

INSPECTION REPORT

CANON PALMER CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Iford

LEA area: Iford

Unique reference number: 102862

Headteacher: Mr. Frank Maguire

Reporting inspector: Mr. Calvin Pike
1565

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 7th December 2001

Inspection number: 243750

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11-18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Aldborough Road South Seven Kings Ilford Essex
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Lillis
Date of previous inspection:	18 November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1565	C S Pike	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9282	C Lorenz	Lay inspector		<p>Attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils and students?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
2391	N Gossage	Team inspector	<p>Mathematics</p> <p>Physics</p>	
14871	B Buteux	Team inspector	<p>English</p> <p>English as an additional language</p>	
16786	S Hodge	Team inspector	<p>Science</p> <p>Chemistry</p>	
1759	G Edwards	Team inspector	<p>Design and technology</p>	
31693	P Hanafin	Team inspector	<p>Art and design</p>	
20537	K Ball	Team inspector	<p>Geography</p>	
1523	T James	Team inspector	<p>History</p>	
23550	M Blewitt	Team inspector	<p>Modern foreign languages</p>	
31705	J Mason	Team inspector	<p>Music</p>	

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8622	H Housden	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Physical education	
15021	N Watling	Team inspector	Special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
8052	K McKenzie	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
19474	G Bernard	Team inspector	Business education	
3773	L Ellis	Team inspector	Biology	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Canon Palmer Catholic School is situated at Seven Kings in the southern part of the London Borough of Redbridge. It is a voluntary aided school and at present has 1171 pupils aged 11-18 years old. The main criteria for entry are for pupils to be baptised Catholic and for the application form to be endorsed by the family's parish priest. There is an agreement with the local authority to admit up to 10 per cent non-Catholic pupils, if there are available places. At present 19 per cent of pupils is non-Catholic. Most pupils come from three Catholic primary schools nearby, but pupils come from 31 primaries in all, including some from the London Boroughs of Waltham Forest, Tower Hamlets, Newham and Barking. The school has a multicultural intake. Thirty-seven per cent of pupils have ethnic backgrounds other than white UK representing Indian, Black-Caribbean, Black-African, Pakistani, Chinese and Bangladeshi communities. Attainment on intake is slightly above the national average but the highest attaining pupils are often attracted to the two selective grammar schools in Redbridge. Boys make up 58 per cent of the intake in Years 7 to 11 at Canon Palmer. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals at 17.5 per cent is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils with Special Educational Needs (11.4 per cent) is below the national average. The range of these needs include specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behaviour or speech and communication issues. Eleven pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need (Stage 5) which is below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Canon Palmer is a good and effective school. It is characterised by very good relationships, good teaching and high standards compared both with similar schools and, in some subjects, schools nationally. Its relatively new headteacher directs with a clear educational vision and appropriately high aspirations for the school's future. Governors, senior and key staff are supportive and diligent although aspects of the school's management are underdeveloped. Most pupils and students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Attainment is high in relation to similar schools and above national averages in many subjects.
- Pupils achieve well across the key stages.
- Teaching is good overall, particularly in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.
- The school is led very effectively.
- It provides a supportive environment founded on Christian values, which is evident in very good, mutually respectful relationships.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

What could be improved

- Consistency of teaching within and between departments.
- Use of assessment information to refine plans for lessons and the school curriculum as a whole.
- Curriculum balance, including addressing statutory requirements in Key Stages 3 and 4 and work-related opportunities for sixth form students.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum.
- The roles of senior and middle managers, especially in monitoring teaching and learning quality.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection in 1996. Standards have steadily risen overall although there is unevenness between and within subjects. Achievements across key stages have been higher than the national expectation, partly catering for rising levels of attainment of pupils on entry to the school. The quality of teaching has improved significantly but some characteristics that inhibit consistently good learning remain. The use of assessment information to refine practice is still underdeveloped and imbalances in the curriculum provided continue. The number and roles of senior

managers have relatively recently been readjusted; their interdependence needs to be developed to have greater impact on teaching and learning overall. Similarly, the roles of middle managers in raising the quality of learning and of governors in offering sufficient constructive criticism of the school's work remain underdeveloped. The new sixth form building was built in 1998, adding valuable and well-used accommodation to the site. Expenditure on staffing, learning resources and equipment in the last two terms in particular have been beneficial but, at this early stage, have had limited impact on the quality of learning and teaching as a whole.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils 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	A	A	B	A
A-levels/AS-levels	C	C	C	

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Test results in English, mathematics and science at the age of 14 years in 2001 were in the top 5 per cent of similar schools and above the average nationally. Average points scored by pupils at the end of Year 9 were higher than schools nationally in mathematics, science and English. Standards were well above them in these core subjects overall compared with similar schools. The trend in national test results has been below the national trend up to last year when it moved to be slightly above. Standards in English and mathematics at age 14 have shown steady improvement. Statutory teacher assessments for 14-year-olds were above average in other subjects except where they were below the average in design and technology, physical education, art and design and in information and communication technology.

GCSE results for the three years since 1999 have been in the top five per cent of similar schools. The average point score per pupil in 2001 was above the average for schools nationally. Overall, improvements in attainment are above those nationally. Latest examination results are above national averages in English literature and language, mathematics, double science and the separate sciences of chemistry, biology and physics and design and technology and well above average in history, for the small group taking music and for pupils taking statistics in Year 10. In other subjects they were in line with the average nationally except in modern foreign languages and particularly in art and design where they were below national averages. Eighty per cent of pupils identified as having Special Educational Needs in Year 11 achieved five GCSE passes at grades A to G. Fifteen per cent of them achieved five passes at grades A to C. In work seen in Years 10 and 11, there were particular strengths in English and science but weaknesses in ICT across the curriculum and some unevenness in standards in a number of other subjects. Pupils make good progress overall across the Years 7 to 11 age range. The school's targets for future years, set more recently by using key data concerning the increasing levels of attainment at entry, are appropriately challenging.

GCE AS/A-level results in the sixth form have remained in line with national averages for the last three years. In 2001 the average point score per student was just in line with the national average, boys attaining slightly higher scores than girls. Results were in line with the national average in mathematics, English, biology and chemistry, below in physics and art and design, but above in history, business studies and, particularly, accounting. High standards were also gained in psychology, drama and music where cohort sizes prevent making valid national comparisons. Overall achievement is satisfactory in the sixth form considering entry levels and the subjects students choose, some of which are new to them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils and students are enthusiastic about their work and life and the school and enjoy taking part in activities and carrying out responsibilities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are polite and courteous. Their behaviour is most often calm and orderly.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are mutually supportive and respectful often contributing to good learning in lessons.
Attendance	Good. Above the averages for schools nationally.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	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 overall quality of teaching and learning is good in the main school and in the sixth form because expectations are often high and pupils respond well to challenging work where it is presented. The school meets well the needs of all pupils and students including those with special educational needs and makes satisfactory provision for those who have English as an additional language. Some teaching is stunning. This encourages pupils, especially in Years 10 and 11, to be active as learners and enthusiastic learners through investigation, asking questions and exploring ideas. When teaching is good, expert subject knowledge is carefully explained using an appropriate range of teaching methods. Well-matched and challenging tasks ensure that pupils make good gains in skills and understanding. Learning is effective, particularly so after age 14, because pupils are mainly motivated by teaching and concentrate well. Learning would be more consistently good if teachers' expectations were always high and their intentions regularly enabled pupils and students to take a more active part in lessons. Students learn well in the sixth form because they benefit from the high level of subject expertise provided.

