitably targeted. There are high expectations for students to listen to others with respect and there is usually a good response; sometimes leading to high levels of interest and the desire to build on what others have said. In drama, the performance of others is often observed with respect, enabling students to grow in their ability to evaluate the work of others objectively. At break and lunchtimes, students socialise effectively and they are able to work well together in lessons where they are required to do so. They respond well to opportunities provided for their personal development, for example through work experience in Year 10, recently introduced opportunities to train as librarians, and the Year 11 prefects carry out their duties responsibly and gain good levels of respect from those younger than themselves. The newly introduced citizenship programme within drama is effectively raising levels of awareness about how society works, rights and responsibilities.
18. Levels of attendance are 89.1 per cent for the last school year, which is well below the average for similar schools and lower than at the time of the last inspection. Absence that has not been authorised is below expectations at 0.2 per cent for the same period. Procedures have been reviewed recently but action taken has not yet had an impact on standards achieved. Unauthorised absence for the current year is showing an increase since the school adopted a policy of not authorising holidays during term time. The most significant reasons for absence are holidays, exclusion, students with long-term illness in Year 7 and too many parents who are not sufficiently interested in their children's

education to ensure that they attend regularly. There are some students who persistently refuse to come to school; action taken to provide them with an alternative programme, largely vocational, has received a positive response resulting in raised standards for some. Although too many students are late at the beginning of the school day, revised procedures that place high priority on reducing this are beginning to have an impact and most are anxious to get to their classes as quickly as possible since all lost time must be made up through detentions. The attendance of some students has an adverse impact on the standards they achieve.

Sixth form

19. Students in the sixth form enjoy coming to school, in particular, they value the high expectations for them to behave as responsible adults and respond accordingly. This results in good levels of mutual respect between them and adults at the school. They are positive about their Programmes of Study and enjoy challenge; although independent research and 'finding out for themselves' are not practised with sufficient frequency for these skills to be well developed. Most grow in maturity in response to good opportunities for them to take responsibility and use their initiative, for example through the peer mentor scheme, being senior prefects, organising lunchtime clubs and activities for others and supporting teachers during trips and visits with younger students from whom they earn good levels of respect. Students show good attitudes overall to their preparations for the next stage of their education or training and are well aware of the skills they need to develop to support their ambitions. Attendance levels at registrations are unsatisfactory at 90 per cent with 1.7 per cent unauthorised absence. Some students are not well motivated to attend registration where they have no class immediately following but usually arrive before their first class instead.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching is good overall. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection, both in the reduction of the amount of unsatisfactory teaching observed and an improvement in the teaching observed that was good or better. Examples of excellent teaching were seen in drama, music and ICT. Examples of very good teaching were also seen in English, geography, history, mathematics, physical education, religious education and science. Relatively little unsatisfactory and poor teaching was observed and it was not concentrated in any particular subjects but a high proportion was observed in Year 10.
21. Overall, teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, art and design, geography, history, ICT, music and physical education. In design and technology, French and religious education, it is satisfactory. It is very good in drama.
22. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 93 per cent of the lessons observed. It was excellent in 4 per cent and very good in a further 12 per cent of lessons observed. Forty-five per cent of the teaching observed was good and in a further 33 per cent it was satisfactory. In 7 per cent of lessons the teaching was unsatisfactory or poor. The quality of teaching was good in Years 7 and 8 and satisfactory in Year 9. It was good in Years 10 and 11. The improvement in the quality of teaching throughout the school is reflected in good learning by the students generally.
23. Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9. There are good schemes of work and guidance from heads of department. In some subjects, for example history, geography and mathematics, use has to be made of teachers who are not subject specialists. Though all of the non-specialist teaching observed was satisfactory or better, their confidence in

teaching the subject did affect the learning of some of the students, especially the higher attaining students. Very little unsatisfactory or poor teaching was seen in these years and where it was observed, it was mainly a result of teachers failing to manage the students' behaviour satisfactorily.

24. Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11. Very little unsatisfactory teaching was seen and over two-thirds of the teaching observed was good or better. This good teaching reflects the good subject expertise of staff and the generally good management of the students, even when the number of students with special educational needs in the class can present problems.
25. The school has spent a great deal of time since September 2001 concentrating on ensuring that teaching is effective at Glenthorne. The headteacher, the leadership team and heads of department have embarked upon a comprehensive programme of monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching to help raise standards. These strategies have been very successful in the main. Staff know what is expected of their planning and of the school's desire to see a range of teaching and learning strategies employed to challenge the full range of ability in all the classes. In most lessons, the staff's planning and use of appropriate strategies are seen to good effect.
26. Teachers' subject knowledge is good overall. The result is that most staff teach confidently because they are well prepared to impart knowledge, understanding and skills. In nearly every lesson, objectives are made explicit to the students at the start of lessons and usually instructions are made clear so that students know what to do. In most lessons, they carry out these instructions well, the lesson objectives are reviewed to check what has been learnt and usually, students' learning is good, for example in a Year 8 physical education lesson where the students were developing their gymnastics skills.
27. In most subjects, there is suitable attention to the teaching of basic skills of literacy, as seen in the Year 7 history lesson where clear explanations of the technical terms relating to medieval England ensured that students understood key words. There are insufficient resources overall for all subjects to deliver ICT across the curriculum and this does have an adverse impact on students' standards overall in this area. There is not yet consistent monitoring and evaluation of the teaching of literacy and numeracy by all departments and the impact they have on the curriculum planning of staff.
28. Since September 2001, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on the teachers planning effectively to take account of the needs of students who can work quickly and those who work at a slower pace or who have special educational needs. This is now reflected in most teachers' lesson planning. As a result, in many lessons, most students are engaged in learning at the appropriate level and are rewarded with good gains in knowledge, understanding and skills'. For example, in a Year 10 dance lesson where the class was preparing a chair dance sequence, or in a Year 11 basketball lesson where there was a good range of tasks to prepare for observations by the external assessor. Occasionally, the work is too challenging with unrealistic demands, resulting in many students losing the desire to continue with the activity, as in a Year 10 science lesson. In some lessons, there was no evidence of planning to meet the differing needs, as in a Year 7 history lesson on medieval England where there was no planning for students identified on the school's special educational needs register and they found it hard to cope with the subject matter, and the choice of activities did not extend higher attaining students. The link between the assessment of individuals' performance and curriculum and lesson planning is not yet sufficiently consistent to ensure that students of all abilities make good progress in all lessons.

29. However, most teachers have appropriately high expectations, both in terms of the work to be done and standards of behaviour. Expectations are generally good, as seen in Year 7 when students learnt well because of the challenges presented by the teacher in the drama session. Students usually respond positively to lessons which actively involve them in their own learning and they are able to work well collaboratively in pairs or small groups, as in a Year 7 drama lesson looking at the nature of society.
30. The management of students is good overall. Most teachers manage students well but on occasions the teaching was unsatisfactory or poor, mainly because of a failure to impose authority on the class. Where management is good, students are interested in the challenges presented, good concentration is maintained and good or very good relationships are evident, for example in a Year 8 music lesson. Praise is often used well by adults and this encourages the students.
31. Lessons usually start on time and the pace of the lessons is often good. Where support staff are available, they are used well, but in Years 10 and 11, there is insufficient in-class support and this had an adverse impact on learning, especially in Year 10.
32. The use of assessment information to plan and/or adapt the content of the next lesson and the resources needed is good. In humanities, there were many examples of the good use of assessment and, in the best instances, clear guidance being given to students on how to achieve the next higher level. There is insufficient use of ICT across the curriculum to support teaching and learning. There has been much to catch up on and the school is committed to its effective use in raising the quality of teaching still further. The restricted availability of resources does have an impact on the teaching of ICT across the curriculum. Overall, the use of homework is satisfactory but there is not yet sufficient consistency in setting homework that challenges the students and extends the learning they have done in school. There is too much incomplete homework in students' books.
33. Marking of exercise books and other work is generally regular and helpful to students. The good practice of adding comments is not so well developed in mathematics. In English, marking is satisfactory overall, but there is great variation in the quality of marking between teachers. Marking in science and art and design, however, is less satisfactory. However, overall, individual subject targets are discussed with, and set for, students; many students find this a useful opportunity to reflect on their own performance and on how they can improve. The school is moving towards preferring more specific learning targets, even sometimes based on National Curriculum levels, where this is appropriate. Practice varies between departments, but is good in physical education, geography, history and in design and technology for students aged 11 to 14. Targets in science are not sharp enough and teachers in religious education are working towards developing a new system.
34. Students' learning is good overall and there are examples of good learning spread across all years. In Years 7 to 9, the learning is satisfactory overall, despite occasions when the management of students' behaviour in lessons is unsatisfactory. Learning in Years 7 to 9 also reflects that some classes' lessons are taught by non-specialists. In Years 10 and 11, the good learning reflects the good quality of teaching overall. There is generally good acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills in lessons. Students showed a good understanding of their own values when expressing their own views on their performance in a Year 10 dance lesson. The pace of working is often good. Students' own knowledge of learning is good, aided by the improved assessment procedures and was shown to good advantage in a Year 11 physical education lesson,

where they developed confidence in their feedback to the group when analysing the play of others.

35. The quality of teaching and learning for students with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Teachers know their students well and are positive and encouraging, which helps students contribute to lessons. Some good teaching was observed in the reading recovery and progress unit withdrawal groups and in history, where good quality resources and questioning were effectively used to stimulate and motivate students to extend their thinking and writing skills. Learning support assistants make a good contribution to students' learning through their knowledge and expertise in managing learning difficulties, such as using Braille language. However, the level of support is unsatisfactory in mainstream lessons in Years 10 and 11 for students on the special educational needs register at Stage 3. Learning support assistants are successfully involved in leading withdrawal groups for National Literacy programmes, which has, in turn, reduced the number of in-class support assistants. This is having an unfavourable impact on learning in English, mathematics and science in Years 10 and 11. The quality of planning for students on the school's register of special educational needs, particularly those with individual education plans, is inconsistent in many subject areas, though examples of good practice were seen in art and design, history and drama where special educational needs students were achieving well towards, and at times beyond, their targets. Targets on individual education plans are insufficiently subject specific; in English, targets are often not sufficiently literacy based. Students are offered lunchtime and after-school homework support in the special educational needs area and the library where they use ICT facilities. Good homework support from the youth centre's (Centre 21) programme is effective in raising confidence and self-esteem. Specific support for students with English as an additional language had just started again at the time of the inspection but the learning of these students is good. The school has identified gifted and talented students and is beginning to plan discrete support and activities for them and their learning is satisfactory.

Sixth form

36. Teaching is good in the sixth form. Most of the teaching observed was good or better: 8 per cent was excellent; a further 19 per cent very good and 49 per cent was good. While all subjects contributed to this good teaching, very good and/or excellent teaching was seen in performing arts, English, geography, biology, leisure and tourism, music and computer studies. Teachers' subject knowledge is good in the sixth form. Teachers' expectations are high. Teachers manage the students well. The quality of teachers' assessment is good and contributes well to students knowing their current standards and how to improve. The teaching of key skills is good but there is not sufficient emphasis generally on developing the students' skills in independent study and research. Students' learning is extended well by the homework assignments that teachers set. Students' learning is good overall and similar to that reported for the rest of the school.

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

37. The quality and range of curriculum provision is satisfactory. The school's vision is to provide an inclusive curriculum which allows all students to achieve their full potential and it is making good progress in achieving this. The overall length of time of the

school week is in line with the majority of similar schools and follows the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) guidelines. The majority of subjects, including religious education, have appropriate allocations of time. The exceptions are design and technology and ICT across the curriculum and this does have an adverse impact on students' attainment.

38. Problems with staffing in ICT mean that the curriculum does not meet statutory requirements. The school is endeavouring to meet the ICT requirements by ensuring that it is included in all curriculum subjects. As yet, it has not succeeded in achieving this. Similar problems in recruiting specialist teachers in design and technology result in aspects of the curriculum in this subject not being met.
39. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is enhanced by subjects such as drama and dance. The school has introduced citizenship through the medium of drama and it is proving very successful although the time for it is achieved by a reduction in the design and technology allocation. In Years 10 and 11, the full range of core GCSE subjects is offered, as well as drama and dance and a limited range of vocational subjects. The school is planning to offer more vocational courses in the near future. A small group of students in Years 10 and 11 are disapplied from the National Curriculum and follow an appropriate course arranged through the Connexions organisation. In Years 7 to 11, the curriculum opportunities are similar for all students.
40. The careers programme is good. Students receive appropriate guidance when making their option choices and there are several units of work in the personal, social, and health education programme which prepare students for the world of work. During the visit, a large number of school governors were in school offering practice interviews to Year 12 students. There is a good programme of work experience for all students in Year 10. The careers library is lacking in good, relevant material but is currently being restocked.
41. The quality and range of learning opportunities for students with special educational needs are generally satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Provision is unsatisfactory overall in Years 10 and 11. Younger students at Stage 3 receive additional literacy support to develop reading, speaking and writing skills in small withdrawal groups in Year 7 National Literacy Progress units. Numeracy support is still an area for development. Students are grouped by ability in Years 8 and 9 and students with special educational needs are supported in class. The paired reading programme is supported effectively by sixth-form and Year 10 students. Students in Years 10 and 11 with special educational needs take GCSEs or Certificates of Achievement in a range of courses. However, there are too few vocational options for them to raise their levels of achievement. The study support option in Years 10 and 11 does provide additional support but the level of resources and learning support is inadequate.
42. The contribution that the community makes to students' learning is good. The local community is involved in several areas of school life. A particular strength is in the link that the physical education department has with a number of local sports organisations. These include a well-known football club, Wimbledon, and its connection with girls' football. The local police run a regular discussion forum in the school. There are good links with the local youth clubs and health organisations. The drama department has good links with a number of theatres. The Young Engineer Project is supported by local companies who also provide good work experience contacts.
43. Relationships with partner institutions are satisfactory. There are curricular links with the four major feeder schools and the school is linked with a local beacon school. There are good curriculum links with other secondary institutions and with local colleges, including the 'Building Bridges' project for poor attenders in Years 10 and 11.

44. The provision for personal, social and health education is unsatisfactory overall. Although the programme covers an appropriate range of topics, a lack of clear co-ordination, cohesion and leadership mean that there is some repetition and omission. Some students in the same year have not received their full planned entitlement. This situation is compounded by a lack of training for tutors and poor resources for some topics. The delivery of the programme is not carefully monitored and this results in considerable variations for different tutor groups. However, there is appropriate provision for sex education and drugs awareness.
45. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Both the physical education and the performing arts departments offer a wide range of activities. These include visits to theatres and the chance to take part in a variety of performances. Extra funding for a homework club and Saturday clubs for the performing arts further enhance this provision. There is a well-organised and well-liked activities week and there are summer schools provided to improve the confidence and competence of students in both literacy and numeracy. There is a well-supported ICT club and opportunities to engage in activities such as public speaking and chess.
46. The overall provision for students' personal development is good. For spiritual development it is satisfactory. Whilst the school places a strong emphasis on developing personal values, it has not fully audited this provision across the departments and much that happens in lessons does so by default rather than design. Several departments such as drama and English play an important role in personal development, whilst in other subjects it is not specifically addressed and opportunities are missed.
47. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. All year groups have three assemblies per week. These are well prepared and contain good moral and social elements but not all the assemblies or the tutor periods include a spiritual element. The school is not meeting statutory requirements for a daily act of worship. Several other subjects, notably drama and English, make a strong contribution. In an English lesson, students were being encouraged to reflect upon spiritual issues through the reading of poems. In Year 7 drama lessons, students explore a fictitious community and are required to explain the nature of 'faith'. Recent changes in the religious education syllabus now include moments for meditation and reflection. A Year 7 class was being encouraged to consider how the beauty and design of nature is often used to argue for the existence of God.
48. The provision for moral development is good. A well-understood code of conduct, produced in collaboration with both parents and students, provides a framework of values that encourages students to respect and value others. This is reinforced in a positive manner by teachers who provide good role models and expect high standards of behaviour. Several subjects such as geography and history examine moral issues, and religious education presents students with opportunities to discuss important moral issues. A Year 11 group was sensitively discussing the question of euthanasia. Regular visits by the local police provide a forum for debate.
49. The provision for social development is also good. There are good opportunities for students to take responsibilities in school. An active school council considers various topics, and plays an important role in school communications. In several subjects, students are encouraged to work in small groups. Students help out with such things as library duties, reception duties and in helping to run clubs. In Year 11, students can become prefects; a role which they carry out in a mature and responsible manner. Students are actively involved in such things as fund raising for charity, the collection of

hampers for old people at Christmas and taking part in school productions. An activities week provides a residential experience for a large number of students, to which they respond well. Several subjects, including citizenship and sociology, address social issues well.