The quality of teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9 is good in English and mathematics, particularly for higher attaining pupils. In Years 10 and 11 it is good in English, mathematics and science. In English, geography and history the quality of teaching and learning is better in Years 10 and 11 than in the earlier years because assessment is better used to inform planning. As a result, work is generally well matched to individual needs. The teaching of literacy skills is satisfactory. There is planned provision for extending numeracy skills outside mathematics where it is mainly located at present.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory overall: it is broad but insufficiently balanced. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities for Years 7-11 but these, as with work-related opportunities, are limited for sixth form students.

Aspect	Comment
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Those with identified special educational needs are fully included and their needs are well met.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are supported well. Assessment procedures on entry to the school are sound although the use of this information is not fully utilised in planning individual lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. A Christian ethos underpins spiritual development and pupils are encouraged to reflect on their lives and values particularly in history, geography and the arts. Different cultures are celebrated well in art and design and music. Provision for moral and social development is good. It is also good for cultural development, especially in the arts where a range of cultures is celebrated.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very supportive and considerate with effective monitoring of pupils' personal development but the use of assessment is underdeveloped. Procedures for pupils' and students' welfare, monitoring attendance and individual progress are good.

The school works very well to engage parents in its work and encourage pupils' learning at home. The quality of information provided for parents is good. The curriculum is broad but time allocated to the available subjects is imbalanced and restricts pupils' learning. Additionally, statutory requirements are not met in design and technology and information and communication technology throughout the school or for the provision of religious education in the sixth form. Extra-curricular opportunities are wide-ranging, enthusing many participants. The school's caring ethos is excellent, built on Christian values, mutual respect and very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very effective leadership charged by the headteacher's clear educational vision that he is realising strategically. Senior staff are diligent but their roles, like those of middle managers, are underdeveloped in assuring the quality of teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors address statutory duties well, except for some elements of curriculum provision. Underdeveloped role as critical friends.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring has lacked rigour and coherence. More recent analysis and subsequent targeting are effective and augur well.
The strategic use of resources	Good use of available learning resources as well as finances, including those in the form of grants.

There is an effective match of teachers and support staff to meet the school's needs, although changes in staffing have had a negative impact on some departments and there are currently a number of temporary teachers in the school. The range, quality and use of learning resources are generally satisfactory. Whilst accommodation is good for sixth form students, it is unsatisfactory overall in the main school.

The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. Senior and middle managers are diligent and committed but their responsibilities in monitoring the work of the school are underdeveloped and lack

coherence. Governors bring valuable expertise and support although they are insufficiently informed to provide constructive criticism of the work of the school. The school consistently and effectively applies appropriate principles to ensure it gains best value in its planning and expenditure, although it is aware of the need to refine its work in using information about attainment to compare its standards and plan the extent to which all pupil achieve well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High expectations that the school has. • Approachability of the school. • That their children like school. • The quality of teaching and leadership. • Pupils' and students' behaviour. • Encouragement for children to be considerate and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of activities outside lessons. • Information about how pupils are getting on. • The levels of homework. • More recognition of other faiths, traditions and cultures.

Eighty-six parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and 581 questionnaires were returned. The inspection findings accord with what pleases parents most.

On those issues raised by parents who returned the questionnaire or attended the pre-inspection meeting, there was evidence that the school recognises other faith traditions and provides satisfactory information about how well pupils make progress. Arrangements for homework were judged to be good but there are some inconsistencies in practice. Inspectors considered that the range of activities outside the classroom was good for pupils in Years 7 to 11 but limited in the sixth form.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form is larger than others nationally. With 233 students, it comprises nearly one-fifth of the school. Approximately one-fifth of female students join the school at age 16 years. There is a significant proportion of students who have English as an additional language, nearly all of whom speak English very fluently. The school provides the full range of its sixth form curriculum without having to link with other local schools or colleges. Most students study at least two A-levels and all complete a personal and social education course. Each student has a personal tutor who helps to ensure that appropriate progress is made. Key skills are taught as part of subjects being studied.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

Standards in the sixth form have kept in line with national averages as sound improvements in resources and teaching have been introduced. Provision for students is adequate overall. Whilst the school gives satisfactory value for money overall, the cost effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Attainment in examinations 2001 was in line with national averages although there are variations of achievement between subjects. Standards seen in the inspection were good. The quality of teaching is good. Students mostly make good progress although their learning is often inhibited when teaching does not enable them to develop thinking, questioning or research skills fully enough. The sixth form is effectively managed but at the time of the inspection the post of head of sixth form was vacant. Students are supported well through individual tutoring as well as guidance provided by subject teachers. The curriculum provided meets the needs of students well with the exception of the provision for work or industrial experiences, opportunities for which are few.

Strengths

- Achievements in English, mathematics, history, business studies, accounting, psychology and general studies.
- Guidance on entry.
- The quality of teaching.
- Good assessment procedures to monitor and support individuals' academic progress.
- Progress made by the students.
- Opportunities for taking responsibility within and outside the school.

What could be improved

- Development of thinking, research and investigation skills as autonomous learners.
- Planned provision for work and industry related experiences across the curriculum.
- Range of extra-curricular activities.
- Planning for and development of information and communication technology (ICT) skills in each subject.
- Arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements for religious education.

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

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Good. Results in 2001 are in line with the average partly because the department has experienced staffing problems from the beginning of the calendar year. Current standards are very good and students and staff committed to achieving well.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Chemistry	Good. Results are in line with national averages in 2001. This is because teachers have good subject knowledge and students respond positively, but they currently have too few opportunities to develop independence in their learning.
Biology	Satisfactory. Results have improved steadily in recent years and were well above average in 2000 but dipped in 2001 to being in line with averages. The quality of teaching is good but there are limited opportunities to develop independent work or research skills.
Physics	Satisfactory. Results have improved over the last year to being in line with national averages, now matching those of chemistry and better than biology. Students are achieving standards that build effectively on their prior attainment because practical skills are being taught well and students are keen.
Design and technology	Good. Standards are improving and now in line with national averages. Students produce a good variety of original designs. Graphicacy is well developed. The quality of teaching is good, founded on clear teacher expertise but achievement is below expectation where pupils have not followed a DT course prior to the sixth form.
Business studies	Very good. Results were above national average in 2000 and 2001. Teaching ranges widely in quality; much that is good provides suitably high challenges for students. Computers are too rarely used to develop independent learning or reinforce ICT skills.
Physical education	Satisfactory. Results were in line with average in 2001 but no student obtained a high grade. Students make satisfactory progress. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with several good features. There are very good relationships in class.
Art and Design	Satisfactory. Examination results were again below the national averages in 2001, but the standards in work seen of the current students are in line with expectations. The quality of teaching and learning is good and management of the subject is satisfactory.
Music	Good. A-level results are consistently close to national averages. Standards of performing are good but resources are too limited to enable independent learning up to date computer hard and software.
Geography	Satisfactory. No A-level results in 2001 but standards seen in both courses were in line with expectations. Teaching is good because it motivates students well to make good progress.
History	Very good. Results are well above national averages. A-level results have improved significantly. AS-level results in 2001 are in line with averages nationally. Many students show well-developed historical skills and enthusiasm triggered by good and frequently very good teaching.
English	Good. A-level results are in line with the average nationally. Achievement is good because students develop an insight into literary texts through exchanges of ideas, sustained argument and well-prepared writing. Teaching is good and the department well managed.
French	Good. Results are continuing to improve and now in line with the average. Coursework is a clear strength with a high degree of accuracy. The students are well taught because expectations are high and the range of methods good.