50. The provision for cultural development is good. A major contribution is made by the performing arts departments who organise a considerable number of activities. During the inspection, the whole of Year 8 went to see a play in the West End. Music and dance explore our musical heritage. A Year 10 dance lesson was based upon the music of Madonna. Joint trips to the local community are organised by the humanities department, whilst the modern foreign languages department arranges visits to Germany. Students are encouraged to reflect upon the cultural diversity of our society in these subjects and also in religious education and English. In art and design, students explore the cultural heritage of several societies including both Western civilisation and societies further afield, as in their work on aboriginal art. Assemblies cover the major festivals of the main religions that are found in our society.

Sixth form

51. The curriculum provision in the sixth form is good. The school offers a wide range of options although shortage of student numbers means that some subjects are not taken up, for example all the science subjects in some years. Several vocational courses are offered with healthy numbers evident in some of the options. The teaching of key skills is somewhat fragmented, and the option choices of some students restrict their ability to take key skills. The school is in breach of the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in not offering religious education in the sixth form.
52. The courses on offer build not only on the strength of the school but complement those available in the surrounding area. Students are given good advice and made fully aware of the options available to them. Even so, in some subjects, there are occasionally high drop-out rates, for example in mathematics.
53. The curriculum is enhanced by enrichment activities that make a strong contribution to students' personal development. They are involved in the life of the school in several areas. As well as acting as responsible prefects, they assist with paired reading with younger students and they help in the running of some of the clubs. During the visit, a group made very good presentations to the school during morning assemblies. The school's good provision of extra-curricular activities is open to sixth-formers and they take good advantage of the opportunities offered.
54. Students are encouraged to make effective use of their study time and their progress is carefully monitored. The curriculum is inclusive with specific support being given to students with special educational needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

55. The school makes satisfactory provision for the health, safety and welfare of its students. Students like and respect their teachers and are confident that there is always at least one person with whom they can share problems or concerns. This is often their form tutor, who moves through the years with them developing a good knowledge of them as individuals. Arrangements to introduce them to the school before starting in Year 7, together with the support provided by sixth-form mentors, who have been trained for this role by 'Childline', ensure they settle quickly and happily. Supervision at break and lunchtime is given high priority by school management and there is a good

level of presence by senior members of staff. There is a suitably trained person with responsibility for child protection and the school's policy and procedures meet local requirements. All members of staff have had a recent briefing to ensure they are up-to-date with procedures.

56. There is a suitable health and safety policy and the recently appointed person with responsibility has a good understanding of issues that need to be tackled. There are effective arrangements to deal with first aid emergencies and prescribed medicines. Fire drills are planned well to ensure students and staff know what to do in the event of an emergency. The school is aware of requirements in respect of the testing of equipment and appliances and these are up to date. A good start has been made on risk assessment procedures, particularly in subject areas and for school trips and visits. Risk assessments have not, however, been completed on a whole-school basis and there are not procedures in place for their regular review.
57. The school has recently reviewed procedures to promote high levels of attendance and behaviour. These are well planned to promote good standards but have not been in use for long enough for an impact to be seen, for example in reducing numbers of exclusions or improving the overall level of attendance. The behaviour policy and guidance for staff in its implementation are clearly set out and supported well by an unambiguous code of conduct that is displayed in classrooms throughout the school. The school's efforts to ensure that these are known well to staff, students and parents have ensured that they are used consistently and what will happen as the result of misbehaviour is fully understood by students. Strategies to manage behaviour in classrooms are used well by most teachers and support an effective learning environment well. Although there has been an initial rise in the rate of exclusions at the school since September, parents, students and staff agree that standards of behaviour have recently improved as a result of procedures adopted. Where behaviour causes concern, the school seeks to involve parents at an early stage in finding a way forward. Procedures used in dealing with excluded students meet requirements and good support is provided for them when they return to school. There is an effective awards system that recognises achievement in all aspects of school life. The anti-bullying policy and procedures have effectively reduced incidents. An anti-bullying culture is promoted well through personal, social, and health education lessons, as seen during the inspection week where work with Year 7 was centred around increasing their confidence in sharing concerns. Sixth-form mentors have been especially trained to support younger students who are worried about bullying; although this arrangement is relatively new they are gaining the confidence of the younger students. For a small number of disaffected students, usually boys in Years 10 and 11, the school arranges part-time accredited vocational courses as a supplement to studying core subjects in school. These are successful in promoting improved attitudes and attendance.
58. The school works closely with the educational welfare officer who is in school several times each week. All unexplained and discernible patterns of absences are followed up by the school before referring them to the educational welfare officer, thus ensuring best use is made of the time available. The recently introduced computer system to monitor attendance is used well to identify unsatisfactory attendance. Absence lists are produced daily after morning registration and the school has a policy of contacting parents on the first day of unexplained absence. This system is not yet fully effective because of staffing difficulties. Parents are, however, increasingly aware that they will be contacted if no reason for their child's absence has been given. Students are registered on computer at the beginning of every lesson, enabling the school to identify quickly unexpected absences after registration. Registration procedures at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions ensure there is an accurate record of

those present. Students who arrive or leave during the course of the day are suitably recorded. There is a senior staff presence outside the school at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions to hurry students in, and to challenge those who are late. Poor punctuality results in detention during either break or lunchtime when students make up the time they have lost. The school seeks to raise the awareness of parents about poor attendance by sending home each term a printout of their children's attendance. The school is aware of the need to analyse the levels of attendance of different groups, for example refugees, within the school, but is still working on how to extract this information from computer files. Annual progress reports to parents produced last year provide levels of attendance overall and a grade for each subject, however, insufficient information is given to highlight the impact of poor attendance on individual children's work.

59. The quality of care and welfare for students with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Students' needs are identified well and the new Code of Practice implemented. However, review and movement up and down the stages on the register are not monitored adequately. Students with behavioural difficulties are receiving inconsistent support in mainstream lessons. The quality of care and welfare for those students with statements is good, for example students with visual impairment and a range of other learning difficulties are effectively assessed and comments fed back to students and parents. Annual reviews fully meet requirements and attendance of parents at review meetings is high. Parents and outside support specialists are also involved at all stages of assessment. The quality of support from external agencies is good.
60. An outline of the personal, social, and health education programme includes all the expected areas of study to prepare students effectively for making decisions affecting their lives in and beyond school. Despite some well thought-out provision, arrangements for co-ordination and monitoring to ensure coherence and progression on a whole-school basis are not secure. Some good examples of effective personal, social, and health education were seen during the inspection, for example in Year 7 in coping with bullying, but this was not consistent across the school. The school has made an effective start on its programme to develop citizenship skills and the links between this and drama lessons have resulted in good levels of interest from students. There is a strong tutor system that results in staff knowing their students well. Although planning for tutor time each morning often results in the provision of good quality support and guidance for students, this is not consistently so across the school. The personal achievements of students are recorded effectively in their 'records of achievement'. Students receive good quality careers information and advice that starts in Year 8 with an introduction to jobs and continues with work in Year 9 that supports decisions made about choices for GCSEs. Suitable support from the local careers service is provided throughout Years 9 to 11 and is supplemented by an effective work experience programme. Good opportunities for personal development are provided through the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities on offer. The student council is in the process of being re-focused to provide opportunities for students to make their views known throughout all year groups. In Year 10, students are able to volunteer and train as librarians and the role of Year 11 prefects is well defined to provide them with good opportunities to take responsibility and use initiative.
61. Procedures for assessing students' attainment and academic progress are good overall. The collection and compilation of school data on students' performance are very good. Senior management now has available figures on students' performance before they arrive at the school and in their progress through the school. Senior and middle management and all teachers have access to this information; they use it efficiently and

well to measure and check on students' performance and progress and to set targets. In some cases, teachers use the information to inform curricular organisation, such as setting in mathematics.

62. Procedures for monitoring and supporting students' academic progress are good. Subject departments monitor students' performance against the standards required by the National Curriculum three times a year and the results are sent home to parents and guardians. The results are also fed back to senior management, who check for evidence of underachievement overall. Where appropriate, effective action is taken within a subject department or by a head of year to secure improvement.
63. In all departments, students are made aware of their level of achievement in National Curriculum terms and students understand fully what level they are on, for example in geography and history. The good practice, where National Curriculum levels are used in the regular marking of students' work, is not seen throughout the school however. In modern foreign languages and science, marking includes these levels to some degree, but teachers in mathematics, art and design and music for example, do not use them with any consistency. In English, teachers put them in their mark books, but do not necessarily share the levels with their students.
64. Nevertheless, many departments use the information well, which they gain from students' test results and from assessing their work, to make alterations to their teaching programmes and schemes of work. The science department has adopted a new GCSE course and revised their schemes of work as a result of low attainment among 14 to 16 year old students. The history department has made very good provision for their gifted and talented 14 to 16-year-olds. In modern foreign languages, a modular GCSE course has been adopted, following a decline in results.

Sixth form

65. Students are well informed about courses available in the sixth form and most are able to enrol on the Programmes of Study they have chosen, although in a few cases, classes clash making this impossible. There are good levels of satisfaction from students. This is because of the benefits gained from working with teachers who know them well, together with the small group sizes that make possible good levels of individual support in lessons. Students are confident that teachers will quickly identify and take action where they are not on track with their work. Both target setting and marking are effective in helping them to understand what they must do to improve. Students are encouraged to take responsibility and as a result, grow in maturity, for example through training as peer mentors, in their duties as senior prefects, in helping to organise and run clubs and sporting activities at lunchtime and in supporting staff on trips and visits with younger students. Opportunities to find out about opportunities for further study or work at age 18 are planned well with support from the local careers service, work experience, a visit to a higher education convention and encouragement to attend open days at individual universities and colleges where appropriate. A careers adviser holds a regular 'drop in' session each week to provide ongoing support on an informal basis.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

66. The large majority of parents are satisfied with what the school provides and achieves and inspection evidence confirms their positive views. They say their children are expected to work hard and that they make suitable progress. Most feel comfortable about approaching the school with queries and concerns. Some have reservations

about standards of behaviour; they acknowledge, however, that these have improved recently since a review of procedures. There is concern from some about the quality of homework. Inspectors found that, although work given for their children to do at home is satisfactory overall, there is an inconsistency in standards and regularity that may affect some students more than others. A few parents feel that the school does not work closely with them. Inspectors do not agree with this view since the school has more than the expected number of opportunities for parents to consult with tutors and subject teachers, and procedures used to deal with concerns show clearly that parents are encouraged to be involved in finding a way forward when their children have problems.

67. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents through the information it provides is good overall. Together, the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents provide a suitable range of information about routines, expectations and achievements. These, together with an information evening for prospective parents and a subsequent 'Welcome' interview for each family, ensure parents are well informed when their children transfer into Year 7. School procedures for dealing with any matter of concern about individual students include making contact with parents at an early stage; in particular where behaviour is a problem, the school seeks to work with parents to find a satisfactory way forward. There are good opportunities for parents to find out about how their children are getting on at school through regular consultation interviews. There are formal arrangements for them to meet with either subject teachers or the relevant form tutor each term. In addition, parents of students in Year 7 are invited to discuss how their children are settling into the school during the first term. At times when their children must make choices, the school arranges information evenings to ensure parents are fully aware of the options available. Students have twice yearly reviews of their progress and parents are invited to attend these; giving them the opportunity to find out how their children are getting on and also to discuss and understand the targets that are being set for them. There is a useful curriculum guide that explains to parents what will be studied in each year group and how they can help. Newsletters issued each half-term ensure parents are kept up to date with school news and diary dates.
68. Annual progress reports provide for parents a broad outline of the programmes of study in each subject and information about the levels that their children are working at in relation to what is expected for their age. There is, however, little information to help parents understand what their children know, understand and can do in each subject. Attitudes to work, behaviour and personal development are reported well and levels of attendance provided. Where attendance falls below expected levels, information about the impact this has on standards achieved is not consistently well reported. There are good examples of target setting that help parents understand what their children must do to improve, particularly so in English and mathematics. The results of individual testing at age 14 years are suitably reported. There are effective arrangements for parents to discuss progress reports with staff and most take advantage of these.
69. The involvement of parents with the school has a satisfactory impact on their children's learning overall. There is a thriving 'parent and teacher' association that contributes well to learning and the school community through the range of social and fundraising events organised. There are good levels of attendance at consultations organised for parents to discuss their children's progress and targets, and increasing interest from parents in how well their children are doing. Parents show interest in the work their children are asked to do at home, many check and sign weekly homework records regularly and use the student planners well as a means of two-way communication with form tutors. Those attending appreciated the information evening recently held for parents about homework. Despite the high levels of interest in helping their children to do well shown

by many parents, there are too many who do not support the work of the school by ensuring their children attend regularly.

Sixth form

70. Both parents and students express good levels of satisfaction with sixth-form provision and standards achieved. Students are pleased that the number of courses on offer has improved over the last two years, and feel that the overriding benefits of staying at the school for the sixth form are their good relationships with staff and the high levels of support offered through small class sizes. Very few students do not get the choice of subjects they prefer, although a small minority cannot attend key skills or general studies lessons because of timetable clashes. Opportunities for parents to discuss progress and targets with teachers have resulted in parents being involved and able to support their children with the work they do at home. There were limited opportunities during the inspection to observe the personal, moral and social education programme, although some useful careers advice was offered during the week. Many sixth-formers take up positions of responsibility in the school, often in support of younger students. Students did express dissatisfaction with aspects of the sixth-form accommodation, both the study and recreational provision and facilities for some subjects like ICT.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

71. The leadership and management of the school are good. Since September 2001, the new headteacher, the leadership team, heads of department and heads of year have focused heavily on the major problems facing the school. Overall, there has been a good improvement in relation to them. There is now a clear educational direction to the work of the school and there is a consistent focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning and raising achievement. The leadership of the headteacher is very good in focusing the school's drive and ensuring that it is successfully reflected in both the day-to-day operations and the strategic planning. Through his vision, drive and commitment, he has been able to begin to turn the school round and attainment and behaviour in most lessons are improving. He has had considerable success in securing the return of former staff to the school which is having a positive impact in many areas, and of taking the current staff with him in responding to improvements which are needed. There is now a good ethos reflected in the shared commitment to succeed.
72. The drive to improve the quality of teaching has been successful. Teaching has improved in quality in comparison to that reported at the last inspection. Students do achieve well overall. Students' attainment observed in lessons is an improvement on standards achieved in external tests and examinations in 2001. Whilst the targets for students' performance in GCSE have been reduced, they are a more accurate reflection of what the current Year 11 are likely to achieve.
73. The improvement in teaching has been achieved by identifying and making clear to staff the school's expectations. There has been a comprehensive system of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching. The result has been a significant reduction in the incidence of unsatisfactory teaching and a considerable rise in the proportion of teaching that is identified as good or better. This improvement was reflected in the observations during the inspection. Managers at all levels are aware that while much has been achieved, there still remains work to be done, especially in ensuring that there is a consistent planning of tasks and resources to match students' specific needs for all lessons.

74. There is still a number of requirements on the list of breaches of statutory requirements identified at the last inspection which have not been met. The requirement for a daily act of collective worship is still not met. The school has improved the provision for this and the breach is mainly in the consistency of approach of teachers when it is their responsibility in tutorial time. The school is now working to the spirit of the legislation. The curricular provision does not meet statutory requirements in ICT and design and technology but the appropriate improvements have been made in history, geography, art and design and music. In addition, currently, the school is not meeting statutory requirements in respect of risk management.
75. The leadership team has changed since the appointment of the new headteacher and the promotion of one of the deputy headteachers to a headship. It is settling to the new roles and structures adopted and they work well as a cohesive team. The work of the leadership team has ensured that the school's performance management strategy has been implemented well and used to reinforce the drive for effective teaching and learning. There is good use of assessment and other data to help identify trends and to target areas for improvement. There is evidence of much good leadership in departments, for example in drama, art and design, English, geography, history, ICT and science and it is very good in physical education. Where there have been recent appointments in mathematics and religious education, they are beginning to have a positive impact on their departments.
76. The governors have continued their development since the last inspection. They have become more proactive in their role in determining the school's direction and priorities and they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They fulfil their role well in holding the school to account but have not made sufficient progress in ensuring that statutory requirements are met.
77. The special educational needs department is managed well within the resources it receives. Organisation, funding and accommodation have been effectively improved since the last inspection. Teamwork between the co-ordinator and the learning support assistants is effective in promoting a caring and positive environment where students feel secure. Staff share a high commitment to inclusion and special educational needs students are fully integrated into mainstream classes with considerable success. Guidance for the new Code of Practice is already in place and staff training is part of the current school improvement plan. Monitoring aspects of assessment and care and welfare for students on the school's register and support for additional administration of the new Code of Practice are inadequate. Resources are satisfactory and ICT programs are being appropriately developed. Additional funding for in-class support for students with significant needs, such as educational behaviour and learning difficulties, is insufficient.
78. The school's development planning continues to be good. Since September 2001, there has been very good identification of the school's priorities for improvement and good action taken in relation to them. As yet, the action taken has not resulted in improved levels of attendance or a reduction in the incidence of exclusions. However, students are now very clear as to the standards of behaviour expected and the result of non-compliance. Behaviour in lessons and around the school during the inspection was good. The school is aware that a high incidence of exclusions makes it difficult to raise the school's level of attendance. It is also tackling a parental culture of condoning absence for family holidays.
79. Staffing is unsatisfactory. The match of staff experience and qualifications to the needs of the curriculum overall is unsatisfactory and this has an adverse impact on standards

in some subjects. There are insufficient suitably qualified teachers in ICT for effective delivery of the curriculum to all students in Years 7 to 11. There is a similar position in design and technology affecting the curriculum offered to Years 7 to 9. Some classes in Years 7 to 9 are taught by non-specialist teachers in history, geography and mathematics. The school, in common with other schools nationally, does find it difficult to recruit staff in some subjects. To improve staffing stability, the governors have approved a new recruitment and retention policy since September 2001. Where learning support assistants are available, they work effectively, but there are insufficient to provide enough support to all the students who need it, especially in Years 10 and 11. Where appropriate, most departments have technician support, although there is none for art and design. There is a high level of administrative support in the school; this staffing reduces the administrative load of teachers and allows them to be more effectively deployed teaching.