In other subjects work was sampled. Provision and teaching were good in drama and psychology. Considering the sixth form curriculum as a whole, there is insufficient allocation of time to deliver the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Good information on future choices and support on academic progress. Individual learning needs are met well and students receive satisfactory personal support and guidance.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Good. Guidance on entry is good with equal opportunities being promoted satisfactorily. Students are provided with mentor support. Planning is effective and provision is carefully monitored. Assessment has limited use to set targets for individual performance.

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"> • helpful information and advice on sixth form • teachers are accessible for help • teaching is good and challenging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advice on future options • extra-curricular activities • information about progress

Inspectors agree with the students' positive views and their concerns related to the range of extra-curricular activities, but found clear evidence of helpful advice on future options as well as the school's provision of useful information about the progress made by students.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Results and standards on entry to the school at the age of 11 years.

1. Results from primary schools and at the age of 11 years show standards on entry to have improved consistently over the last five years, the average being just above the national expectation in mathematics, science and English for 2000 and 2001. Boys' and girls' attainment is closer on entry than is the case nationally.

Results, standards and achievement at the age of 14 years.

Strengths

- Results in English, mathematics and science were above national averages and well above similar school averages; the proportion of higher attainers in mathematics was similar to schools nationally.
- Standards are above the national average at the age of 14 years in geography and history and they are high in drama.
- Achievement is good across the Key Stage, Years 7-9.
- Standards in a number of subjects have improved since the last inspection.

Areas for improvement

- The continuing development of numeracy and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum.
- Standards in art and design, music and in ICT.
- Achievement in art and design, music and ICT.

2. Test results in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 in 2001 are above the national averages and well above, being in the top 5 per cent, when compared with similar schools. When Year 9 pupils, who were involved in the 2001 test, entered the school in Year 7, their overall attainment was slightly below the national expectation. Their average attainment in 2001 showed a slightly higher rate of improvement than is expected nationally. In all three 'core' subjects the average achievement was more than one National Curriculum level. Improvements were most evident in mathematics where pupils achieved more than one and a half level improvement on average. Achievement in science was slightly higher than in English across the period.
3. There are no benchmark assessments at the age of 11 years in other subjects. The statutory teacher assessments in 2001 were above average with nearly all achieving the nationally expected standard by the age of 14 years, except in art and design, information and communication technology, in design and technology and in physical education. These assessments were high in music, history and geography but show unsatisfactory progress in design and technology and, particularly, in ICT. Teacher assessments suggest that boys attained higher than girls apart from in art and design, design and technology and physical education. Caution is required in the interpretation of these assessments because moderation arrangements are insufficient to confirm their validity.

4. Standards at age 14 years are above those expected nationally in English, geography and history. They are high in drama. In modern foreign languages and physical education attainment is in line with averages nationally. Standards in design and technology are broadly in line with those expected nationally, but the pupils' appreciation of the principles of design is less well developed than the practical skills of making. In art and design and information and communication technology (ICT), standards are below expectations by the end of Year 9. In art and design, pupils do not have well enough developed skills in a sufficient range of media and techniques because the course does not ensure established skills are built on across the three-year period. In ICT, pupils do not have sufficient time to develop appropriate knowledge and skills or to use the subject across the curriculum.
5. Standards of literacy skills are good at the end of Year 9. This is partly because the Literacy Strategy is being implemented successfully, enhanced by a summer school for pupils to promote literacy skills and family literacy sessions offered to parents of pupils in Year 7. In practice, standards of literacy skills are developed across the curriculum but this is not yet being co-ordinated across all subject areas.
6. Pupils use number skills in mathematics and some other subjects confidently. However, whilst numeracy standards are satisfactory, the school's approach to numeracy is underdeveloped. The mathematics department is introducing the National Numeracy Strategy in Years 7 to 9. Plans to promote the development of numeracy skill across the curriculum are to be enacted in the remainder of the current academic year.
7. Across most subjects pupils make satisfactory progress by age 14 years, confirming the analysis of national test results. However, the improving trend in the school's results over the last four years is slightly below that nationally. This is partly related to underdevelopment of ICT across the curriculum and the limited use of assessment data to refine lesson and curriculum planning. In almost two-thirds of the lessons seen during the inspection, progress was good or better. It was very good in one quarter of lessons and less than satisfactory only in a few isolated lessons. Compared with other year groups, progress in lessons was slower in Year 9, sometimes as a result of time available for subjects or because teachers' expectations of the pupils were insufficiently high.
8. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) across the school make good progress. In Years 7 to 9 the learning support team aims to achieve improvement of one National Curriculum level in English, mathematics and science for each pupil on the SEN register over the key stage. Last year 21 pupils achieved this target. Five achieved a gain of one level in two out of three subjects; five achieved a gain of one level in one subject. No pupils failed to make any progress or regressed.
9. The school has started to identify formally those who are gifted and talented. Their progress is not monitored formally but the standards of their work indicate that it is satisfactory. High attaining pupils make good progress in mathematics and history where the organisation of the curriculum or lesson planning challenges them well. In music, instrumental lessons combined with classwork enable most pupils to make good progress.
10. There was insufficient evidence overall to evaluate the progress over time made by those who have English as an additional language (EAL) because the school does not undertake such analysis currently. However, although no provision was identified in plans for teaching seen during the inspection, pupils with EAL were included well in

lessons, enabling them to make progress comparable with others in the group. Similarly, although data concerning pupils on entry to the school is analysed to determine the relative levels of attainment of different cultural and ethnic groups, this information is not used explicitly in lesson or curriculum planning, or in reviewing the results at the end of Year 9. In lessons observed, pupils of different ethnic groups were supported effectively and made satisfactory progress.

Results, standards and progress at the age of 16 years.

Strengths

- A high GCSE average points score in 2001 compared with all schools nationally.
- Very good achievement in GCSE English, mathematics and statistics and good achievement in GCSE history, design and technology and for the small cohort taking music.
- Good achievement overall with nearly all pupils making good progress.
- Standards of work that are well above those expected in similar schools.
- Standards are very much improved in history and English since the previous inspection.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in art and design and achievement in modern foreign languages.
- Girls' achievement in physical education.
- The use of ICT in all subjects.

11. Standards overall are above those expected nationally. They are broadly similar to those at the time of the last inspection. There have been improvements in some subjects, particularly in history, because the teaching is improved. By contrast, in ICT standards remain below those expected nationally, results in German have fallen and in art and design the standard overall is unsatisfactory. In physical education, standards have fluctuated but are now in line with those of the last inspection.
12. The trend since the last inspection in the school's average GCSE points score for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science has remained broadly in line with the national trend. Since the last inspection the strongest performing subjects have been mathematics, English and history. Results in other subjects have fluctuated. Overall, the school's results have improved in relation to averages for schools nationally and, especially, for similar schools.
13. In 2001, 56 per cent obtained 5+ GCSE grades in the range A*-C, above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. The average point score of 43.7, was good.
14. These results, expressed as an average point score per pupil, were just above average when compared with schools nationally and much higher than those of similar schools. They were also slightly higher than what might reasonably have been expected when comparisons are made with the pupils' previous results in national tests at the age of 14 years. Additionally, the proportion obtaining 1+ grades in the range A*-G was in line with the average nationally. These results represent a satisfactory level of inclusion. The work seen during the inspection indicated that those in Year 11 have made sound progress since the age of 14 years and are producing work of a higher standard than the results would indicate.
15. The proportion obtaining GCSE grades in the range A*-C in 2001 was above the average for schools with similar background in most subjects. They were above national averages in English, mathematics, double sciences and statistics and were

broadly in line in history, design and technology and for the small cohort taking music. Relatively few higher attaining pupils achieved A*/A grades in double sciences. Results were below the schools' average nationally in art and design and modern foreign languages.