80. The school has a good strategy for appraisal and performance management. The recently appointed headteacher has introduced a new scheme under which line management and performance management have been brought together. Support staff are not yet included in this strategy, but their needs are being tackled through the school's moves to achieve Investor in People status. The school has a good and comprehensive scheme for the induction of new staff, including newly qualified teachers. Close links with local university departments over a number of years indicate that the school is an effective provider for initial teacher training.
81. Since the last inspection report, the school has made considerable efforts to improve the accommodation but overall, it is unsatisfactory. There are shortages of adequate rooms in several subject areas, many areas are in need of decoration and there is a backlog of maintenance. Litter, though less than at the time of the last inspection, still remains a problem in the canteen. However, the new perimeter fence and the video security system have drastically reduced graffiti and damage. The site manager and his staff are hardworking and keen to improve the environment and further improvements are planned.
82. In English, science, geography and history, accommodation is good, with spacious rooms and departmental accommodation situated near to each other. The busy library is a welcoming, split-level area, offering much better facilities than at the time of the last inspection. Facilities in physical education are barely adequate and the positioning of the mobile hut used for boys' changing results in mud being taken into school on shoes, a problem which is aggravated by the poor drainage of the site. However, this problem will be resolved when the new sports hall facilities are completed for the next school year. In design and technology, there is no graphics room and other rooms are too small for the size of the classes. In ICT, there are insufficient computer rooms to enable ICT to be delivered effectively across the curriculum. In music, accommodation is poor with insufficient practice areas or storage facilities.
83. The overall level of resources available in departments is satisfactory and is sufficient for the delivery of the curriculum in Years 7 to 11, though there is an insufficient number of computers for the students to use. The ratio of students to computers is below the national average and some of the computer stock is old. The library facilities, which were strongly criticised in the previous inspection report, have been significantly improved. The library and resource centre is now an attractive facility providing students with a good working base. There is still insufficient use of the facilities by students for research purposes. This is partly because of the restrictions placed on the use of e-mails and CD-Roms and the reticence of some departments to recommend resources for this purpose.

84. The school's management of its finances is good. The management of the budget is efficiently carried out. The school has carefully linked its improvement plan to the budget and closely monitors expenditure. Principles of best value for money are rigorously applied, for example in the recent review of heating and lighting costs which revealed considerable savings could be made by opting out of the local authority's scheme. Unit costs are high, with staffing and administration costs being particularly expensive when compared to similar schools. The percentage of time teachers spend on average in contact with classes is low compared to national figures. In endeavouring to raise standards, the school has appointed experienced staff, with consequent increased costs. Observations during the inspection indicate that this strategy is working. All designated funds have been efficiently and effectively directed to the purpose for which they are intended, for example the homework club which operates in the local youth centre. The effectiveness of the school is satisfactory and it gives satisfactory value for money.

Sixth form

85. Leadership and management in the sixth form are good. There is a clear educational direction which is reflected in the commitment to the best possible provision for its students. This provision is monitored effectively. The work in the sixth form reflects the school's values well and there is a similar drive to raise standards as in the rest of the school. The key issue from the last inspection relating to the provision of religious education in the sixth form has still not been met. Support for students with special educational needs is good in the sixth form and helps them integrate well into all aspects of the provision.
86. Accommodation for the sixth-form work is unsatisfactory. Although improved since the last inspection, accommodation is still unsatisfactory as study facilities are not good enough. The area lacks corrals or booths for individual study. The location of the room results in students being disturbed by noise from the adjacent social area. The unsatisfactory accommodation in design and technology, ICT and music have an impact on sixth-form work, and in art and design there is no specialist area dedicated to sixth-form work.
87. The overall provision of staffing for the sixth form is satisfactory. There is a good match of teachers' qualifications and experience to the needs of the curriculum in most areas. There are some problems in vocational courses where teachers do not have a business/economics background and in sociology where not all the teachers have formal qualifications in the subject. The school's arrangements for appraisal and performance management are just as effective as for the rest of the school. Professional development for the staff has been thorough. Most teachers have been well prepared for the demands of the new AS and A2 syllabuses, although some new science teachers are lacking confidence in these areas. The professional needs of non-specialist teachers of vocational subjects require more attention.
88. A satisfactory level of resources is available in most departments to support the work of students on post-GCSE courses, though there is a weakness in mathematics where there are insufficient graphical calculators. Access to ICT resources is unsatisfactory and some students, especially those on vocational courses, are rightly critical of the lack of access to e-mail facilities and the restrictions placed on the use of CD-Roms in the resource centre. These restrictions limit their opportunities to undertake research assignments and have an adverse impact on the standard of their work.

89. Sixth-form costs do exceed the amount of revenue these students bring into the school but the amount is not excessive and the costs and benefits have been carefully considered and reviewed by the school. The school is committed to expanding the sixth form and believes that this is a worthwhile investment, as do the inspection team. The governing body has a good strategic plan for developing the sixth form and monitors the developing situation closely. Provision in the sixth form is good and effective and provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

90. The governors should include in their post-inspection action plan the way they intend to respond to the following issues in order to raise standards in the school. The governors, headteacher and staff should:

- 1) Improve standards achieved by students in national tests and public examinations by:
- improving the vocational options available to students in Years 10 and 11;
 - improving students' capabilities to research and carry out independent learning;
 - targeting teaching appropriately so that greater numbers of students, particularly those identified as gifted and talented, achieve the highest grades; and
 - monitoring and evaluating lessons to ensure that opportunities for students to work at the highest levels are available as they already are in subjects such as drama.

(Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 91, 113, 124, 126, 132, 137, 141, 149, 160, 165, 172)

- 2) Improve students' attendance by:
- sustaining the drive to improve attendance within the school;
 - allowing the administrative staff the time to make the appropriate calls to parents without distraction;
 - using appropriate technology to telephone students who are absent;
 - identifying more directly in reports linkage between attendance and students' performance; and
 - continuing to identify and reward those students with good or better attendance.

(Paragraphs 8, 18, 19, 57, 58, 69, 78, 138)

- 3) Put the statutory curriculum into place where it is currently absent by:
- improving the provision of specialist accommodation; and
 - improving the availability of specialist teachers in subjects such as ICT and design and technology.

(Paragraphs 23, 34, 37, 38, 74, 79, 81, 82, 130, 141, 144, 148, 167, 170)

- 4) Improve the consistency with which teachers plan to meet the full range of students' needs within their classes by:
- sharing the excellent practice that is evident already in the school;
 - supporting teachers in their planning of different tasks and resources;
 - improving the availability of in-class support where there are high numbers of students on the register for special educational needs; and

- continuing to make it a major focus of the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching in lesson observations by the leadership team and heads of department.

(Paragraphs 28, 35, 99, 118, 122, 135, 145, 177)

5) Improve the provision for personal, social, and health education by:

- agreeing a programme for personal, social, and health education across all year groups from 7 to 13;
- implementing this programme across all tutor groups in each year group;
- monitoring and evaluating the teaching of the programme across all tutor groups; and
- providing training and support in those areas where tutors are less confident or have less expertise.

(Paragraphs 44, 60)

Sixth form

(1) Improve the sixth form accommodation by:

- reviewing the facilities available for and the location of the study facilities;
- improving the facilities in the sixth-form common room; and
- improving specialist facilities in subject areas such as art and design.

(Paragraphs 86, 203, 204, 208)

(2) Improve the attendance of students by:

- changing the timing of morning registration; and
- rewarding students with excellent attendance.

(Paragraph 19)

(3) Improve the retention rate by:

- monitoring it across all sixth-form subjects; and
- ensuring that students have appropriate GCSE grades before starting on AS courses.

(Paragraphs 52, 185, 189, 191)

(4) Extend the sixth-form curriculum by the inclusion of religious education by:

- implementing the school's plans for adding religious education to the sixth-form curriculum.

(Paragraphs 51, 85, 214)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	137
	Sixth form	37
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students		55

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 - 11							
Number	5	16	62	45	8	1	0
Percentage	4	12	45	33	6	1	0.0
Sixth form							
Number	3	7	18	8	1	0	0
Percentage	8	19	49	22	3	0.0	0.0

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

Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	945	105
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	144	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	31	2
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	252	3

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14

Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving
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42

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	10.7
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	108	86	194

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	57	61	66
	Girls	59	43	41
	Total	116	104	107
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	60 (67)	54 (55)	55 (41)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	26 (21)	28 (29)	19 (13)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	58	69	66
	Girls	59	49	42
	Total	117	118	108
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	61 (64)	61 (58)	56 (42)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	19 (10)	30 (27)	16 (10)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	100	83	183

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	23	86	95
	Girls	33	72	74
	Total	56	158	169
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	31 (42)	86 (93)	92 (95)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	32.3 (36.0)
	National	39.0 (38.4)

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

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations	Year	Male	Female	Total
	2001	30	55	85

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	6	24	30
	Average point score per candidate	8.8	16.0	14.6
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	18	17.5

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	5	19	24	2	7	9
	Average point score per candidate	8.6	16.3	14.7	5	10.9	9.6
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.9	17.4	9.8	11.4	10.6

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

Ethnic background of students

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	6
Black – other	2
Indian	13
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	1
White	1004
Any other minority ethnic group	18

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	5	0
Black – African heritage	2	0
Black – other	8	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	247	4
Other minority ethnic groups	11	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	65.7
Number of students per qualified teacher	16.0

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	369

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	70.1
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	25.8
Key Stage 4	22.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	3,243,158
Total expenditure	3,248,316
Expenditure per pupil	3,030
Balance brought forward from previous year	70,605
Balance carried forward to next year	65,447

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	37.9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	33.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	6.6

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1050
Number of questionnaires returned	251

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	29	59	8	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	33	58	5	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	17	57	20	3	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	54	20	4	3
The teaching is good.	24	63	6	1	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	54	14	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	50	4	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	49	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	27	52	16	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	24	59	6	2	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	26	58	10	2	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	57	6	2	8

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- The teaching methods used in the best lessons.
- The range and quality of the curriculum.
- Departmental leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- Targeting students with special educational needs and higher attaining students so they achieve more.
- Making marking consistent and effective.
- Implementing rigorous systems for monitoring teaching and learning.

91. The GCSE examination results for English in 2001 were below the national average and were also below average in comparison with the results of students in similar schools. Girls achieved much better results than boys. The picture for results in English literature is little different. The standard of students' current work in Year 11 is in line with the national average. Results in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were in line with the national average. There was very little difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Students' current work in Year 9 is in line with the national average.
92. The attainment of students is below average when they enter the school but they make good progress because by the end of Year 9, their standards of reading and writing are in line with national averages and are as good as those of students in similar schools. When talking about the books they have read, the majority are able to support their opinions by referring to a text and can analyse language to show how writers achieve different effects. A particular strength of the reading is its expressiveness, with boys, in particular, bringing alive words on the page when they read aloud. In their writing, the majority of students are able to organise their ideas, show good levels of accuracy in spelling and punctuation and can write in appropriate ways in different forms.
93. By the time they reach the end of Year 11, students make satisfactory progress. Although standards were below the national average in 2001, students made good progress on the basis of their test results at the end of Year 9. Current work shows that progress generally is satisfactory. The majority of students understand how writers are influenced by their cultural background, how they create characters and develop narrative. They are able to compare and contrast the work of different writers. They are doing especially well in their appreciation of poetry and know how writers achieve different effects through the use of imaginative language. They are writing at greater length and with more sense of style. Throughout the school, students with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress, but their rate of progress is adversely affected by the lack of consistency of all teachers' planning to meet their individual needs more effectively. A similar picture is evident for the progress of higher attaining students.
94. While overall standards are broadly in line with the national average, throughout the school, there is evidence that a significant number of students is not yet reaching

average standards in reading and writing and is still making errors when spelling simple common words. Some continue to have difficulty in organising their own ideas. Work is marred by awkward or clumsy expressions. Some lack confidence when reading aloud and their understanding is mostly limited to a literal interpretation of what they read. These weaknesses are most evident amongst younger students although some persist and can be found in all years.

95. The school's development planning recognises this problem and encourages all departments to help improve standards of literacy. English lessons often begin with a quick 'starter activity' such as the spelling of common plurals, and most subject teachers are now identifying key words for students to learn. In history, key words are emphasised at the beginning of every lesson and teachers ensure that commonly misspelled words, such as 'parliament' and 'propaganda', are accurately written. Students are also encouraged to write at length which helps them to develop a sense of style. Opportunities for students to write in this way are not being exploited to the same degree in lessons in science, design and technology or ICT.
96. Further initiatives include the successful start made by the school in introducing the National Literacy Progress Units in Year 7 for those students whose standards of reading and writing are not yet at average levels but who are now making good progress. Students in Years 7 and 8 whose reading skills need to be improved also have an opportunity each week for further practice by reading to older students in tutor time. This is encouraging students to have a positive view of reading. Students take part in the annual 'Readathon', and recreational reading is sometimes encouraged in tutor time; both these strategies help students to develop the habit of reading. The library is also playing an important part in the school's drive to improve levels of literacy. Many students frequent this bright and appealing area, especially before the start of morning school. They are making good use of the stock which is fresh and has a broad appeal. The library also has the technology to record students' patterns of book borrowing, but this has not yet been exploited to target the extension of students' reading.
97. The overall standard of speaking and listening is satisfactory. Students listen best when they are required to do so for short periods of time and when the teacher has a clear purpose in mind. Good examples of this were seen in drama lessons in Year 7 when students were required to listen to one another's views so that they could build up a composite picture of a mythical country. The majority of students can express a point of view coherently although their language sometimes lacks precision. In English lessons generally, and in the curriculum as a whole, students do not get enough opportunities to practise speaking at length because they are mostly required to provide answers to teachers' questions.
98. The quality of teaching in English is good overall and in just over half the lessons observed, the quality of the teaching was good. The use of techniques to help students learn is a strength of these lessons. For instance, in order to help students write more effectively, the teacher of a Year 8 class made use of the work of an established author. By underlining the way in which the writer used words to create an effect, students were helped to focus on those features of the writer's style which helped to make description vivid. In turn, their writing was enhanced when they came to use similar techniques in their own work. The teacher of a Year 10 class made particularly good use of the overhead projector to enlarge the text of two poems which were being compared and contrasted so that handwritten annotations could clearly be seen and discussed by all students. Further strengths of the teaching include good subject knowledge, which helps students understand and appreciate the books they study, and the effective management of time to ensure that lessons move along at a fast pace.

99. In lessons which are satisfactory, teachers have clear objectives, set appropriate learning tasks and maintain good discipline, all of which help the majority of students to make progress. However, in these lessons, students with special educational needs are not making as much progress as they might because their individual needs are not being planned for and higher attaining students are not being helped to achieve at the higher levels which are appropriate to their abilities. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, the weakest students were given little help with their writing, lost interest and showed no evidence of progress. Overall, marking is inconsistent and does not give enough guidance to students on how they might improve their work in order to reach higher standards.
100. In lessons as a whole, the attitudes of most students are positive and behaviour is satisfactory. For the most part, students respond well to a curriculum which has both breadth and balance and the good curriculum on offer is a strength of the department because of its variety and interest. Students study a wide range of texts and have opportunities to write in different forms and with different sorts of readers in mind. They are given scope to use ICT for wordprocessing and in some Year 11 lessons, for research. Some lessons make an important contribution to students' personal development. For instance, before writing their own poetry, a Year 7 class were encouraged to think about and discuss the significance of the process of change after reading a poem on the cycle of life by a primary school pupil. The curriculum is further enhanced by special events such as visits by popular authors.
101. The department is well led and managed and reflects the overall aims of the school in the different aspects of its work. Particularly good features are the accurate assessment of students' levels of achievement and students' termly self-assessment of writing in Years 7 to 9 which is also made available to parents for comment. Some monitoring of teaching and learning is taking place but this needs to be more frequent and systematic if it is to have an effect on standards. Despite recent severe staffing difficulties and changes to the school's intake, progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards by the end of Year 9 have been maintained and the curriculum has been strengthened. However, the standards of students' work by the end of Year 11, are not as high and the quality of teaching is less good than for the younger students. The department is outward looking and has the will and the capacity to improve. There has been a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Drama

102. The quality of work produced by the drama department is one of the strengths of the school. Standards are high. Results are well above national averages in GCSE examinations and in 2001, all candidates achieved passes at grades A*-C. For 16 of the students this was the highest grade they achieved in all their subjects. Well over half of the candidates attained grades A* or A. In 2001, all candidates achieved a pass at grades A-C in both the AS-level examination and the A-level examination.
103. From the time they enter the school, students are helped to learn to use dramatic representation to explore and present ideas and issues. They make rapid progress in their movement work. They show good concentration. Students on the GCSE examination course are able to show that these skills are further strengthened and refined and that they have learned to apply them in a wide range of demanding contexts. They are beginning to learn and understand the significance of such terms as 'mantle of the expert' and 'physical theatre'. They are learning to reflect on their own work and to evaluate it effectively.

104. The overall quality of teaching is very good and in some lessons it is excellent. All teachers have a deep understanding of the purpose of drama and have a very strong grasp of the techniques which help students learn. Lessons are well planned, objectives clearly stated and time is used well. A major strength is the way in which all teachers create a disciplined environment in which students are expected to express and develop their own ideas in an atmosphere of trust. Because of this, students focus effectively on using their skills of language and movement to develop and present ideas. Those with special educational needs are fully integrated and their progress is as good as that of other students. In a Year 7 lesson, two students for whom English is an additional language were well integrated with the rest of the class. Students are encouraged to succeed through the use of an effective rewards system. Some students in Year 7 have not yet developed the sustained concentration seen in the classes of older students but this helps to illustrate the very good achievement of students in this subject overall. Work is further enhanced by the flourishing drama clubs, by visits to theatres and by visits from travelling companies.
105. The department is very well led and managed. There is a strong sense of direction to all its work but it is especially successful in establishing a curriculum with a clear sense of progression. From Years 7 to 9, all students are encouraged to develop a wide range of skills and can then choose to study the subject in more depth in Years 10 and 11. They then have the possibility of studying the subject at a higher level in the sixth form. The department is especially effective in reflecting the aims of the school and is very well documented. Assessment practice is well developed. The department expects the highest standards from all students and meets with a large measure of success in achieving this aim. Students enjoy drama lessons and grow in confidence because they are aware of the high quality of their work.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Attainment at GCSE.
- Teaching is good overall; lessons are well planned and have clear objectives.

Areas for improvement

- To raise attainment at the end of Year 9.
- Development of ICT.

106. The attainment of students on entry to the school is below national standards. The overall results of National Curriculum tests for 14-year-olds in 2001 are below national expectations and below average when compared with schools having a similar intake. However, results at the higher Levels (Level 7+) have shown a significant increase during the period 1999 to 2001. This improvement is above the national trend. The results in mathematics compare equally with science, but less well with English. Progress based on their attainment in the National Curriculum tests from the age of eleven (i.e. at the end of their primary school careers), overall is marginally less than the national average.
107. GCSE results in 2001 at grades A*-C and A*-G were both slightly above the national average. This represents significant gains on the results the same students achieved at age 14. Students' progress in mathematics is very favourable when compared to their performance in most other subjects. During this academic year, the department has initiated an early entry policy for the more able intermediate students. Twenty- seven

students were entered and twenty-three gained B-C grades. Overall, the GCSE results show a significant improvement since the last inspection and the results during the last two years have been consistently good.

108. Standards of work seen in lessons broadly reflect the most recent results and the level of students' attainment on entry to the school. In a high ability Year 9 class, the work on developing expressions for algebra was not entirely understood. For example, an expression was arrived at for the number of posts needed to create a fence when numerical and algebraic values are mixed together. One student explained the solution but other members of the class remained confused. However, in a Year 10 lesson, students clearly grasped the techniques of frequency polygons and applied this skill to examination questions. They were also able to confidently explain previous work on standard form including the use of negative indices.
109. The quality of teaching is good overall. Effective teaching was characterised by well-planned lessons, clear explanations and supportive, individual attention. In one very low attaining Year 8 lesson, the teacher questioned the class effectively, gave students time to think, expected them to explain their responses and explored reasons for any wrong answers. The work was challenging for the ability of the students. They were expected to plot co-ordinates, including those having negative values, and recognise the sequence of the numbers and thus correctly identify the axes of the graph. The atmosphere within the room was purposeful and the students enjoyed the lesson. In another lesson, the particular teaching style also ensured the success of the lesson. Students were invited to play a full part in the development of the lesson. Open questioning encouraged active participation. The objective of the lesson was to establish a pattern for a sequence of numbers. Students were challenged to think 'what do we do here?' and 'what could we possibly do to 1 to make 5?' The effective use of the whiteboard enabled the class to follow actively and examine the stream of suggestions, including those which did not work. A high proportion of the lesson was directed to demonstration, illustration and dialogue linked to interpretation and analysis. Favourable teacher/student rapport existed and students were entirely engaged throughout the lesson in both discussion and written work. Where teaching is satisfactory, it is invariably characterised by teacher-centred methods with insufficient student participation in discussion. The dissemination of facts predominates these lessons, with students working through exercises. The teaching of concepts is particularly mechanistic, focusing upon techniques rather than a grasp of the underlying mathematical concepts. There were no lessons this time where poor teaching was the cause of unsatisfactory outcomes although in the last inspection, a quarter of the lessons were considered to be unsatisfactory. The overall progress of special educational needs students was equal to other students. In many of the lower sets, teachers demonstrate sensitive and clear knowledge of students' needs. In the one lesson where a teaching assistant was present, her work was effective in promoting learning and displayed knowledge of the students together with their detailed individual educational plans. All teachers were aware of those students on the special educational needs register.
110. Students' behaviour in lessons is good overall. However, when the teaching style is overly teacher focused, the students often appear to be too passive and reluctant to openly enter into discussion. This restricts learning opportunities, which otherwise may encourage confidence in the subject and enable the teacher to assess the effectiveness of their own teaching. Students, however, have good knowledge of their own learning and in Years 10 and 11, show good interest and concentration which results in good learning of mathematical skills and concepts. The quality of students' learning is satisfactory overall.

111. The recently appointed head of department provides clear direction for the subject area, which includes a high priority on raising attainment levels. Staffing turbulence has been an issue generally, which understandably has had a negative influence. However, the department is now fully staffed and many of the teachers have been recently appointed to the school. The schemes of work and department documentation are very good, including detailed information on assessment data, which has been used to good effect. Analysis is made of National Test results based both upon teaching groups and individual students. This has led to amending schemes of work to more closely reflect the demands of the GCSE programme. In Year 7, some students who have not achieved National Curriculum Level 4 on entry to school, follow a support programme, Springboard 7. This is a national initiative designed as a catch-up programme which was implemented in September 2001. It is therefore too early to make a full assessment of its effectiveness. All these features of departmental policy lend support to procedures which give a clear and cohesive educational direction to the subject. However, the absence of the general use of computers is a serious denial of opportunity for all students in mathematics. In the only instance where computers were used, it was a satisfactory lesson. However, the lack of supportive technology, such as an interactive whiteboard, hindered the overall effectiveness of the lesson, which penalised the teachers and students alike. The improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall.
112. Evidence of numerical work in other subjects is relatively limited. Geography provided the best examples of numeracy, which is integrated into their schemes of work. Most examples related to statistics. In Year 9, students were using birth and death rates to plot line graphs. In Year 10, exercises related to ranking data were also in evidence. In history, Years 7, 8 and 9 exercise books showed details of chronology and time. An interesting piece of work was seen in a Year 9 class related to the differing alliances in the First World War. The worksheet asked students to assess information using calculations to establish the relative strengths of the two opposing sides. However, numeracy is not a strong feature of lessons generally. In science, the use of numeracy was not satisfactory being restricted to reading scales, taking averages and plotting graphs. The work observed on using data to describe patterns and trends together with transposition of formulae was weak. In design and technology, evidence of measuring length and volume and use of two- and three-dimensional work was poor. The use of spreadsheets in ICT was seen in Years 10 and 11. Students were seen using formulae and precise searching using a variety of sorting options. However, knowledge and understanding were weak, except in the classes where students had elected to study the subject as an option. Standards of numeracy are in line with those normally seen, but the lack of a co-ordinated approach is resulting in considerable variation amongst subjects.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Teachers specialist subject knowledge.
- The leadership of the department.
- The quality of the resources and technical support.
- Development planning is good.

Areas for improvement

- Students' work rate is too varied.
- Students' investigative skills are not developed well enough.
- Comments on students' work are too often too vague to help drive up standards.

113. Standards in both GCSE examinations and Year 9 national tests were well below the national average both last year and the year before. However, there are encouraging indications of improvement. The Year 11 results last year, in comparison with those of students in similar schools, were high. Their achievement during their GCSE course was good. The school is determined to build upon the achievement of the last Year 11 and to reverse the trend of low attainment in comparison with all schools.
114. Currently, students' achievements by the end of Year 9 are good and in the lessons observed and work seen, standards are in line with those expected nationally. In Years 10 and 11, standards are below those expected nationally but this represents satisfactory achievement in relation to their starting point at the beginning of the course. There is still too much variation in attainment seen in lessons and that found in students' books. In Years 7 to 9, the new curriculum schemes of work are having a good effect because the teachers are confident in the subject matter and the planning to ensure students' progression is good. Students in some lessons are becoming more active through the use of experiments and/or discussions. Often relationships are good and students behave well in the laboratories. In other instances, students leave work unfinished and wait to be told what to do next. Current achievement in Year 11 does not match that of the Year 11 students last year. However, there is now greater consistency in Year 10 because the new examination course is well planned and well suited to the needs of the students. Behaviour management of the type seen in the lesson on enzymes, with the current Year 11, is raising achievement all the time. However, the students are not using skills and ideas to build confidence in their own ability to do investigations and experiments. This aspect of science is not well tested in examinations. Throughout Years 10 and 11, students achieve satisfactorily because they practise the use of specialised words, follow instructions, have good information sheets and guidance, plus homework and individual advice and support from teachers and technicians. All of these methods were seen to be successful when students from all the various groupings made positive contributions in lessons. However, all students are too often expected to work at the same rate so that some become frustrated by work they perceive to be too hard and others have an easy, though not very satisfying time.
115. However, overall attainment by students aged 14 matches the national expectation in some aspects of science. The weak aspect is investigative and experimental work; which helps to explain the lack of high levels in the 2001 national tests. Students can explain how to produce new chemical products or to change the polarity of an electromagnet and how different animals are adapted to different habitats. They can use apparatus safely and record what they observe. In the work seen, however, they did not make good use of data displayed in graphs. They did not use computers sufficiently to improve their work. Neither did they use the ideas and skills they already had to make decisions about investigating, nor communicating to others what procedures they would recommend or what they had found out.
116. Attainment is below average in Year 11 mainly because of weaknesses in students' coursework. Students can explain key ideas, for example the distinction between aerobic and anaerobic respiration. They conduct experiments safely and thoughtfully but are not yet sufficiently active in making their own decisions about techniques, patterns in data and the conclusions to be drawn from that data. This helps to explain the lack of higher grades in the 2001 GCSE examinations.

117. The teaching is good in Years 7 to 9. The students performed the experiments carefully and safely and they co-operated well together because the teachers had planned carefully and well. Students also learned well when encouraged by the teacher to think aloud and to talk things through at the beginning of the lesson. Students were confident when their knowledge from one lesson enabled them to answer the teacher's questions in the lesson that followed. For example, they used ideas about permanent magnets to predict what would happen to the electromagnet being demonstrated. However, they were frequently less thoughtful because the teachers did most of the work for them. This restricts their opportunities to practise elements which help secure high grades.
118. In Years 10 and 11, the teaching is satisfactory overall but it does vary. In good lessons, the learning was well focused and enabled students to grasp new concepts very well, for example the diffusion of food solution into a potato or the flash points of petrol or diesel fuels. Students did experiments about respiration carefully because the teacher's instructions were clear and she gave good individual support. However, both in lessons and in work seen, students were not conducting investigations themselves. This is partly because the course for Year 10 was only recently introduced, but it is also the result of gaps in prior learning. Teachers have a tendency also to move all students along at the same rate, not planning for the specific needs of all the students in the class. Books were frequently marked but too often students were not challenged to act on the teachers' written comments in books. Teachers sometimes failed to check whether or not agreed targets had been met before moving on, so that learning was superficial and students commitment reduced.
119. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory because achievement is better. However, as a result of good leadership and management, the department is aware of the need to improve the consistency of the teaching and marking across all three subjects and in encouraging investigative work, data handling and communication skills.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Significant achievement in GCSE exam results since the last inspection.
- Boys and girls attaining above average at GCSE.

Areas for improvement

- The plenaries in lessons do not always give students the opportunity to talk about their work and check what they have learned.
- Standards of research skills vary too much because sketchbooks are not sufficiently used as studio tools and homework often lacks rigour.
- ICT is not fully integrated into the work planned.
- Three-dimensional skills for students in Years 7 to 9 are limited and as a result, visual and recording standards for lower attaining students lack quality.
- Higher attaining students should be challenged further by encouraging them to work on a larger scale and use a wider range of good quality resources.

120. Students join the school with a wide range of knowledge, skills and understanding in terms of drawing, painting and three-dimensional skills. In 2001, the teacher assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 showed that three-quarters of students reached the expected standard (Level 5 or above). Both boys and girls attained similarly at Level 5, however, boys achieved better at Level 6. These results indicate that

standards have risen rapidly since the last inspection when students were attaining well below national expectations. Standards seen during the inspection were broadly in line with what is expected nationally. Students mix and control paint, use a variety of mixed media and record from observation with increasing accuracy. Students enjoy art and design and behave well in lessons. However, staffing disruption has had a detrimental effect on the progression of basic skills particularly for average and lower attaining students in Years 7 and 8 where drawing is weak and three-dimensional studies have not sufficiently complemented students' visual recording skills. Students are acquiring an understanding of contextual references through the study of different cultures, as seen in an interesting display of aboriginal art inspiring two- and three-dimensional designs in Year 8 work which was of average attainment. Overall, students in Years 7 to 9 are achieving well relative to their starting point. Higher attaining students are insufficiently stretched through research and homework to extend their analysis of artists' work so that they learn to look closely and improve their techniques of painting and drawing. Students with special educational needs increase their confidence because they receive good support to improve their presentation skills. However, some have insufficient opportunity to work with three-dimensional materials to improve their modelling and co-ordination skills.

121. GCSE results have significantly improved since the last inspection. In 2001, they were well above average compared with unvalidated results for all maintained schools. Results far exceeded the target set by the department on the basis of the students' previous work and students are performing much better in art and design than in most other subjects. Both boys and girls attained A*-C grades at GCSE well above their national averages. The work seen during the inspection was not as good as the last examination results; however, it reflected broadly average standards. The department attributes the difference in attainment to temporary staffing difficulties. The best coursework seen in mock examination studies was detailed and research showed competence in linking artists' work as well as the students' own skills in drawing and painting. However, in Year 11, weaknesses generally lie in the area of progressing ideas, because of gaps in acquiring this knowledge through systematic research and investigation. A considerable amount of coursework is incomplete for many students. Standards are lower because many students are working from secondary source material while the development of ideas in preparation studies is weak. In Year 10, however, students are beginning to show a more consistent approach to research by linking artists' work to their own studies so that they improve their drawing and colour techniques. An improved range of artefacts and resources is helping to extend and improve the skills of drawing from direct observation which is revitalising students' studies across all levels of ability. Sketchbooks are used to record ideas, however, these are insufficiently used as a studio tool to show coherent progression from Years 10 to 11. Achievement overall is good because of improved use of reference material to support coursework, however, achievement is less than expected for many borderline Grade C/D students in Year 11 because of absence and unfinished coursework. Students with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress because they are given individual help to raise their self-esteem and confidence.
122. The teaching and learning of art are good. The teachers generally have high expectations of students' work and behaviour and make these very clear. They explain the aims of the lesson carefully and refer to them during the lesson. Teachers' very good relationships with students have a positive impact on how students learn in a department where there are new staff and temporary replacements. Most lessons have a good mix of written, practical and aesthetic work designed to improve students' visual language, for example teachers use art vocabulary and explain how to look at a painting. In the most inspiring lesson, for example, Year 10 students were encouraged to look closely at cultural artefacts and picture resources on Indonesian and African dress to

develop their knowledge of different cultures, while the teacher used good questioning techniques to widen their understanding. The consistent emphasis on developing literacy skills, for example in the use of key words, was a feature of all lessons. Teachers often discuss work with individuals throughout the lesson; however, end-of-lesson summaries are sometimes brief and insufficiently challenge students to explain and reflect on their own or the rest of the group's work so that they extend their oral and presentational skills, establish what they have learned and, as a result, develop independent learning skills. In some lessons, there were missed opportunities to extend the skills and techniques of the higher attainers because of the lack of class discussion, whilst there were limited opportunities to see artists' prints displayed with students' own work so that they compared techniques. Homework is set on a two-week cycle and the frequency and quality of work set are inconsistent across teaching groups. The majority of students respond well in lessons and, with encouragement, are co-operative and work well. The only relative weaknesses in teaching relate to the marking and presentation of students' work where there is insufficient guidance given on how to improve. Students in Years 7 to 9 are uncertain as to how they are achieving because they do not know their National Curriculum levels and GCSE students are not made aware of exam-marking criteria.