16. An analysis undertaken prior to the inspection and based on the expected grades based on tests at age 14 years, shows that many pupils made good progress by the age of 16 years, including the higher attainers in mathematics and statistics. Girls obtained a greater proportion than boys of the highest grades (A*/A) in English language and literature, double science, art and design and drama, but this profile was reversed in mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, history and statistics. Subjects that gained the highest proportion of A*-C grades for pupils entered for examinations, were biology, chemistry, statistics and electronics whilst those with the lowest proportion of A*-C grades were French, German, physical education and geography.
17. Nearly all pupils make good progress by the age of 16 years. Achievement was never less than satisfactory in all but one of the 57 lessons seen during this inspection in Years 10 and 11. Those of differing capabilities made good progress in just over two-fifths of the lessons seen and very good progress in well over one tenth of others. Nearly all made good progress in English, history, mathematics, science, design technology, modern foreign languages and music. Pupils' progress is unsatisfactory in ICT overall because it is insufficiently used to develop their skills across the curriculum.
18. Standards of literacy are generally high at age 16 years. Standards of speaking and listening are good, although some subjects offer limited opportunities for developing these skills fully and there are missed opportunities for example, in some more teacher-directed science lessons. As a consequence, some pupils find it difficult to give cogent scientific explanations and clear descriptions. There are, however, many subjects where discussion and debate are encouraged. Standards of reading and writing are satisfactory across the curriculum. The combination of good speaking and listening and satisfactory reading and writing standards in literacy overall contributes to the well above average standards in history, geography and English.
19. Standards in numeracy are good. This is because good teaching in mathematics promotes confidence and skill by age 16 years. This is consolidated in some subjects, including geography, where pupils use a range of statistical information and are confident in analysing data to interpret results. Standards in ICT are below those expected nationally at age 16 years. The opportunities to use these skills in other subjects to improve the quality of learning and raise standards are unsatisfactory because provision is not planned and, at least until recently, equipment has been inadequate.
20. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and those who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in the school. The needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language are not always made explicit in lesson plans but, in practice, teachers pay close attention to ensure sound support.
21. The school has analysed attainment of different groups of pupils in previous Year 11 examinations. In 2000, this showed that, on the whole, girls obtained a slightly higher percentage of A*-C GCSE passes than boys, although the gap between the two was smaller than that nationally. However, there were differences in the successes of ethnic minority groups within the school. For example, white boys achieved higher than white girls but non-white girls attained higher than the average for girls and higher than non-white boys. The highest attaining pupils were Asian boys and girls but the lowest were

black, particularly African, boys. Whilst setting appropriate targets to raise the levels of attainment of all pupils especially boys, the school is paying particular attention to raising the expectations of black pupils through the Barriers to Learning Project. The school has not yet analysed its results for 2001 to identify the extent to which its previous intentions to raise attainment have been realised.

Sixth Form

Strengths

- Average point score for pupils in line with the national average in 2001.
- A rising trend in A-level results since the last inspection.
- Nearly all students make satisfactory progress because they and their teachers are enthusiastic.
- Well above average A-level results in history and above average results in business studies, general studies and vocational studies (intermediate).
- High standards in psychology and accounting.

Areas for improvement

- Art and design.
- Use of ICT across all subjects.

22. Standards achieved by students in 2001 were good. The average point score per pupil entered for GCE A/AS-level was in line with the national average and higher than that for the local education authority's schools. Male students obtained a slightly higher points score than the female students.
23. The few students with special educational needs in the sixth form are supported well and make good progress. Those for whom English is an additional language have good skills in English and perform well. The school has made no analysis of the attainment of students in terms of their ethnicities. During the course of the inspection, all students made at least satisfactory and often good progress as a result of good teaching and learning in all lessons irrespective of the ethnic groups they represented.
24. Results were well above average in history and above average in business studies, general studies and vocational studies (intermediate). Results were well below average in art and design. They were in line with the national average in mathematics, biology, physics, chemistry, drama, English literature and French. Results in AS in 2001 showed that just over one half of those entered obtained a grade A-C and 87 per cent gained grades A-E.
25. Since the last inspection, results have shown an upward trend. Over the three-year period prior to this inspection, history and accounting have shown significant 'added value', indicating a good level of achievement. Overall, the strongest performances have been in history, business studies and general studies.
26. Validated national data for national comparisons are not yet available for 2001. Results were highest in history and business studies. They were lowest in art and design, German and music, although small numbers of students in these subjects make national comparisons invalid. Achievement is satisfactory when students' A-level results are compared with their GCSE results obtained two years previously.
27. A sound understanding of the new examination requirements was an important factor contributing to the satisfactory AS results in 2001. They were very good in business studies and broadly satisfactory with most pupils obtaining passes in all other subjects.

28. The factors that contribute to these results are well-managed procedures for monitoring and supporting students along with appropriate levels of challenge in most subjects, especially in accounting, business studies and psychology. Standards in numeracy and literacy on entry to the sixth form are satisfactory. Many students demonstrate a good level of maturity and motivation in persevering in their studies. The combination of these sound, key skills, teachers' appropriate expectations and very good subject knowledge that characterises nearly all their teaching, provides the foundation of students' overall good progress in the sixth form.
29. Standards in the work seen in Year 13 were in line with those expected nationally and broadly reflected the recent examination results. Standards are highest in business studies, accounting, history and psychology. They are in line with those expected nationally in mathematics, chemistry and biology where the students work with increasing independence and music and art and design where the key skills and independent decision making combine well to enable students to appreciate different music and media respectively. Good thinking and analytical skills contribute to standards that are in line with those nationally for AS and A-level students, enabling them to interpret statistical data and explore historical links to explain trade developments.
30. Good analytical skills contributed significantly to standards that are above those expected nationally in business studies and history seen during the inspection period. However, in many subjects ICT skills are insufficiently used to solve problems and standards in this area are below those usually found in sixth forms. Standards are good in English because many students show confidence and skill in commenting perceptively on texts studied and an increasing independent point of view as well as personal writing style.
31. Effective guidance on entry, good relationships and sound rates of progress contribute to the good rates of retention of students achieved by the school. Most students make effective progress to their individual targets supported by the school's mentoring system for sixth form students. As a result, records indicate that the majority are successful in moving to appropriate forms of higher education or employment after their sixth form studies.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

32. Pupils are very enthusiastic about coming to school and have very positive attitudes towards work and life at school. The school's caring ethos, which is underlined by the Catholic faith, results in the very good personal development of pupils. Pupils' behaviour is good and there are very good relationships between all members of the school community.
33. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils are willing learners, although they can occasionally be over dependent on teachers and unwilling to question. Where the teaching is very good pupils respond well to high expectations and the challenges offered to them.
34. Behaviour is good. Most pupils understand and accept the behavioural rewards and sanctions that are clearly laid down and implemented. Some jostling between lessons in areas of the school with narrow corridors has resulted in closer supervision by staff. There have been a few short-term exclusions, which were for justifiable reasons. Bullying is very rare and dealt with very promptly and effectively.