123. Art and design is well managed and the significant improvement in standards and teaching stems from the good teamwork and effective monitoring since the last inspection. The head of department and teachers evaluate work through observing lessons and reviewing in detail students' work and test and examination results. Schemes of work and allocation of time in art and design have been modified to improve the curriculum and raise standards. The lack of an art technician impacts unfavourably on the quality of three-dimensional studies on offer to students in Years 7 to 9. The department's action plan clearly identifies key priorities, such as the development of ICT. Regular art clubs and activity days are enhancing the curriculum for many younger students; however, the chance to see original art is limited. There is scope for permanent displays of high quality, sixth-form work and exhibitions of higher grades at GCSE to promote the success of the department to all students.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Satisfactory teaching with some excellent teaching in control.
- Satisfactory management of the department.

Areas for improvement

- Improve students' standards, especially boys by the end of Years 9 and 11.
- Improve achievement of students across Years 7 to 11.
- The provision of statutory design and technology courses across Years 7 to 9.
- The provision of balanced courses offering equal opportunities and progression across Years 7 to 9.
- Accurate assessment of students' work throughout Years 7 to 9.
- Improve staffing, training, accommodation and resources.

124. Standards in design and technology have declined since the last inspection. Teacher assessments of students' work at the end of Year 9 were below national averages with girls gaining higher levels than boys. Standards in the work of students at the end of Year 9 observed during the inspection were well below expectations. Few students make well-designed products. Communication of their understanding of the design

process, using text and drawings, remains a weakness in the three specialist areas of textiles, food and resistant materials. Few students could explain the reasons for modifying work and evaluate products well.

125. The achievement in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory, for both boys and girls, including those with special educational needs. The number of design and making tasks is insufficient to allow students to progress as young designers. The range of materials, techniques, and opportunities to clearly communicate their designing activities is too narrow.
126. Standards in GCSE examinations in 2001 for girls were below national expectations and well below for boys. There has been a drop in standards since 2000. Standards of work seen in lessons for Year 11 students were well below expectations. Descriptive text, graphics and annotations in folders are often of poor quality. In textiles, there is little use of mood boards to display contrasting styles and textures of fabrics. Girls' work remains of a higher standard than boys'.
127. Achievement by the end of Year 11 for students taking both the short and long courses is unsatisfactory. Too few students were able to complete projects with a complete portfolio, matched by a product that showed appropriate developments, testing and evaluation.
128. Teaching is satisfactory across Years 7 to 11 with some very good and excellent lessons. Specialist teachers have a good knowledge of their subject. In Year 7, students learn to cook muffins working to time plans, with those with special educational needs receiving good support from well-directed support staff. In Year 9, excellent teaching allows students to design control systems and plan and order programmes. Teachers encourage high standards of logical thinking. Some lesson planning limits students to make products such as textile pictures. Homework, when set, complements the work completed in lessons but does not cater for students of differing levels of attainment. Learning in lessons across Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory overall, although students' self-knowledge of learning is superficial and they have little understanding of quality factors in their project work. Learning in lessons across Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory, although the teachers' targets to manage projects and demand quality are not clear to some students.
129. Students show satisfactory attitudes overall in design and technology lessons. Many work industriously and attend after-school activities such as the young engineers' and textiles clubs. In some lessons, students do not respect equipment, do not follow the teacher's instructions and go off task for some part of the lesson. When students need to bring in ingredients or choose fabrics, some show little interest in bringing these to lessons.
130. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Departmental documentation still lacks detailed, quality statements for individual projects. Guidance to improve presentation of students' work to a common format has not improved since the last report. The full programme of study required by the National Curriculum is not covered due to lack of qualified staff. Time for design and technology in Years 7 to 9 is low at just over five per cent, and the National Curriculum is not fully covered. The timetable also results in students not covering the same lessons; most miss some important areas from resistant materials, textiles, control and food. Although there are opportunities using ICT to control systems, new national technology initiatives, such as using computers to design and make products, are being held back due to lack of qualified staff and machinery. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The resistant materials room is too small, with inadequate space to work around machinery. Technology rooms are spread

around the school, preventing students using facilities from different areas such as ICT. Technical support is good in workshops but limited in food and textiles.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Schemes of work are detailed and well written.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Detailed tracking and analysis of students' progress promotes good standards.

Areas for improvement

- More consistent matching of tasks to the needs of individual students.
- Boys' examination performance falls well behind that of girls'.
- There are currently no extra-curricular activities in the subject.

131. Standards of work seen during the inspection were, on average, below national expectations in Years 9 and 11, with a significant minority in line or above. This represents satisfactory progress since students entered the school below national expectations. Reliable comparisons with standards at the previous inspections are invalidated by the changes in the nature of the student population that have occurred since then.
132. National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were below the national average in 2001; a decline since the previous year. In both years, boys performed better than girls, in direct contrast to the national pattern. Performance in the GCSE examinations has been below the national average, in terms of the proportion of pass grades A*-C, for the last four years and showed a decline between 2000 and 2001. In recent years, girls have outperformed boys by a wider margin than the national gender difference. Girls' performance in 2000 was above the national average.
133. By the end of Year 9, most students' attainment is below national expectations, with a small minority above. All students have satisfactory or better map reading skills. Higher attaining students have a good grasp of geographical concepts. They can, for example, describe and explain population movements, as in a lesson on migration of people of different nationalities to the United States. In the same lesson, lower attaining students described migration orally, but had difficulty in doing so in writing. In general, weak literacy skills hamper the progress of about one third of the students.
134. By the end of Year 11, attainment for most students remains below national expectations. Higher attaining students extract relevant information from a range of sources to make accurate notes. They have, for example, a good understanding of the relative merits of coffee growing and tourism for the Kenyan economy. Most students can describe, and the higher attainers can explain, the chief characteristics of Kenyan agriculture. As in Years 7 to 9, lower attaining students are taxed by any requirement to write at length. In their coursework, students set up hypotheses and test them by using simple statistical techniques to analyse their gathered data. Lower attaining students record their results using simple graphs, but are less sure in the analysis of their findings. There is no obvious gender difference in observed attainment in any year group.

135. Overall, teaching is good, both by specialists and non-specialists. Non-specialists have sufficient expertise to teach competently in Years 7 to 9, where they are deployed exclusively. The best teaching is characterised by brisk pace, challenge, enthusiasm for the subject and sensible allocation of time to different activities. Students' response to this good teaching is overwhelmingly positive. Most students behave well in lessons and stay on task and the quality of their learning is good. An example of this good teaching was observed in a Year 10 lesson on out-of-town shopping centres. Students were required to study detailed source material before deciding on the relative merits and demerits of these centres when compared to traditional high streets. They were assisted by the orderly atmosphere in the room and the helpful guidance they received in the use of textbooks and other reference sources. In most lessons, teachers help the development of students' literacy through emphasis on key geographical terms and opportunities to read aloud. Most lessons start with a clear statement of aims and a review of recent learning, enabling students to recall and consolidate what they have learned before. Teachers' good, inclusive questioning ensures that all students become actively involved. In a small proportion of comparatively less successful lessons, there is insufficient matching of tasks to individual students' capability, resulting in higher attaining students not being challenged sufficiently. In some lessons, insecure time management results in students being left insufficient time to complete tasks. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. Their teachers know them well and, on the infrequent occasions they are available, learning support assistants give valuable help. Homework is set regularly and provides valuable reinforcement to classroom teaching. Work is marked regularly and, for the most part, marking is accompanied by helpful comments.
136. The department has responded well to points raised in the previous inspection and the improvement is good. Teaching time in Years 7 to 9 has been increased, opportunities for students to practise and develop their computer skills have been greatly improved and increased, the quality of teaching has improved and there is now a more stable staffing situation. Fieldwork opportunities have been improved, but have yet to be extended to Year 8 students. The analysis and tracking of students' progress is much improved and now constitutes a strength of the department. The standard of students' displayed work is very good. Displayed work improves classroom appearance and encourages other students to emulate it. Many of these improvements are a direct result of good departmental leadership and management, which have improved markedly since the previous inspection. The department has succeeded in maintaining the status of geography as one of the most popular optional subjects in Years 10 and 11. Application of the realistic and achievable targets set in its improvement plan should ensure the subject's continued popularity and future success.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Very good provision is made to develop the students' literacy skills.
- Very good assessment procedures, including the marking of work, have been developed, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- The quality of planning, especially in lessons taught by specialist staff.

Areas for improvement

- A more consistent and frequent use of numeracy in lessons.
- A more consistent approach to the development of ICT.
- Some lessons, especially in Years 7 and 8, are too teacher-centred. More challenging work needs to be presented to students.

137. The standards achieved by students in National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were below the national average, with boys achieving a higher percentage of higher grades than girls. The results in 2001 were an improvement on those recorded in 2000, when boys again did better than girls. In 2001, results for both boys and girls improved, but the boys' improvement was greater. At GCSE, results for grades A*-G in 2001 were below average, though girls did significantly better than boys. Girls achieved results that were in line with national averages, but the results for boys were below this level. For grades A*-C, girls again did better than boys, but the results for both sets of students were significantly below average. The results in 2001, especially for grades A*-C, were well below the results recorded in the previous year. This deterioration was because of two key factors: poor course completion rates by a minority of boys and staffing problems. Over a quarter of the boys entered for history did not complete their course and were ungraded at GCSE. Some of this group had been transferred to another programme of study, but the poor attendance of others, which meant that coursework was incomplete, adversely affected results. There was also some staff turnover and the teaching of a number of students lacked continuity and non-specialist staff had to be used. These problems are reflected in the results gained. Staffing is now more settled and current GCSE students are taught entirely by subject specialists.
138. For present students, standards in Years 7, 8 and 9 are below the national average, but with a good number of both boys and girls attaining standards in their work that are above, or even well above, average. Where standards are less high, poor attendance and low levels of literacy are the main impediments. A significant minority of students have low levels of literacy and they are not confident writers. Teaching staff are aware of this issue and appropriate strategies are being employed. The emphasis placed by staff on the use of extended writing is helping to improve the standards achieved by all students. In Years 10 and 11, students are recording standards that are at least in line with national averages and, again, some are working at well above this level. Lower standards are again recorded by students who are less confident in their written work and whose attendance is irregular. In all years, there is an issue relating to attendance. A hard core of students do not attend school with sufficient regularity and this is adversely affecting the standards of results in history. In lessons and in work seen, there is no discernible difference in the standards being recorded by boys and girls who attend regularly. All students are making good progress in their knowledge and understanding of history, with higher attainers developing very good analytical skills. Other students frequently show satisfactory oral skills but their written work indicates that their analytical skills are less well developed. Such students can give factual written answers but cannot explain why things happened, or offer alternative views. Students who have designated educational needs are also making good progress in their work and, in some lessons, the quality of support offered is helping such students to make at least good progress.
139. The quality of teaching is good. Teaching was at least satisfactory in all lessons seen; indeed, in a half of the lessons seen, teaching was good. Such good quality teaching is having a good impact on learning. A number of key strengths of teaching are identifiable. Staff have good knowledge and, in the better lessons, they plan well and challenge the students' understanding. Work is thoroughly marked and very good assessment procedures have been adopted, especially in Years 10 and 11. This process helps staff to identify strengths and weaknesses in students' work and gives each student a clear indication of how they are performing against known target grades. All students are benefiting from the emphasis that is placed on literacy. Key words are explained and used in every lesson and the emphasis that is placed on the use of extended writing is helping all students to develop their work. Good use is also made of source material.

This enlivens lessons and encourages all students to adopt a more analytical and questioning approach to their study of history. The department has a number of young and enthusiastic staff. Non-specialists teach some lessons, especially in Years 7 and 8, and most are comparatively inexperienced. This is reflected in the pace of some lessons. Some lessons are too teacher centred and insufficient challenges are offered to the students. Inexperience is also occasionally reflected in how time is managed. Insufficient opportunity for students to reflect on their learning is apparent in some lessons; there is insufficient time for summarising. Schemes of work are good and indicate planning for both numeracy and ICT. However, in work seen, too few opportunities to use ICT had been used and numeracy tends to be allocated to specific lessons. During the inspection, opportunities for developing numeracy were missed on a number of occasions. Nevertheless, teaching is good and it is helping students to learn well. Learning was good in two Year 10 lessons on the rise of Hitler. Staff used a range of source material to illustrate how Goebbels manipulated the mass media, and especially the radio, as tools of propaganda to raise the image of Hitler. These lessons had good pace and the students were able to identify a whole range of tactics employed by Goebbels. Numeracy featured strongly in a good Year 9 lesson on the causes of the First World War. The students had to look at various statistics about the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente and identify how strong each group was and how well this indicated their preparation for war. The lesson developed well and students also learned that the causes of the war can be separated into long-term and short-term features. The very good planning associated with this lesson stimulated good learning.

140. The leadership and management of history are good, with clear potential for further improvements. Progress since the last inspection is difficult to quantify because so many changes have occurred and there has been considerable staff turnover. Increased time has been allocated to the subject in Years 7 to 9. There has been a significant improvement in the quality and quantity of textbooks, and assessment procedures have been overhauled and are now very good. Very good provision is made for literacy and the head of department is monitoring the quality of work in the department well, including teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Achievement in GCSE information systems courses in Years 10 and 11.
- Quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11.
- Use of ICT in design and technology and geography.

Areas for improvement

- Provision of the statutory courses for students in Years 7 to 11.
- Standard of students' work by the end of Years 9 and 11.
- Quality and quantity of computers, accommodation and staff training.
- Assessment in lessons across Years 7 to 11.

141. Standards in ICT have not improved since the last inspection, except in Years 10 and 11 where the introduction of information systems as a GCSE option has raised standards for some students. Most students do not receive their full statutory entitlement to ICT courses. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory overall.

142. Teacher assessments of students' work at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were above national averages, with boys doing better than girls. The standards seen in students' work, for both boys and girls at the end of Year 9, were below average. This was due to staff shortages resulting in no discrete ICT lessons being provided across Years 7 to 9. Students' knowledge and understanding of most areas of the ICT curriculum are not well developed. In subjects such as design and technology, students are able to use ICT well and show above average knowledge and understanding of control systems. In geography, some students can use spreadsheets as modelling tools.
143. Results in GCSE examinations have improved over the last two years. In 2001, the standards reached by boys were just above national expectations – just below for girls. Standards of work of Year 11 students show average standards. Students are able to competently use spreadsheet software to solve problems and model. Project work is of a high standard. Many students can work to a schedule and meet targets consistently. Documentation is a strength, with students showing clear application of their understanding of software. Problems are modified after testing, with well-annotated solutions.
144. Achievement across Years 7 to 11 for students is unsatisfactory, with no teaching provision for the National Curriculum beyond the option choice made at the end of Year 9. However, in some other subjects, students continue to build on their use of ICT. In science, students can competently use computer-logging equipment to record data. In geography, many students use ICT to improve the presentation of coursework, adding graphs and diagrams.
145. The quality of teaching is good. Few lessons were seen across Years 7 to 9, but when subjects use ICT as a tool well, learning is very good. In Year 9, students successfully understood principles of macros and timers and used these to design control systems. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and have the ability to encourage quality work, as in a Year 10 lesson adding hyperlinks in documents. However, some teachers do not show a clear understanding of the pedagogy of the subject. In some lessons, methods used to meet the needs of students of differing abilities are unsatisfactory, especially for both higher attainers and for those with special educational needs. There is no regular use of large-screen presentations to help students learn how to use applications, as in a lesson covering relative cell addressing. Planning is good, and record keeping and design of resources is thorough. Teachers have good relationships with most classes and can readily engage groups and guide discussion to enable active participation from most of the class.
146. Learning in the few lessons seen across Years 7 to 9 is good. Students are able to quickly make gains in their knowledge and skills in ICT and use these gains in some subject areas. Learning across Years 10 to 11 in GCSE classes is good, with teachers able to quickly help students to solve problems; their knowledge of quality criteria in ICT projects is clearly communicated to the group. Students with special educational needs show good learning in lessons. Teachers direct support staff well, as in a lesson where a visually impaired student was manipulating spreadsheets.
147. Classes generally enjoy learning when meeting new topics in ICT, but in Year 9, some students feel they should have regular lessons, as were provided in Years 7 and 8.
148. Leadership at subject level is good. There is good monitoring and support of staff, and the head of department is helping teachers, who are very new to the subject, plan and manage lessons. The quality and range of curriculum opportunities are poor, with a full National Curriculum not available across Years 7 to 11. There are insufficient

computers with a ratio of 12 students to each machine. Staffing for the subject is poor, with too few qualified teachers to meet curriculum demands.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Teaching of students aged 11 to 14 is mainly good and students learn well.
- The subject is well led and there is a clear direction for improvement.
- Students' behaviour in lessons is generally good.

Areas for improvement

- GCSE results are well below national averages in French and are very low in German.
- Teaching is only satisfactory for students aged 14 to 16; there is too much use of English, lack of variety of activities and low expectations of students.
- Assessment procedures are not based clearly enough on National Curriculum attainment targets.

149. Standards in examinations are well below average. In 2001, GCSE results in French were well below the national average. Students performed worse in French than in nearly all their other subjects. Girls did better than boys as is the case nationally, but many students performed lower than their teachers' predictions. A small number of mainly lower attaining students gained very low grades in German; their results were lower than those in most of their other subjects. Over the last three years, GCSE results have declined sharply. A contributory factor here is an extended history of long-term teacher absences with unsatisfactory cover and supply teaching.

150. In the lessons and work seen in French, standards at the age of 14 are just below average. The higher attainers can take part in short conversations about themselves satisfactorily and can recognise and use the past tenses when they speak about their activities in the past. Middle and lower attainers are much more hesitant in this type of activity. However, in one class with many students with special educational needs, students were able to express themselves relatively well in a limited range of sentences using the past tense. This was because of very good teaching. Overall, most students listen carefully because they generally behave themselves well and concentrate. The quality of students' writing skills is much more varied. Higher attainers can write about their holidays, for example, with some detail and accuracy. Most other students write much more simply and are often limited to copy-writing. Many of these students need a good deal of support and time to produce their work, but generally the presentation of their work is good. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2001 showed that, overall, students performed at the national average. The performance of current students in Year 10 would suggest that these assessments were overly generous.

151. Students' achievement between the ages of 11 and 14 is satisfactory because teachers generally use active and vigorous methods which involve all students in their learning and to which students respond well. Students with special educational needs make as good progress as others in the group, especially in the smaller teaching sets created for them.

152. In the lessons and work seen in French, standards at the age of 16 are below the national average. Students' writing skills develop only slowly in their examination work and the standard of presentation and accuracy is often weak. Speaking skills, apart

from those of the few higher attainers, are unsatisfactory and many students have little confidence in using the foreign language out loud; their pronunciation is often only very approximate. Many students are passive in their learning and, even though they appear to listen, they are very slow in recalling words they have read or heard before.

153. Students' achievement between the ages of 14 and 16 is unsatisfactory as a result of the long-term teacher absences in previous years. Students responded poorly to replacement and supply teachers.
154. German is introduced as a second foreign language from Year 7 for nearly all students with two lessons a fortnight. This allocation of time is inadequate for the vast majority of students to reach a sufficiently secure basis of skills and knowledge by the end of Year 9, and for all but the most talented, to achieve success in GCSE examinations. A proportion of students enjoy the lessons, but much time in lessons is spent in revising and consolidating work and there is little time for progression. A small number of talented students achieve well between the ages of 14 and 16 and perform satisfactorily in all language skills.
155. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is better for students aged 11 to 14 than for older students. Overall, most of the lessons seen were satisfactory and a further third were good. One lesson was unsatisfactory because students did not use the language purposefully enough and some students lost interest. With younger students, teachers use the foreign language more consistently and ensure students practise it themselves and are involved in their learning of it. At this level, teachers provide a good variety of activities across the four language skills, although they do not use the overhead projector for initial presentations, vocabulary revision and language games as much as they could do. With older students, teachers tend to concentrate on delivering the examination content and rely too much on English. Teachers manage all their students well, but expectations of what students can do are higher for younger students than for older ones, as is the pace and drive towards achieving objectives in each lesson. Teachers use assessment data well to set their students, and marking is generally good, particularly for younger students, but teachers do not require students to redraft their work or make follow-up corrections. Literacy skills are addressed better in the work of younger students.
156. The amount of teacher absences has affected the department severely and restricted the amount of improvement the department has made since the last report. Schemes of work have now been revised, and teachers have made great efforts to concentrate on, and improve, the teaching of students aged 11 to 14.
157. The department is well led and the department is now working well together with a clear sense of direction. Target setting is working well, but National Curriculum attainment targets are not used often enough to let students know how they are doing and how they should move on. The amount of time allocated to modern foreign languages and the place of the second foreign language need revision, as reported at the time of the last inspection. Modern textbooks in French are needed to complement the new schemes of work and examination course. Repairs to blinds and covered display boards would enhance the language learning environment. The improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are mainly good; there is some excellent teaching.
- The department is very well equipped with electronic keyboards.
- Students show positive attitudes and the behaviour of most students is good.
- The range of opportunities in instrumental and vocal tuition is good.
- The standards reached in extra-curricular work are above average.
- Music is well led and organised.
- Since the last inspection report, there has been good improvement.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are below average; performing, composing and listening skills are underdeveloped.
- In Years 7 to 9, students sing insufficiently and irregularly.
- Learning is too keyboard based; students make insufficient use of their own or other instruments in classroom work.
- Accommodation is poor and impacts on standards.

158. GCSE examination results between 1997 and 2000 were broadly average when compared with all schools but were above average when compared with similar schools. Results in 2001 dipped with only 40 per cent of the students gaining an A-C pass.

159. Students enter the school with very variable musical experience related to the quality of their musical education in their previous schools, interests and level of home support. Some students enter with above average attainment, but most students enter with below average attainment in music and teachers' assessments confirm this. By Year 9, when students are 14, standards are below average but improving. Students' achievement in most lessons is good but progress over time has been affected by staffing changes, poor accommodation and weaknesses in the curriculum. Most students are working at about Level 4 or 5, but some talented students attain higher levels. There are opportunities to join choirs, but students have not sung sufficiently or regularly to develop an appropriate standard or repertoire in class. Students make good use of the technology available, for example in developing blues pieces on keyboards, but instrumental performing skills are underdeveloped; students have insufficient experience of instruments other than keyboards and insufficient opportunity to use their own instruments. Many students compose effective pieces using the technology and are developing skills approaching the average level expected, but their understanding of structures and devices is underdeveloped. Music-reading skills are poor because students do not use music sufficiently. Improvisation skills are underdeveloped. Students listen respectfully to each other when performing but their general musical knowledge, for example of instruments, composers, forms, structures and well-known pieces of music, is below average.

160. In GCSE work standards in Year 10 are just below average, but standards in Year 11 are well below those expected. Students achieve well when they make the appropriate effort but attitudes and attendance are too variable. The poor attendance has affected standards. Students' performing skills are underdeveloped, averaging about Grade 2 in Year 11 (and Grade 3 in Year 10). Students have not sung as a group. The most talented students show good understanding of devices and structures in composing

and create imaginative and original compositions. They make good use of music technologies (including those at home) but, until recently, have been disadvantaged by the lack of computers in the department. Students listen respectfully to each other but their general musical knowledge is poor.

161. Teaching in Years 7 to 11 is good with nearly half the lessons observed being very good or excellent. Teachers show good subject knowledge so that they teach confidently. Instructions are clear and teaching is energetic; the students always understand the objectives. Schemes and lesson content have been thoughtfully put together, but major weaknesses are the lack of regular singing in Years 7 to 9 and the over-reliance on keyboard work. Expectations are very high; lessons are well matched to the different levels of attainment with the most musical students being challenged by extension work and additional support given to students who need it. Students with special educational needs are well integrated and make similar progress to the other students. Lessons have clear structures and are very well organised; student management is very good so that most lessons are orderly and time used well. As a result, relationships are very good and students are usually good humoured and work well, especially in practical work. Lessons start briskly and maintain a good pace so that students remain focused, supported by the use of visual aids such as overhead projectors and video but illustrations and classroom display are insufficiently used. Music technologies are used well at all levels now. The assessment of students is supportive and shows them clearly how they can improve. Homework is clearly set to extend students' learning. Most students enjoy music; they enjoy practical work but dislike written work and use equipment sensibly. They are attentive and work productively but without any great verve; they are very supportive of each other. The quality of learning is good overall. The highest attaining students are keen to answer questions and the most enthusiastic involve themselves in opportunities offered by the department and musical opportunities outside school. In GCSE lessons, attitudes are mainly positive and most students take advantage of the free instrumental tuition available to them and opportunities in extra-curricular work; this strengthens their achievement. The new teachers are working very hard to motivate students and give additional opportunities to them, especially in Year 11, to enable them to catch up and obtain the best possible results but not all students are making the required effort.
162. The leadership and management of music are good and well supported by the school. Music is well organised and the staff and visiting teachers now form a strong team of enthusiastic and hardworking colleagues committed to raising standards. There is appropriate and developing monitoring and evaluation of the subject's performance and development priorities. Schemes of work, assessment schemes and the strategies to raise standards are under review. Resources are used imaginatively to enhance teaching, for example when a student e-mailed a composer to ask how he developed a set work. There are useful links with other schools but, curricular links with the primary schools are not consistent. Although the school has tried to improve the music accommodation, it remains poor; there are insufficient practice areas for group work; one room is a mobile hut separated from the main room; there is inadequate storage and departmental office. The use of the main room by other subjects requiring desks limits the opportunities to make music in the classroom; this is a serious weakness. Keyboard resources are very good and support students' learning well but there is an urgent need for tuned percussion instruments, such as xylophones and glockenspiels, and other classroom instruments. To enhance creative work, new audio, a larger TV and music for singing, playing and resources in the library are required. Since the last inspection, standards, teaching, resources, the numbers taking music and the time allocation for music have been improved and overall, the improvement is good.

163. Twenty-eight boys and thirty girls receive instrumental or voice lessons from four visiting teachers and teachers at the school; this is a below average number but is increasing. The school is to be highly commended for providing free tuition where appropriate. It was only possible to see a small amount of tuition but discussions with students, teachers and the scrutiny of tapes, CDs and videos of performances indicate that standards are broadly average and that teaching is good, as was observed in voice tuition. The progress and achievement of students is good in relation to their ages and the time they have received tuition, but practice is too variable and students do not have practice books. Monitoring of students' progress is not yet sufficiently consistent. The curriculum insufficiently supports instrumental tuition and tuition makes little impact on the quality of students' musical experiences in the classroom; this is a weakness the department intends to address. The range of extra-curricular activities in music is good and developing, and includes two small but developing choirs, recorder groups, music theory group, jazz band and other ensembles. Standards and the quality of teaching are good and individual students reach very high standards, as heard and seen in recordings. The visiting teachers give good support to these groups. The school promotes regular concerts and musicals, such as 'Bugsy Malone', involving large numbers of students and visits to concerts and musicals in London. Music groups perform in assemblies but the regular use of music in assemblies is underdeveloped. Groups perform frequently at local primary schools, festivals and local arts and charity events. Music makes a valuable contribution to students' personal development. Lunchtime recitals through the 'piano café' provide valuable practice in performing and a cultural opportunity for the students. These activities reflect the dedication of staff, support of parents and the enthusiasm of the musicians whose performances and successes bring credit to the school and this improving department.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Very good leadership by the head of department which has led to the broadening of the provision, for example by introducing GCSE dance, and developing other areas such as assessment.
- Good teaching which leads to most students achieving well.
- Very good extra-curricular provision which students enjoy and which contributes to raising standards.

Areas for improvement

- Reviewing strategies for coping more effectively with the small minority of challenging or demotivated students.
- Encouraging more independent learning and evaluation by students, especially in Years 10 and 11.

164. The teacher assessments for Year 9 students in 2001 showed that the proportion of boys attaining Level 5 or above was above the national average, whereas the proportion of girls attaining the same levels was below. The evidence of the inspection was that overall, standards of students by the end of Year 9 are in line with expectations, and although there are variations between individual classes, there is not the gap in attainment between genders which was indicated by past results. The standards represent good achievement since most students join the school with skills, knowledge and understanding in physical education just below expectations for their age group.

165. During the inspection it was only possible to observe one core physical education lessons for students between the ages of 14 and 16, only lessons for students opting for the GCSE course. The proportion of Year 11 students gaining an A*-C grade in the 2001 GCSE examination was well below the national average, and in line with the trend of the previous three years. The inspection confirmed that standards of students currently on the GCSE course are below national expectations, particularly in theory. However, the majority of these students, boys and girls, are lower attainers, and the standards they achieve on the GCSE course represent mostly satisfactory achievement in relation to their prior attainment at the age of 14.
166. By the end of Year 9, students of all levels of ability, including higher attainers and students with special educational needs, make good progress overall in developing skills in various games and activities. Students in Year 7 being introduced for the first time to volleyball, develop the basic handling skills well. However, girls in a Year 9 basketball lesson made less progress in developing the basic passing skills. In dance, students make satisfactory progress in developing the collaborative skills involved in developing an interpretative sequence. Most students increase their gymnastic skills well; they learn to carry out different types of jump, using equipment, and they also develop the skill to evaluate their performance.
167. By the end of Year 11, students of all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs, continue to make good progress in consolidating and extending their skills in practical GCSE lessons. For example, in basketball lessons, students not only improve their ball handling skills, but also make good progress in furthering their understanding of the rules and appropriate tactical skills, which higher attainers in particular apply well in a game situation. Students of all levels of ability are also able to develop a practical routine for fitness training, and show a good understanding of the principles involved. However, students make less progress in developing good evaluative skills, and tend to remain dependent on the teacher for feedback rather than exercising initiative themselves. Most rapid progress is made in dance lessons, where girls show a pleasing ability to put together a collaborative dance routine that is suitably challenging. Least progress is made in GCSE theory lessons. For example, in examining the principles of good fitness training, most students work at a slow pace; this is partly due to the poor literacy skills of lower-attainers, which restricts their ability to communicate effectively, and partly due to poor motivation of a minority of students, principally boys, who do not work productively.
168. The overall quality of teaching in physical education is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed, and the teaching is good or very good in a substantial proportion of lessons. The good or very good teaching is characterised by several qualities. The teaching is carried out by specialists who convey good subject knowledge effectively to students through a combination of explanation and good questioning, used to reinforce and extend knowledge and understanding. This is very evident, for example in volleyball lessons in which the teacher explains and demonstrates volleying skills very effectively. It is also evident in the way in which teachers test students' knowledge of muscle groups and the purpose of warm-up routines at the beginning of lessons, and as a result, most students show a good understanding. In most lessons, assessment and ongoing feedback to students are very good, and this helps them to refine and improve their performance. This is a particular feature of dance lessons for older students. Teachers have high expectations and display good classroom management skills in most lessons; by keeping students focused, they learn quickly. Teachers often match the tasks well to the different ability levels of students. For example, when learning volleyball, higher achievers are given more challenging passing practices, enabling them to improve their skills as appropriately as others in the class.

169. In the small minority of lessons in which the teaching is less effective, teachers have limited strategies for motivating the minority of unco-operative or less motivated students, who consequently learn at a much slower rate. This was evident in a Year 11 theory lesson on fitness training. Poor attitudes also slowed the progress of a group of lower attaining girls in Year 9 practising their basketball passing skills. Occasionally, teachers do not give enough weight to students evaluating their own work, which restricts their understanding, particularly of the theory of fitness training. However, overall, the quality of students' learning is good.
170. Leadership and management in physical education are very good. The head of department has motivated a co-operative team of teachers who have worked hard to improve schemes of work and assessment, and this is having a beneficial effect upon standards. The monitoring of teaching has led to sharing of good practice. The department has also addressed literacy well, particularly by focusing upon key terminology and the language of worksheets. A great strength of the department is its extra-curricular programme. A high percentage of students take part, and this contributes to good standards in some areas. Some skilled gymnasts were observed during the inspection, and the school has been commended for its success in some areas such as girls' football. The school is successful in a range of sports and has developed the talents of several gifted students. The amount of time given to core physical education for students between the ages of 14 and 16 is below the national average. In addition, indoor accommodation for the subject is barely satisfactory, although the new sports centre is nearing completion. However, the expertise of the teachers combined with the positive attitudes of most students prevents this having a detrimental effect upon standards.
171. Standards of students by the end of Year 9 are in line with expectations, as they were in 1997, and students continue to achieve well. Leadership of the department is still effective. However, there is now a broader curriculum and some areas such as assessment are better developed. Therefore, there has been good progress in physical education since the previous inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **satisfactory**. Recent staff changes have reversed a decline in standards and injected new life into the department.

Strengths

- The commitment of the current staff to improve the quality of the provision.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and are using a variety of teaching methods to interest and motivate students.