35. The school is very effective in its personal development of pupils. There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in activities outside lessons for example, in a wide range of extra-curricular or homework clubs. Many pupils take part in these activities that help them to mature and, as they progress up the school, to offer useful help to others. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds, including those who are not of the Catholic faith, work together harmoniously. Pupils work well together in groups and, with rare exceptions, listen carefully to each other's views. They enjoy being given and taking responsibility for others. The school council involves pupils of all ages and raises issues of concern to pupils, which are brought to the attention of the headteacher.
36. The level of attendance is above and unauthorised absence below, the national average. Most pupils arrive on time at the start of the day, although one-third of pupils in Year 11 and some in other years were late during inspection week.
37. Pupils with special educational needs have a very positive attitude to school including those who receive support for behavioural difficulties. For the most part they relate very well to staff and are proud of the work and progress that they make. They take a pride in their work and are open in their appreciation of the support they receive and the impact it has on their progress. Pupils are very supportive of each other, recognising each other's strengths and willing to take risks in front of peers when offering answers and ideas in class. They are well accepted into the school and no incidents of bullying or teasing were seen during the inspection.

Sixth form

38. The vast majority of students enjoy life in the sixth form and would recommend it to others. The majority have good attitudes towards work and appreciate the way in which teachers treat them as young adults. Their behaviour, as in the rest of the school, is good and they have a very good respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. They receive clear guidance from staff on how to develop the necessary independent learning skills but at present some students do not have sufficient confidence in themselves to work independently. A minority of students, mainly in Year 12, have yet to show the self-discipline required for successful sixth form work of working in non-teaching periods.
39. The relationships between members of the sixth form are very good. All students, including those who have joined the sixth form from other schools, were relaxed and friendly with each other and at ease with sixth form tutors. The tutorial system ensures that students' personal and academic needs are well known to staff and it results in very good relationships between staff and students.
40. Opportunities to exercise leadership enable students to set good standards and a positive tone for others. This was well illustrated in the quiet efficiency with which duties were undertaken during a sixth form assembly. Many students show a laudable interest in helping younger pupils at the school. They offer pupils greatly valued help through the buddy system, action group or by working alongside teachers in class. In addition, the prefects have duties that involve them in the smooth running of the school. However, as the sixth formers themselves point out, there is not a wide range of extra-curricular activities in which they may participate.
41. Attendance is good in the sixth form. However, attention is needed to ensure that the main school register, rather than those for individual lessons, promptly records the

whereabouts of every student in the afternoon. A minority of students are unpunctual at the start of the day or miss the start of lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is good because teachers' expectations are usually high and nearly all pupils and students respond very well to appropriately challenging work.
- Good subject knowledge is skillfully explained through often well-chosen teaching methods.
- The quality of learning is well managed and good progress is made when provision matches pupils' needs with challenging tasks and variety in learning approaches.
- The parents' positive views are confirmed.

Areas for improvement

- The quality and use of assessment in Years 7, 8 and 9 so that all pupils are made fully aware of the National Curriculum standards expected in their targets.
- The matching of work to the full range of capabilities, especially in Year 7.
- The development and application of ICT in all subjects of the curriculum.

42. The quality of teaching and learning is most often good in Years 7-11 and often very good in the sixth form. It was very good or better in 23 per cent of the lessons seen and good or better in 68 per cent. Three per cent of the teaching and learning seen was less than satisfactory, representing eight of the 197 lessons seen; just over 1 per cent was poor. Excellent teaching and learning was seen on four occasions: in modern foreign languages and instrumental music in the main school and in English and modern languages in the sixth form.
43. Improvement has been very good since the last inspection because the priorities of the school development plan have been well implemented in a number of departments but also because the school has developed an 'effective teacher project' involving a number of the 50 per cent of teachers who have remained in the school since 1998. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is much reduced and the proportion of very good or better teaching has increased since the last inspection.

44. These findings mirror very closely the views expressed by those parents who completed the questionnaire or attended the parents' meeting prior to the inspection. High expectations that provide challenging work were strong features of the very good teaching seen, particularly in Years 10 and 11, although such expectations were not consistently high across the curriculum.
45. Some parents expressed concerns about the regularity and suitability of homework. This is a satisfactory feature of the teaching overall, although homework is not always consistently set or marked to enhance the work of the classroom.
46. The quality of teaching and learning was broadly similar across the year groups. It was rarely less than satisfactory in any year group but there was unevenness of quality between and within most departments. The quality of teaching and learning is more consistent than at the time of the last inspection.
47. The hallmarks of the good and better teaching are the very good subject knowledge and high expectations that earn respect, gain pupils' interest and instil confidence. In the very good teaching; for example, in English, history and psychology, the chosen teaching methods fit well with the objectives of the lesson and ensure that there are very good gains in understanding and skills as well as knowledge. The high expectations are well matched to individual needs and, as a result, all pupils are fully involved in the lesson, including those with identified special educational needs, those who have English as an additional language and those who are identified as gifted and talented.
48. When teachers' high expectations are communicated through thought-provoking questions, progress and the quality of pupils' learning are very good. This was illustrated in an excellent English lesson where such questions presented a level of challenge that enthused many, extending their understanding and arousing their curiosity. This lesson made an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development.
49. In the very good teaching, high expectations are frequently linked to the very good management of learning. This is a regular feature of the good teaching in mathematics and geography where there are opportunities to work in pairs, small groups and as a whole class. In all these arrangements, activities are conducted with pace and provide challenging activities. This involves the very effective use of questions that develop understanding and encourage learners' thinking.
50. In many lessons, individuals, including those with identified special educational needs, are often well supported so that any misunderstanding or uncertainty is quickly resolved and progress made. This was a good feature of some of the lessons seen in English and personal, social and health education.
51. The special educational needs department leads on devising targets for pupils' and students' individual education plans (IEPs) and individual behaviour plans (IBPs). It makes good use of assessment results to indicate improvement in reading age. Very good use is made of a commercial ICT programme to ensure that the targets are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time limited. Whilst all teachers in all departments are aware of pupils' and students' targets, inconsistent use is made of these targets within and across departments to inform lesson planning and to ensure that all pupils and students receive levels of work and teaching appropriate to their needs.
52. The quality and use of assessment, particularly to inform planning and match work to the needs of individuals, is insufficiently well developed across all subjects.

Consequently, some otherwise good teaching remained satisfactory as challenges were not sharply targeted at levels that met individual prior learning and understanding. Associated with this, the quality and nature of marking and written feedback to pupils varied greatly across the school, being largely dependent on individual teachers.