Areas for improvement

- The provision of suitable learning tasks and support for students who are gifted and talented or who have special educational needs.
- The development of the syllabus to ensure that both attainment targets are included in the schemes of work.
- Building into the existing assessment system attainment targets and level descriptors that follow the current good practice set out by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

172. Students take the short course in GCSE in Years 10 and 11. During the last three years, results have steadily declined and last year they were well below the national average with 29 per cent of students achieving grades A*-C.
173. The school has adopted the attainment targets and level descriptors suggested by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). By the end of Year 9, the majority of students are reaching Level 4 which is below national levels of attainment. Students have a broad knowledge of the main beliefs and practices of the major religions that are found in our society, but this knowledge lacks depth and understanding. For example, Year 9 students had a good grasp of the main beliefs of Islam and were able to show that they understood such things as the five pillars of faith. However, they were unable to fully explain the deeper symbolism of such things as the prayer routine. Higher attaining students do not have the higher order skills that enable them to analyse and evaluate the knowledge they have.
174. Students do have a sensitive awareness of the role that religion plays in giving meaning and purpose to life and to relate religious teaching to their own values and lifestyles. When discussing the teaching of Buddhism, Year 9 students were able to understand the importance of searching for a lifestyle that does not depend upon monetary values alone, an aspect covering the requirement of Attainment Target 2.
175. The current work seen in Years 10 and 11 suggests that the decline in standards has been reversed. Whilst Year 11 students have a weak base of knowledge on which to draw, their work suggested improving standards. In the classroom, they were enthusiastically involved in discussions on such topics as euthanasia but their responses were often at a personal and subjective level rather than drawing on religious language and concepts.
176. It was not possible to see a Year 10 group during the visit, but the work seen suggested that this upward trend is even more developed in this year. Their written work contained evidence of a thoughtful understanding of such things as the teaching of Islam on marriage. There was evidence of evaluation and analysis. Standards were just below national expectations.
177. For most students, achievement is satisfactory, but for higher attainers and for those with special educational needs, it is unsatisfactory. There was no evidence of any specific learning materials or extra support being targeted for students with special educational needs. The higher attainers were not sufficiently challenged by tasks that were planned to develop the higher order skills of evaluation and analysis. This picture is reflected in the lessons seen in Year 11.
178. Levels of literacy were satisfactory. The presentation of work is good with most students taking care to complete work well. There was evidence of the use of ICT both in displays around the classroom walls and in project work. Recent projects completed by Year 8 students on the subject of Jewish festivals were of a particularly good standard.
179. The quality of learning varied somewhat in lessons but was at least satisfactory. In seven of the eleven lessons seen, the standard of teaching was good or better and it is satisfactory overall. In a Year 11 lesson, students listened well, discussed issues in a thoughtful way and were keen to be involved. In some Years 8 and 9 classes, they were sensitive to the views of others. However, in some Year 9 lessons, there was some disruptive behaviour.

180. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and successfully use a variety of methods to motivate and interest students. In a Year 11 lesson, a teacher skilfully used a modern TV programme to illustrate various views on euthanasia. Lessons are well planned although in a few lessons there was insufficient content to maintain the pace of the lessons. This was especially so for the students with special educational needs and the higher attainers.
181. Generally, classroom relationships were well managed in a positive manner with teachers demanding high standards of behaviour. Most students were interested and made a positive and thoughtful contribution to the lessons. In a small number of lessons, there was a tendency to adopt a somewhat confrontational style which created tension and a fall in standards of behaviour. Classrooms are bright and cheerful with good displays. Resources and artefacts are satisfactorily used to add interest to the lessons. Relevant homework is set and marking is satisfactorily completed.
182. Since September, the management of the department has improved considerably. A temporary head of department has introduced structure into the syllabus offered and greatly improved the teaching of the subject. A new head of department has just been appointed and together with a team of committed teachers, is rapidly improving the quality of teaching. The well-established and efficient structure of the humanities faculty provides a good framework for the department to flourish. New units of work have been prepared and new resources purchased. There is a sound development plan.
183. Assessment is well organised and efficiently carried out, but as yet is not fully linked to attainment targets and level descriptors. The department is endeavouring to bring the subject into line with the current guidance from QCA on attainment targets and level descriptors. Reports are too general and say nothing about subject-specific levels of attainment.
184. After the last inspection, the provision for religious education declined somewhat with a consequent fall in standards. This decline has now been halted and standards are rising. Although there is still no Post-16 religious education, the school is planning to remedy this in the near future. This significant change means that it is possible to say that progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.

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

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

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

GCE AS-level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art	11	100	84	36	23	2.6	n/a
Biology	6	83	n/a	0	n/a	2.0	n/a
Chemistry	4	100	42	0	4	2.0	n/a
German	3	33	82	0	13	0.7	n/a
Drama	10	100	n/a	80	n/a	4.0	n/a
English Literature	17	100	n/a	41	n/a	2.9	n/a
French	5	60	78	0	13	1.0	n/a
Geography	7	100	75	57	7	3.6	n/a
General studies	4	100	n/a	25	n/a	3.3	n/a
History	14	100	n/a	43	n/a	3.1	n/a
Mathematics	11	27	62	0	15	0.5	n/a
Media Studies	9	100	n/a	67	n/a	3.8	n/a
Music	2	100	84	0	29	2.0	n/a
PE	6	100	n/a	17	n/a	2.2	n/a
Physics	5	60	52	0	4	1.2	n/a
Sociology	11	73	62	0	7	1.3	n/a

GCE A-level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	4	100	96	0	46	5.5	6.6
Biology	2	100	88	0	34	5.0	5.3
Chemistry	1	100	90	0	43	6.0	5.9
Communication studies	10	100	93	30	31	6.0	5.5
Drama	8	100	99	38	38	7.3	6.6
English literature	16	100	95	38	37	6.0	5.9

Geography	5	100	92	20	38	5.2	5.7
History	5	100	88	20	35	5.2	5.5
Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
Mathematics	3	33	87	0	43	2.0	5.8
Music	1	100	93	0	35	6.0	5.7
Other social studies	1	100	87	0	34	8.0	5.3
Sociology	1	100	86	100	35	0	5.3
Business	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	12.0	10.5
Leisure and tourism	4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	10.5	10.1

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good and very supportive. Subject knowledge is very good.
- Students display very good application.

Areas for improvement

- Raise the standard of attainment in an expanded sixth form.
- Use of new technology including computer software and graphical calculators.

185. The GCE A2-level results in 2001 were poor. Only one student of the three who sat the examination gained a pass grade. Drop-out rates in recent years average about 50 per cent and currently this shows little sign of improving. The department operates an open policy for inclusion in Year 12 and students with modest GCSE grades are given every encouragement to study. The results of AS-level in 2001 (unvalidated) show that of the eleven students sitting the examination, only three gained a pass grade. However, this needs to be set against the current experience for this examination nationally. All students who had in Year 11 completed the Intermediate GCSE course were awarded a grade U for each component for their AS modules. Predictions were low overall, based upon prior attainment, although higher than the actual grades obtained. Standards are below those being achieved nationally although the low numbers taking the subject at the school make valid comparisons difficult.
186. The standards of work seen in lessons reflect recent results. In a lesson observed in Year 13, the students were revising for resubmitting their AS-level modules. The main thrust of the lesson was sequences and series. Recurrence relations were reviewed and students showed some evidence that they recalled certain issues. They recalled that in some instances the series moves towards a limiting value, whereas it may in some instances also become an increasing function, dependent upon the value of the first term. The lesson developed by looking at the binomial theorem and some students again showed some evidence of recall and therefore understood previously taught aspects of the topic. However, the pace was relatively slow and the teacher constantly had to check prior learning before moving on to the next step. This confirmed that they were heavily dependent upon the teacher if progress was to be achieved.
187. Standards seen in lessons in Year 12 mirror those seen in Year 13. The students are only one term into their course and are currently preparing for their first module test. The students, together with the teacher, collaboratively solved a problem involving trigonometrical identities. The group of four students were able, when discussing previous work, to accurately reflect upon the use of surds and solution of straight-line equations when given certain criteria, despite their misgivings about their own ability. Overall, the prior attainment of the 12 students in the two teaching groups, taking AS-level in Year 12 is relatively low. Exercise books do not always indicate they have been marked, thus work remains unrecorded and lacks comments. As a resource for future use this limits their potential. This is an issue for consideration for improvement in the context of teaching, which has many strong features.

188. Teaching is generally good and students benefit from this support. Students speak highly of the teachers and their readiness to assist at times outside of lessons. Good teaching is characterised by sensitivity to the needs of the students, whereby the pace of the lessons is appropriate to the ability of the group. The good teaching does encourage a high level of application from the students. A good rapport exists and teachers display patience in their delivery of the subject. Students in both Years 12 and 13 do not display the expected degree of independence and overall, their quality of learning is satisfactory. However, this is recognised by the department and the need to apply a range of teaching styles to develop independent learning is included in the school development plan.
189. Good teaching is clearly responsible for the satisfactory progress which the students make. However, standards remain below those expected and generally, students fail to recognise or understand underlying links in mathematics and are better at describing techniques than they are in understanding and applying mathematical reasoning. The students are not yet confident with issues of identification and selecting the appropriate methodology for solving problems. Recruitment and retention of students is an area for improvement. Currently, there is limited use of ICT and graphical calculators in conjunction with overhead projectors. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Sciences

190. The focus was on biology. There was no opportunity to gather evidence from physics and chemistry because the five students involved were in the middle of examinations during the inspection week. In the year 2001 in all three sciences, the students did as well as expected given their GCSE results. The teaching is good and has very good features. Three biology lessons were observed. In all three lessons, the interactions between teachers and students resulted in growing student confidence; this was especially noticeable in their responses to challenging questions towards the end of each lesson.

Biology

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

Strengths

- Working relationships between teachers and students.
- Explicit links in teaching and learning between academic concepts and real-life issues.
- Teachers' subject knowledge.
- The subject is very well managed.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment procedures for coursework are not used well to improve achievement.

191. In 2001, biology students all attained their expected levels. The average point score obtained by students in 2001 matched the national figure. Small numbers of students were involved. Some other students found the work too demanding because of their relatively low prior attainment, for example, grade D in GCSE, and left the course prior to the examinations. Others completed the AS-level course and are currently progressing well in their preparations for the full A2-level examinations this year.

192. The standards of the work of students currently studying biology are in line with the

national average. Predicted grades and standards in the work seen show attainment in

the range from grade B to grade D. Students were able to explain the different types of cell division and discuss, in an informed way, the social implications of genetic variations and the possible effects of the human genome project. They give detailed consideration to the composition of the fluids going into and leaving, the kidney. Coursework investigations are not sufficiently detailed, although by Year 13, the students do seem to have good confidence with appropriate tools such as databases and spreadsheets but not data logging. They display material effectively and include both pencil sketches, for example of leaf tissue, and electronically produced prose text and diagrams. They make good use of appropriate texts from which they are able to extract relevant information. However, some are not too clear why scientists need to collect data.

193. Achievement is good. Students in Year 12 work hard to successfully overcome gaps in their previous learning, for example when collecting data on the take up of solutions by potatoes. They benefited significantly from the guidance of the patient and well-informed teacher. By the time they reach the end of Year 13, judging by the quality of the interactions this week, students are still eager to learn but have much more confidence, for example when helping each other to clarify their understanding of the application of fundamental concepts such as Darwin's Theory of Evolution, to social change and genetic engineering. They achieve well because the teachers, with patience, tolerance and challenge, interact to support and increase competence and precision in an atmosphere of mutual respect. There is a big difference between the confidence and assurance of the Year 13 students compared with those in Year 12, thus indicating the good achievement being made over the two years of the course.
194. Teaching is good overall. It has some very good features. The teacher gave very good summaries, for example of the opportunities for inherited characteristics to be transmitted by chance. She was able to spot students' misconceptions and immediately drew quick sketches to illustrate the different stages of the cell division for reproduction. As a result of these techniques, students have fewer misconceptions, make links between earlier and later learning and give more coherent answers in discussion and in written examinations. In all lessons, good question and answer routines, involving many follow-up questions, kept the students thinking and doing and building confidence, especially in skills such as communicating, using language precisely and investigating. Because the work becomes progressively more challenging both within and between lessons, the students are fully stretched, strive hard and want to go further. Progress did slow in a lesson when the computer 'crashed' but fortunately the teacher had planned well enough to have alternative effective methods available. The teachers are able to link the academic concepts with real life and to recommend wider reading, resulting in the students remaining motivated and having greater self-esteem knowing that they can use their specialised knowledge in everyday contexts and discussions.
195. In small groups, the students were able to interact frequently with their teachers. This was especially important in aspects of the work where their prior attainment had been low, for example when they were preparing for an assessed practical examination. They worked hard because they knew there would be assessment soon. The teacher helped them but left them in no doubt what they had to achieve. In another context, they were encouraged to speculate about controversial human interventions, such as the spread of myxomatosis in rabbits, to maintain interest and the sharing of ideas when doing examination revision. They were enthusiastic enough to read more widely around the subject and cheerfully exchanged books with the teacher. One display showing the differences between cells in simple and complex living things showed students to be capable of learning independently, but sources were not always acknowledged.

196. The course is well managed. Both A2-level and AS-level courses are now provided and initial indications are that recruitment will improve. The teaching is shared between specialist biologists and their work is well co-ordinated. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

197. Lessons in AS-level and GNVQ information technology were seen for both Years 12 and 13, although some students were missing from groups as they were involved in examinations during the inspection week. In addition, the ICT key skills provision was inspected.

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

Strengths

- Students' achievements at AS-level and GNVQ are good.
- The standard of teaching of AS-level, GNVQ and key skills is good.
- Students are well motivated and show commitment to the course.
- The subject is well led.

Areas for improvement

- Raising the standard of students' key skills in ICT.
- Continuing to improve teachers' knowledge of planning new courses to further meet students' individual needs.
- Continue to improve software and materials for teaching GNVQ and AS courses.
- Provision of greater access to computers for all Post-16 students and ensuring e-mail and Internet facilities are regularly available.

198. The subject was not part of the Post-16 curriculum during the last inspection and there were no entries in examinations in 2001 for advanced ICT.

199. The standard of work seen in lessons in Years 12 and 13 matches the expectations of both the AS-level and GNVQ courses. Students have a satisfactory understanding of some of the advanced features of spreadsheets and databases. Many students are confident using features such as macros and designing well-formatted screens with functioning controls. The writing for the design of their work is clear, and students are able to make modifications and accurately annotate the documents describing the use of the systems. In lessons, boys showed higher standards than girls. In a GNVQ lesson on business document design, most students were able to describe a wide range of requirements and ways by which software can assist with issues of automation and precision.

200. Achievement across Years 12 and 13 for students as a whole is good. Students completing project work for AS-level can effectively test projects and are able to discuss specifications and refine features with the teacher, as in a lesson adding controls to a spreadsheet. Most have increased their technical expertise since completing the GCSE course. The achievement of a student with special educational needs is also good on the GNVQ course, with confident contributions in discussion lessons, aided by patient teaching. Elsewhere, careful phrasing of questions helps elicit full responses from students. Portfolios show a steady improvement in documenting projects.

201. Teaching is good. The ICT co-ordinator is quickly learning the requirements of the new AS-level course and has attended recent training courses. Knowledge and

understanding of the staff are good overall, although some staff are teaching GNVQ ICT for the first time and receiving guidance from the head of department. In one GNVQ lesson, students were introduced well to business house style in document design. The teacher's familiarity with a range of features and applications allowed students to rapidly move on to analysing their own research results. Planning is systematic and reference is made to detailed records to adjust lesson objectives to recent progress made by individual students. There were high quality discussions in lessons, which were well planned, as in a lesson analysing input, processes and outputs. Assessment is meticulous and individual targets are set and regularly reviewed for both AS and GNVQ courses. Individuals are given careful guidance, and work to be completed outside of lessons is well planned to meet the needs of the group.

202. Learning is good. In lessons, teachers' self-assurance and sensitive handling of question and answer sessions allowed students to participate fully and gain confidence in tackling research into business documents. Students' self-knowledge of their learning is good, assisted by helpful supporting comments on portfolios, as in a database study on linked tables. In a GNVQ ICT lesson, a student with special educational needs was given sensitive prompts by a support assistant, enabling her to participate fully in a brainstorming session which introduced the impact of ICT on society and she made good progress. Teachers were able to steer the flow of ideas to meet the lesson aims, and students were able to maintain concentration and attempt to consider the changes in working practices due to ICT, once they had exhausted listing the basic material benefits.
203. There is good management of Post-16 ICT. The ICT co-ordinator is providing weekly support to new members of staff. They have been recently attached to the department from other subjects in the school, due to difficulties in recruiting replacement staff. There are no clear plans to maintain ongoing professional development of staff to ensure good knowledge and an understanding of newer software as courses develop. Although there is satisfactory provision of software and texts, there are few examples currently of projects and supporting resources on the network to help students work independently.
204. Students have positive views about their courses. They are receiving good feedback on progress for both AS-level and GNVQ courses. All students interviewed knew their learning targets and were able to compare their performance over time to previous GCSE successes. There were a high proportion of students on the AS course hoping to continue to A2-level. Some students stated regular access to computers during the week was difficult. Others were unclear about the arrangements or operation of the school's e-mail and Internet searches for coursework. This has an adverse impact on their achievement.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

205. The department offers a variety of vocational courses. The focus during the inspection was on the Intermediate GNVQ in leisure and tourism and the AVCE course in travel and tourism. Owing to mock examinations, work was only seen from students in Year 12. Both courses have been introduced since the last inspection; thus no comparisons can be made.