53. Time, resources and support staff are generally well used. The skills required to make full use of the library are effectively taught but not utilised across the curriculum, especially in Years 7-9. Some good use is made of resources to provide stimulating learning challenges in geography and history. In physical education there is insufficient time provided to plan and evaluate work, partly because the off-site facilities consume much of the time that would otherwise be available for teaching and learning.
54. The quality of learning is unsatisfactory in some isolated incidents because the management of behaviour or pupils' interests are unsatisfactory. As a result the progress of the rest of the class is impeded. This occurred on a single occasion in both music and business studies.
55. The small number of pupils with special educational needs are well taught. There is a good level of awareness of their special needs. In most subjects, where it is appropriate, work is suitably matched to meet their individual needs. Four part-time learning support assistants provide additional and well-directed help. As a result, pupils are included fully in lessons and make good progress.
56. The quality of teaching in the learning support team and behavioural support is very good. Teachers know the special educational needs of pupils and students very well. This enables them to plan work that meets pupils' needs, engages them, interests them and enables them to make good progress in building on their prior knowledge and understanding (particularly in literacy and numeracy) which, because of their special educational needs, is below expectation on entering school. Staff have a very wide range of class management skills and teaching styles that encourage learning and forestall incidents of poor behaviour before they can affect lessons. The learning support team provides homework clubs at lunchtime and on two afternoons after school. Pupils find this a great help in enabling them to have access to the curriculum and to make good progress. In one lesson seen, the teaching style was too teacher led and opportunities for involving pupils in their own learning were missed.
57. Satisfactory provision is made for those who are identified as gifted and talented, particularly through additional curricular opportunities. There was no evidence available to indicate the progress made by those who have English as an additional language. The small number who are not fluent in English when they start at the school, receive a good level of additional support.
58. The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory overall. Literacy skills are taught satisfactorily overall. Provision is good in English where many pupils make good gains in writing skills by age 14 years and also develop well their reading and speaking skills. There is generally good provision in geography, history and science. Nonetheless, standards of speaking skills are not yet good enough because pupils' skills in argument, sustained discussion and informal presentation of ideas, opinions and concepts are not fully developed. Whilst provision to develop these skills in other areas is underdeveloped overall, attention to the understanding and use of technical vocabulary related to subjects is generally good. Whilst the mathematics department has begun to implement the school's strategy for the development of numeracy skills, this has not yet been extended across all subjects, although there are plans to do so. Numeracy skills are well taught in mathematics. Key objectives for their consolidation, application

and development are not included in the schemes of work of other subjects. ICT skills are underdeveloped across the curriculum, although the teaching of these skills is good in discrete ICT lessons. There is a planned strategy for extending basic ICT skills outside discrete subject lessons and across the curriculum, but this has not yet been implemented fully. As a result, provision is uneven.

Sixth Form

Strengths

- Good teaching and learning in most subjects inspected with some very good teaching in English, history, geography, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages, business studies and psychology.
- Very good subject knowledge and high expectations.
- Most students learn very well because their key skills are good.

Areas for improvement

- Development of independent learning, questioning, research and investigation skills.
- Use of ICT across the curriculum.

59. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It was very good or better in 25 per cent of the lessons seen. Overall, good or better teaching and learning was seen in 74 per cent of lessons, indicating a good degree of consistency. The quality of teaching and learning was unsatisfactory in four lessons.
60. Many of the very good features evident in the main school are also regular features of teaching and learning in the sixth form. They are further enhanced by the greater maturity and commitment of students and teachers' good, specialist knowledge in most subjects, but insufficient emphasis is placed on developing independent learning skills.
61. Whilst a high proportion of good or better teaching was seen in nearly all subjects, the proportion of very good teaching and learning varied between and within subjects. The teaching of key skills is not timetabled as a separate lesson. There is satisfactory provision within general studies and most subjects draw upon and contribute to them. The strength of students' learning in the areas of communication contributes to standards but there remains a limited use of ICT.
62. Individual needs are usually met well in lessons. Occasionally in Year 12, where teaching groups are large, the match of work does not fully reflect the wide range of capabilities.
63. Special educational needs are well met. Those who have English as an additional language are sufficiently fluent and literate to cope with the demands of studies when they enter the sixth form. When this is occasionally not the case, individual support is sensitive and effective.
64. All students are well included because effective guidance and support results in a generally good match of courses to individual needs and aspirations. Retention rates are very good overall.
65. When the quality of teaching and learning was unsatisfactory, progress was too slow because there was insufficient awareness of how work might be improved or students might participate more actively in the lesson and their learning.

66. The quality of teaching in the learning support team and behavioural support is very good. Teachers know the special educational needs of pupils and students very well. This enables them to plan work that meets pupils' needs, engages them, interests them and enables them to make good progress in building on their prior knowledge and understanding (particularly in literacy and numeracy) which, because of their special educational needs, are below expectation on entering school. Staff have a very wide range of class management skills and teaching styles that encourage learning and forestall incidents of poor behaviour before they can affect lessons. The learning support team provides homework clubs at lunchtime and on two afternoons after school. Pupils find this a great help in enabling them to have access to the curriculum and make good progress. In one lesson seen, the teaching style was too teacher led and opportunities for involving pupils in their own learning were missed.

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

67. The school provides a range of courses that match pupils' and students' aspirations well. However, although the quality and range of learning opportunities offered in the sixth form are generally satisfactory, the balance of provision in the main school is unsatisfactory. This is because the curriculum is broad but insufficiently balanced. Moreover, statutory requirements are not met in some areas. In Years 7 to 9, insufficient time is allocated to design and technology, history and music. The carousel arrangements do not provide for secure continuity and progression. In Years 10 and 11, pupils have the option of studying design and technology (DT) or information and communication technology as discrete subjects but not both, despite the fact that DT is part of the core curriculum in Years 10 and 11. In addition, the time allocated for DT is below national recommendations. The school does not meet statutory requirements across all ages because there is no provision for control and data logging in ICT, provision for computer aided machines in DT and provision for religious education in the sixth form. In art and design, planning for Years 7 to 9 does not fully address the requirement of Curriculum 2000. The school is aware of these weaknesses and has plans in place to address them for next year.
68. In the main school pupils are offered the full range of National Curriculum subjects at GCSE; in mathematics about one-third of pupils in Year 10 are entered for statistics. Several departments are now examining the possibility of offering entry-level qualifications for pupils with special educational needs.
69. The school has implemented sound strategies and practices for teaching literacy skills. Most departments make planned provision to improve standards of literacy. The Numeracy Strategy is just being implemented starting in the mathematics department and with planned additional training for all staff scheduled for 2002. As a result, numeracy skills are not yet being sufficiently well developed across all subjects of the curriculum.
70. Overall, the school makes satisfactory provision for extra-curricular activities. In Years 7 to 11 the opportunities provided for extending opportunities for learning are very good. There are many sporting activities including basketball, judo, boys' indoor hockey, badminton, netball and soccer. The school is very successful in promoting the performing arts including music (through the choir, orchestra and guitar club), art and design (including the art lab for girls) and drama. There are a range of visits to theatres, libraries and art galleries. Field trips include Epping Forest and London Docklands. In addition there are trips abroad including to Belgium and Spain. As well as subject based clubs, the school provides a range of very effective study support during

lunchtimes and after school. These include GCSE catch up lessons in art and design and revision groups for history.

71. Equality of access to the curriculum and extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. There are patches of good practice but these are inconsistent because of lack of planning and direction. There is no specific school policy on identifying and making provision for gifted and talented pupils and students, although some good practice does occur for example, in English, mathematics and science.
72. The school's provision for personal and social education, including drugs awareness and sex education, is satisfactory. Careers education is a component of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) modular curriculum in Years 9, 10 and 11. It raises students' awareness about the implications of having a job and preparations for work experience and job applications. There is a clear process or learning progressively through the PSHE curriculum. However, its effectiveness is monitored and evaluated only through informal discussions with staff and pupils. Careers interviews are provided for all pupils in Key Stage 4. Since the reduction in provision by the local careers service provider, the school has released the head of careers for a fortnight each year in the summer term to conduct interviews with all the other pupils to ensure that they receive their entitlement.
73. Work experience is provided for all Year 10 pupils and this takes place in the last fortnight of the summer term each year. Pupils are encouraged to find their own placements as well as using provision established by the school. All placements are managed through Trident, which then ensures that health and safety and insurance standards and expectations are met. A school-produced explanatory leaflet on work experience is distributed and this is satisfactory. Pupils are provided with a logbook which they use to reflect on and evaluate their experience. All placements are monitored by volunteer members of staff.
74. The school is an integral part of the local community, which makes a good contribution to pupils' and students' learning. Links run through all year groups and most areas of the community. For example, there are visits from the fire brigade to discuss careers and from the transport police to discuss safety issues. They also include sporting contacts, links with local businesses, writers, artists and musicians. The school choir provided the backing support for a recording supporting Children in Need. The local Asian community makes good use of the school's facilities at weekends. Close links are made with the local parishes. Pupils and students benefit well from the opportunities provided to broaden their experience and awareness of the world beyond school. There are sound links with partner institutions including the partner primary schools. The school has developed close and effective relationships with local, teacher training institutions.
75. The quality of spiritual development for pupils and students is good. The school provides an act of worship for all each day. Assemblies are held regularly and provide a positive medium for the consideration of spiritual, moral and social issues. For example, in one assembly a very moving analogy was made between celebrating the Eucharist and a real example of an American boy's handling of bereavement and how to remember the influence and teachings of his dead father. Assemblies all have time for prayer and reflection. Within subjects, good opportunities arise, either planned or spontaneous. For example, in history, pupils in Key Stage 4 explored the feelings of people caught up in the social tensions and deprivations of the United States of America in the inter-war years. In modern foreign languages the Hail Mary is recited in French, German or Spanish. In the sixth form, topics include religious beliefs. Songs in

assembly, composed by pupils using religious texts, were described as ecstatic. Monologues on inner turmoil, presented by pupils in drama, demonstrated tension, emotion and empathy; you could have heard a pin drop.

76. The school makes good provision for pupils' and students' moral development. All adults continually reinforce basic moral principles throughout the daily life of the school. Adults provide good role models. They treat pupils and students with respect, discuss issues of right and wrong and attempt to explain why one course of action is preferable to another. There is a good selection of books in the library on a range of social and moral issues. In history, studying the slave trade in Year 8 and the Holocaust in Year 9 give pupils important insights into how easily people forget the differences between right and wrong.
77. The provision made for pupils' social development is good. There are good opportunities where pupils and students work together in pairs and small groups involving a range of activities. The very good range of extra-curricular activities for Years 7 to 11 enables pupils to work together both formally and informally. The school provides opportunities for pupils and students to exercise responsibilities for example, through the School Council and the buddy system.
78. The quality of provision for cultural development is good. Rich provision is made in art and design as seen in a wall display produced by the art group, which illustrated the major symbols of Christian, Buddhist and Islamic faiths, including Mendhi patterns, linked to the symbolism of body tattoos. In history, the study of local culture in Ilford and Seven Kings provides pupils with an understanding of how local culture and identity have developed. There is a recently started Black History group, which is investigating the roles and origins of the teaching of African people across the world. In music the teaching of samba and gamelan music raises awareness of other cultures. There has been a recent, whole-school Black History month and a Caribbean Project. In addition, the school has worked with the Junior Windsor Fellowship to reduce the number of permanent exclusions, with notable success. Good use is made of the school's facilities at weekends by the local Asian community.
79. There are 93 pupils and students on the special educational needs (SEN) register of which 11 (one of whom is in the sixth form) have Statements of Special Educational Need. This is much lower than the number to be found in comparable schools. The highest incident of SEN is emotional and behavioural difficulties followed by autistic spectrum disorders (including Asperger's Syndrome), specific learning difficulties or dyslexia and speech and communication difficulties. Three pupils (two in Year 10 and one in Year 11) have been disapplied from parts of the National Curriculum and the provision made for them is appropriate and in the best interest of the pupils.
80. In Years 7 to 11, access of pupils with special educational needs to the curriculum is enhanced through small group withdrawal, in-class support or both. In Years 10 and 11, some pupils study a reduced number of GCSE subjects and receive extra support in the remaining subjects in order to enhance their knowledge and skills. In the sixth form, one student has a laptop computer to aid writing and recording. These practices are a positive feature of the school and are working well. A further successful innovation is the introduction of a social skills group in Years 7, 8 and 9, for pupils who have communication difficulties identified in their Statement of Special Educational Need. The learning support staff work successfully with an outreach teacher from the local authority to enable these pupils to gain greater access to the curriculum.
81. The special educational needs provision within the school makes a positive contribution to pupils' moral development through encouraging an ethos of tolerance and

acceptance of difference. For example, one pupil was able to express the view that people who have autism are different from, but not inferior to, those who do not, even though they may feel different. They are also well developed socially, being very supportive of each other and celebrate each other's successes, such as a pupil in Year 11 who praised the achievement of a friend when completing mathematics homework. Pupils are proud of their work and were willing to explain what they are doing when using ICT to complete a curriculum vitae.

82. A strength of the school is the harmonious blend of many different races, cultures and creeds. All pupils are welcomed into the school community where the Catholic faith is the cornerstone of the school's ethos. Just over one third of the school's intake is of ethnic minority origin and a small number are refugees. Three hundred and forty-eight pupils are registered as having English as an additional language (EAL) this is a high proportion of the school roll. Fourteen pupils are identified at the early stage of language acquisition. Sixty-one pupils are supported through the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant (EMAG). At present the EMAG teacher is in school four days each week, but from the end of next term the school has reorganised its support systems. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) will be responsible for EAL students as part of her new role as Head of Learning Support Services. The SENCO has well-organised plans to continue the support that is already provided. There are satisfactory strategies in place for meeting the needs of EAL learners through small group teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy.
83. Teaching of EAL learners follows similar formats to those for pupils with SEN and pupils are sometimes taught together. Links are forged between the two areas of provision, but both areas retain their separate identities. Subject teachers are sensitive to the needs of pupils having English as an additional language and inspectors reported that pupils are well integrated into lessons. Overall, pupils with EAL make satisfactory progress. Their achievements are recorded carefully and strategies are in place for improving the standards reached through a range of schemes. For example, the Barriers to Learning Scheme focuses on improving the performance of Afro-Caribbean boys. An example of good progress is that of two sisters of Asian origin who entered school in Year 8 with no English language skills. Both girls worked with bilingual support for two and a half hours each week and progressed well, achieving creditable results in the recent GCSE examinations. Although grades in English were well below average, these same girls achieved good grades in mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
84. Overall provision for pupils speaking English as an additional language is satisfactory and often good. Pupils are included in all areas of provision, teachers are responsive to their needs and pupils integrate fully into the life of the school.