Leisure/travel and tourism

Overall, the quality of provision in leisure/travel and tourism is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The retention and recruitment rates recorded in this vocational area are excellent.
- The courses offered provide students with very good opportunities to further their studies, or to enter the world of work.
- The students have very positive views about the quality of the courses offered.

Areas for improvement

- Students should be offered better access to ICT facilities to help their research work.
- For standards to rise further, more emphasis in lessons should be placed on the business/economic context.
- The provision for the teaching of numeracy should be reviewed to ensure that suitable and consistent teaching is offered.

206. Results in the leisure and tourism GNVQ Intermediate course in 2001 were in line with national standards. Some students in 2001 also completed an Advanced GNVQ course in leisure and tourism though, as fewer than five candidates were involved, no national comparisons can be attempted. An analysis of Intermediate and Advanced results in both 2000 and 2001 shows that the department has very high retention and completion rates. Students opting for the courses stay enrolled and the vast majority are successful in gaining examination passes prior to leaving school. The recorded outcomes are far in advance of national average figures.

207. Numbers on present Intermediate and Advanced courses are also small. Standards on the Intermediate GNVQ leisure and tourism course are below average. This is mainly because the students do not fully understand the business and economics theories that underpin much of the work completed and there is insufficient specialist teaching of these topics to help to improve standards. In the Year 12 AVCE course, standards are in line with the national average, with the students gaining a satisfactory understanding of the theories involved in an appropriate vocational context. Written work seen from both courses suggested that all students are gaining a good basic knowledge of the structure of the travel and tourism industry, but their ability to analyse trends and to explain the underlying theories, is less well developed.

208. Teaching is of a satisfactory quality and, in some lessons, it is good or even very good. Some turnover in staffing has been experienced and this has led to some loss of continuity. Staff illness has resulted in an unsatisfactory provision for the teaching of numeracy. This is unfortunate, especially as the Intermediate GNVQ students have very modest GCSE mathematics grades and they need specialist teaching on numeracy in order to improve their learning. Certain key strengths were evident in the lessons seen. Staff are caring and supportive and students are given much good, individual help and guidance. This boosts the students' confidence and helps to promote their learning. Some very good, individual support was seen in lessons involving role-plays. Both Advanced and Intermediate students were doing work on customer care and, as part of their course requirements, had to role-play situations where customers required specific information about holidays, or where they wished to complain about the standards of service received. The students showed considerable maturity and enthusiasm when undertaking this work and their learning was improved by the quality of evaluations undertaken. Sensitive comments made by the teacher enabled the students to refine their learning and develop their roles. During the lesson, the quality of the role-plays improved significantly.

209. The management of these courses is satisfactory. The courses successfully meet the needs of the students and are effective in offering improved opportunities for further education as well as improving employment prospects. However, some of the arrangements for the teaching of the courses are unsatisfactory. For example, though the students are generally enthusiastic about the courses and the help they receive, they are critical of the opportunities they have at school to undertake essential research using ICT. Internet access is restricted to specialist classrooms, which are not always available. In addition, the students complained about restrictions in using e-mail. Such restrictions severely limit the quality and quantity of research that they can undertake. This means that some of their work is based on using brochures, for example, that may not contain the most up-to-date information.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

210. Courses are offered in A2-level drama, music and art and design but the focus of the inspection was on the GNVQ (Intermediate level) course for performing arts. This is a new course currently taken by three students in Year 12. One was absent during the inspection. Standards are high in drama and the teaching and learning are very good. Standards in music are in line with those nationally and students make good progress. Teaching and learning are good. Standards in art and design are in line with those nationally and students make good progress. Teaching and learning are good.

Performing arts

Overall, the quality of provision in performing arts is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is very good and there is some excellent teaching.
- Learning is good and students are very well supported by staff.
- The course is well organised.

Areas for improvement

- The number of students on the course is low.
- The irregular attendance of some students has affected standards.

211. Standards are broadly average. Practical work, as seen in video recordings of the most recent drama assignment, is of good quality and shows strong characterisation. Voices and facial gestures are used well to portray moods. Work is well planned and well choreographed to make full use of the space available. Issues are well represented. Good technical support is evident. Pace is maintained and scene changes effected smoothly so that the atmosphere is created and tension is built throughout. A strength is the willingness of the students to take risks which do succeed. Written work is less secure but it is well presented and makes good use of ICT; it shows an awareness of the requirements of the course.

212. Teaching is very good and some excellent teaching was observed. The quality of learning is good. Teachers show good knowledge of the course. Teaching is confident and clear and the objectives are fully understood. The content and approach are well matched to the needs of the individual students and the examination requirements resulting in students steadily acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding. Teachers have high expectations with students responding well to the concentrated teaching within the small group and making appropriate efforts. However, standards have been affected by the irregular attendance of students. The energetic teaching challenges

students to think and develop their own ideas so they work productively; questioning skilfully draws answers from them. Teachers give very good support in assessing students' work as seen in lessons and in the work in students' folders. This allows the students to acquire confidence in tackling their work. This was demonstrated in the module where students were planning a presentation for the local council about a week-long arts event, 'Spotlight on Youth'. Initially reticent, students gained confidence over the week with the help of video to analyse their strengths and weaknesses. This was good preparation for the examination. Students appreciate the quality of the teaching that allows them autonomy and supports them well at a personal level. Relationships with staff are very good.

213. Responsibility for the course lies with the teacher in charge of GNVQ courses. It is evident that the teaching is well organised. The three teachers are involved in bringing complimentary strengths to the course; leadership is good and the course is equally well managed by the excellent liaison between the staff who have the day-to-day organisation delegated to them. This new course has made a good start.

HUMANITIES

214. Examination courses are offered in geography, history and sociology. There is no religious education provision in the sixth form. The focus of the inspection was geography, although lessons in history and sociology were sampled. Numbers in history and sociology are too small to make valid national comparisons but in 2001, all the students who were entered for external examinations achieved pass grades. In lessons observed in sociology, standards were in line with course requirements and teaching and learning were satisfactory. In history, some high standards were seen and the quality of teaching and learning was good.

Geography

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

Strengths

- Standards on the AS- and A2-level courses are above average.
- Students achieve well; their fieldwork assignments are of a high standard.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- The subject is well led and there is thorough monitoring of students' progress.
- The retention rate on the AS-level course is well above average.

Areas for improvement

- Most students have yet to achieve that fluency in essay writing that will assist them to gain the highest examination grades.
- Students need further guidance in the organisation of their copious notes.

215. Standards overall are good. The most recent GCE A-level results were above the national average, albeit from a small number of candidates. There was a slight decline between 2000 and 2001. Comparisons with the situation at the time of the previous inspection are invalid because of changes in the nature of the student population over the intervening period. In relation to their GCSE results, candidates did better than expected. In the first batch of results on the new AS-level course, over half of the candidates achieved one of the two highest grades A or B. Performance of boys and girls is similar.

216. The standards of work seen in lessons and in scrutiny of students' files and coursework during the inspection are good. In both Years 12 and 13, students compile comprehensive notes, extracting relevant information from a range of sources. In several cases however, the work in students' files is poorly organised, lacking the coherence desirable in a source for revision. Students in Year 12 show a good understanding, for example of the effects of human activity on fragile environments, as seen in a lesson on the Norfolk Broads. By Year 13, they have gained sufficient knowledge to discuss maturely the ethics of aid and trade with developing countries. They produce well-researched coursework, often using advanced statistical methods to analyse fieldwork data. They use computers to enhance the presentation of both text and graphs in this coursework. Most Year 12 students, and a third of those in Year 13, have yet to achieve an essay style sufficiently fluent to ensure the highest examination grades. There is no obvious difference in the classroom attainment of male and female students.
217. Teaching is very good overall. Characteristics of the teaching include a good tutorial style, inclusive questioning that encourages all students' participation, challenging content and brisk pace. Teachers show very good subject knowledge and infectious enthusiasm. They match tasks closely to the needs of individual students. These qualities, together with students' overwhelmingly positive attitudes, ensure that the quality of learning is very good. Students are encouraged to discuss difficult topics, as in a Year 13 lesson on international aid and debt relief. Extended pieces of writing are marked regularly and students are given clear and accurate judgements of the quality of their work, which help them to improve it. Learning is promoted further by teachers' guidance in the use of a range of resources and frequent opportunities for students to organise their own learning. Students grasp these opportunities, as shown in the way they organise research tasks, making good use of resources beyond the school. They gradually improve their skills, knowledge and understanding throughout the sixth form as they take on more advanced statistical methods in their data analysis. They use books and ICT confidently when carrying out enquiries. Good relationships with their teachers give them the confidence both to seek help without embarrassment and to present their research findings to their classmates. A slight weakness in the teaching is that students should be taught to be more selective in their note taking.
218. Very good leadership and management of the subject have a large influence on the quality of teaching and learning. Students' progress is monitored through detailed analysis of a wealth of data. The quality of classroom teaching and consistency in marking are monitored thoroughly. High standards have been achieved. The department is not resting on its laurels and is seeking to effect improvements through its carefully considered forward planning. The popularity of the subject is illustrated by the high proportion of Year 12 students continuing with the subject in Year 13.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

219. English, German and French are offered as examination courses in the sixth form and English and French were a focus for the inspection and German was sampled. One German lesson was observed where teaching was satisfactory, but learning was unsatisfactory and standards were below those expected nationally. In English, standards were in line with those nationally whilst in French, they were below.

English

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

Strengths

- Good teaching leading to good learning by most students both at AS- and A2-level.
- Students enjoy the subject, have positive attitudes and work hard.
- Standards at both AS- and A2-level are in line with the expectations of similarly aged students nationally, and this represents good achievement for many students.
- The English curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities, such as theatre trips and overseas visits.
- Leadership of the subject is good and has helped to make English one of the strengths of the sixth form.

Areas for improvement

- There are no significant areas for improvement.

220. The proportion of students achieving A-level pass grades, and particularly A-B grades, has been broadly in line with the national average for the previous three years. Similarly, attainment in the relatively new AS-level syllabus has been in line with the expectations of students in the early stages of the course. The inspection confirmed that standards both in Years 12 and 13 are in line with expectations of similarly aged students nationally in the key areas of knowledge and understanding of a range of texts and in the skills of critical analysis and the capacity to make an effective personal response. These standards represent good achievement for many students in relation to their prior attainment at the age of 16, and the level of attainment in English makes it one of the most successful subjects in the sixth form.

221. When studying a range of texts such as Shakespeare's 'Much Ado About Nothing', Ben Jonson's 'Volpone', the poetry of Keats and of the First World War, and a range of other texts, students are able to discuss verbally and in writing why authors use particular forms, imagery and structure. They are able to research effectively, and develop a good ability to compare and contrast texts and make a critical analysis. Least progress is made in developing a good understanding of the context in which particular texts were produced, for example although several students are able to evaluate Keats in the context of the Romantic poets, several have a limited understanding of the context of Volpone. In contrast, most students are able to make a sustained, personal response to the texts they study, and back up their assertions with evidence. For example, several students were able to describe how the tone of Keats' poetry differs from the immediate, emotional response of the trench poets of the First World War, and students were able to discuss which they preferred. They are also able to talk articulately about the complexities of the plot in 'Enduring Love'. The confidence and willingness of most students to debate the texts freely in class are particularly good. Year 13 students were able to make a mature self-assessment of what they had achieved in their study of 'Volpone' and how they might improve their understanding.

222. The overall quality of teaching in sixth-form English is good, and this, combined with the good relationships and very positive response of students in lessons and the hard work put into independent study, contributes to good gains in knowledge and understanding. The teaching is confident and authoritative, based on good subject knowledge which is conveyed to students through explanation and also through very effective questioning which makes students back up their assertions with evidence. Teachers employ active strategies which make students think critically about the texts. This was very evident in a 'hot seat' lesson on 'Volpone', which made students reflect on the characterisation

and develop a better empathetic understanding of the play. Teachers also provide good feedback to students on how they can improve their work still further, and encourage their independent learning skills well. For example, Year 12 students were given a research task on computers to help them understand the context in which Tennessee Williams produced the 'Glass Menagerie'.

223. Leadership and management of English in the sixth form are good. The teachers are experienced and have had good professional training to help them teach relatively new courses. English has a high profile in the sixth form, although there are far more girls than boys opting for the subject. The subject is notably enriched by extra-curricular provision such as theatre visits and a trip to the First World War battlefields, which had a profound impact on some of the students. The department is making good use of research possibilities such as the Internet.
224. Attainment is still satisfactory and students achieve well, as they did in 1997. Therefore, there has been satisfactory progress in English in the sixth form since the previous inspection.

Modern foreign languages

225. The focus was on French, but German was also sampled. There were no candidates for German in 2001 and 1999. In 2000, the sole candidate for German performed below expectations, considering her GCSE grades. One Year 13 lesson was observed. Satisfactory teaching included some good questioning and a sequence of activities using a range of language skills but responses were mostly very hesitant, and little progress was made.

French

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good; lessons are well structured with a range of activities which help students to build up their language skills effectively.
- Schemes of work have recently been revised and improved.
- Students have positive attitudes towards the subject.
- The subject is well led and there is a clear direction for development.

Areas for improvement

- Examination results over the last three years have been very low in numbers and below grades expected from the students' GCSE grades.
- Students do not spend time in France during the course.
- Less capable students do not have specific learning targets. They tend to remain passive in class discussion.

226. The number of students taking French has been very low over the last three years. There were no candidates for GCE A-level examination in 2001. In 2000 and 1999, two candidates gained a C and a B grade. One other candidate did not pass. These grades were below those expected from their GCSE performance. In 2000, results in AS-level were well below those expected from the GCSE results of the five female students.
227. The standards of work of current students are below average overall. Only two lessons were seen because students were involved in other AS-level examinations. In Year 13,

one lesson was observed with only one student present out of three on roll; one student was ill and the other was doing preparation for a school examination. The lesson was well planned and structured to develop the student's speaking skills. The teacher carefully supported the student and guided her through several attempts to describe a picture; this was a lead-in activity to the main part of the whole lesson on social issues in France. The student was encouraged to widen her vocabulary at every opportunity; she had a good accent and intonation and did not hesitate to ask for explanation, but she lacked the basic vocabulary expected at this stage. She performed better in a reading text on the same theme, and in learning a new area of grammar. With French as a fourth A2-level, the student was, however, doing well.

228. Students in Year 12 perform as expected given the relatively wide range of ability and achievement shown in their GCSE grades. Students listened carefully to the teacher and to the material on tape and took part well in reading a text aloud. They are moving on successfully from their GCSE work into new areas. Most are tackling the wider range of vocabulary they meet in magazine and newspaper texts with increasing confidence. One student was more hesitant in understanding the new vocabulary and needed the good support that the teacher gave him to enable him to express his opinions and ideas. There is scope for the teacher to use a more systematic method with the overhead projector for the collection and future testing of vocabulary, and to make sure all students make notes of new words.
229. Teaching is good overall and students learn well as a result. The principal features of teaching are clear objectives, good planning, brisk pace in the continual use of spoken French and a range of methods and activities to bring about learning. Students are given every encouragement to express themselves well and the students respond with good concentration and interest, even though they find some aspects of the work very challenging. For example, students found it difficult to manipulate the language from the original wording in a text about the Noirmoutier region of France, in order to answer the teacher's specific question. The teacher gave the less capable student a number of alternatives in French and then helped him sensitively to complete his final answer correctly.
230. Some of the written work demanded of students takes the form of grammar work leading on from the work studied at GCSE. Students also write at length and in varying degrees of detail in their essay work. Students show a range of attainment in the complexity of expression and accuracy of their writing, but the standard of written work overall is below average. The amount of extended essay work is not adequate for real progress. Marking is generally good, but students are not required to redraft their work after the teachers' careful marking.
231. Students learn well. They are attentive, work productively and respond well to the supportive teaching they experience. The single student in the Year 13 lesson rose well to the challenge of working alone with the teacher. In lessons, time is used well; a number of different activities are introduced for students to make progress in all languages skills. However, the small number of students in each teaching group means that there are fewer opportunities for partner and group work, where students could support and help each other and talk and listen to each other maturely as part of their learning. This kind of opportunity would help students to gain confidence, as would specific learning targets shared with them.
232. Students have good opportunities for independent work with the foreign language assistant. Students report that they benefit greatly from these speaking sessions once a fortnight, because the assistant includes work on using the Internet for further

independent reading study. Teachers are also pleased with the progress students have made this year in their oral skills, compared with the progress students made last year, when there were no foreign language assistants. Students are not required to keep a log of the type and amount of independent work they do, but monitoring of this aspect of their work, to include also their independent listening work with tapes, would help them in their examination preparation, especially in Year 13. A further area for improvement is the provision of opportunities for students to visit France some time during their course. No student has made definite arrangements for study or even a visit to France this year.

233. The good teaching and learning result from work in the subject being well led and managed. Schemes of work have been revised and updated after students' relatively disappointing performance in AS-level last year. A good range of helpful learning support materials is being developed. However, the professional development and training of teachers has not so far included a course on new developments in language teaching, specifically at sixth-form level. Students are monitored well on their performance and progress and interim reports give a good guide to students on how they are progressing. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.