Sixth form

85. The curriculum is appropriate, broad and balanced, meeting the needs of students in most areas except in its provision for religious education. This is because time allocated to religious education is insufficient to meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.
86. Provision in the sixth form meets the needs of a broad range of students as a range of options is open to them, including A-level, AS-level and GNVQ courses. Students have equality of opportunity and access to sixth form studies. They may enter some A-level courses without the requirement to have gained a GCSE qualification previously. Key skills are at an early stage of development across the curriculum, but are especially

evident in English. Students with special educational needs or who have English as an additional language are supported well in the sixth form and make good progress.

87. Although provision meets student needs overall, opportunity for work experience is available in Year 12 is underdeveloped. Most of the 15 students who participated in the last fortnight of 2001 were planning careers in the medical sector. Whilst purposeful, relatively few students were involved. Active steps are now being taken to broaden the perspective of sixth form work experience placements and to involve more students.
88. The quality and provision to enhance the subject curriculum for the sixth form is similarly limited. This is because of a restricted range of activities as commented upon by parents and students alike and arrangements are insufficient to ensure that all sixth form students make the most productive use of private study time available.
89. Young Enterprise, by contrast, is a highly successful work-related feature of the sixth form provision. It has been developed over the last three years for Year 12 students and the participants have secured a local prize in Redbridge each year; in 2001 it was for the best company report. In the present Year 12, there are 24 participants, with an even gender balance and, whilst they are continuing to generate funds by providing services such as a disco for Years 7 and 8, they are now venturing into product delivery for the first time in 2002. With the support of a local business, they are to create and distribute a CD-based newspaper, full of self-generated news, quizzes and other activities designed for teenagers, under the byline 'it really is not available on paper'.
90. Sixth form students continue to develop well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally as a result of very good relationships between teachers and students, good role models demonstrated by adults working with sixth formers, effective working links between sixth form students and younger students or outside groups and the curriculum provided.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

91. The school's provision for support, welfare and guidance is, as at the last inspection, good. Staff care for the pupils and there are many support systems for those with and without difficulties, which enable them to move forward and the school to run smoothly.
92. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is satisfactory overall. A strength of the school is the very good pastoral care that develops thoughtful, responsible young people. The very wide range of activities, which take place in the lunch hour or after school, are a strength. There are many highly challenging sports activities, including judo tuition, which has resulted in pupils achieving at the very highest level. Homework clubs support learning and peer counselling, as well as that provided by the Catholic Children's Society, all support an admirably caring community where staff support pupils in helping them to look after themselves and each other.
93. The school now makes good use of the information that it receives on all pupils at primary-secondary transfer from LEAs. There are clear criteria for identifying pupils with learning difficulties at an early stage. Annual reviews of pupils with special educational needs or transitional reviews of Statements of Special Educational Need are well planned and include parents and pupils or students and meet statutory requirements. The quality of reports for these reviews is good. Healthy and safety issues are addressed well by the school to ensure that pupils learn in an appropriately secure environment.
94. Very good use is made of a wide range of outside agencies including the education psychology service, the Catholic Children's Society, the LEA's outreach services and the local family guidance clinic.
95. The identification of pupils who are gifted and talented has been considered, but at present there is no universal identification or provision for these pupils throughout the school.
96. However, the monitoring of academic progress in Years 7-11 is unsatisfactory as assessment is not satisfactorily used to guide teachers' planning. Test results are analysed and recent steps have been taken to measure the educational value added to pupils' learning. Regular progress checks and an interim report draw together the assessment made by different departments, but, as at the last inspection, the system of assessment is left to each department. This results in a patchy, inconsistent picture where assessment is not used thoroughly to meet the academic needs of individuals. Marking rarely indicates what pupils should do to improve or extend their work and it is not clear how teachers' knowledge of their pupils' abilities affects their planning. Targets, if they are set, are too vague and inexplicit. In a few subjects, work is taught that meets the needs of for example, the higher attaining pupils. In other classes, the needs of lower or higher attaining pupils are not met. However, the progress made by pupils with special educational needs has improved and is now very good.
97. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. There are certificates for good attendance and the education welfare officer chases up poor attenders. The school has yet to reduce the number of pupils in Year 11 who arrive late. There are very good systems in place to promote good behaviour and tackle the rare instances of bullying. No bullying or any form of harassment was seen during the inspection week. The procedures for child protection are good.

Sixth form

98. The educational and personal support and guidance for students is good. Students' academic and personal progress is monitored and supported well through the tutorial system. Despite concerns expressed by a minority of students, they receive good careers advice which, for those who have been at the school in previous years, follows on from advice given in Year 11. The opportunities for taking work experience in the sixth form are currently limited to those studying GNVQ. Advice on university choices or other work or study options is good and visits may be made to universities.
99. Staff take good care of students' health and welfare. Child protection procedures are good. However, the afternoon registration system does not clearly identify who is in school and who is not.
100. Procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are good and lead to a good diagnosis of individual learning needs. Students' performance in subject areas is requested at regular intervals and communicated to tutors, after which regular tutorials take place. These subject reports are used as the basis of discussion and target setting with students. Each student is free to ask for extra tutorials should this be felt necessary. A number of students responding to the student questionnaire at the start of term, when pupils were new to Year 12, felt that they were unclear about the help they could receive and the progress they were making. However, during the inspection most students now felt confident in the tutorial system.
101. The use of assessment information to guide teachers' planning in the sixth form is satisfactory. As a result of diagnosis of students' needs, the school has for example, changed an English examination board and allowed experienced business studies students to move ahead faster than others.
102. Students are allocated time, as is usual in a sixth form, for study periods between lessons. There is little planned study space at present although the information technology room is currently available when not used for lessons. The lack of dedicated study space is recognised by the school to be having an impact on the development of students' study skills and dedication to work. This particularly affects the academically weaker students.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

103. As at the time of the last inspection, parents think the school is very good. A large majority of parents responded to the questionnaire and the pre-inspection meeting was very positive. A significant minority (15 per cent) felt that the school does not work closely with them and one-fifth of parents who completed the questionnaire considered that the school did not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. During the inspection, examples of information provided by the school for parents, showed that good efforts were made to communicate with parents clearly and to involve them in the learning of their children. The inspectors considered that the range of after and before school activities for pupils in Years 7–11 was appropriate, but that this was too limited in the sixth form.
104. The response by students to a number of areas in the questionnaire gave initial cause for concern, but when questioned during the inspection, students responded very positively to all areas of life in the sixth form with the exception of the lack of extra-curricular provision. Inspectors agree with the enthusiastic views of students

questioned during inspection week and also believe there are insufficient activities provided for them outside the academic curriculum.

105. There is a very high turnout for parents' evenings and the logbook is a very effective method of ensuring that parents are aware of what is required of pupils. The Home School Association supports the school very well and raises considerable sums for example, through the fête and international evening, which are used to benefit pupils' education.
106. The quality of information provided for parents is good. The prospectus and newsletters are clear and informative. The interim report and parents' evenings are very useful, as is the logbook, but the end of year written reports do not consistently report on the progress made by pupils. Some departments are better than others. There are few clearly defined targets set for improvement and some subjects report National Curriculum levels whilst others do not. As at the last inspection, few departments make provision for pupils to assess their own work and thus reflect on their learning.
107. Parents' contribution to their children's learning at school and at home is very good. Parents respond well to prompting from staff for example, in art and design at Key Stage 4, where parents' help is enlisted to check that pupils have completed coursework on time.
108. The learning support team has developed very positive relationships with parents, especially for pupils and students who have Statements of Special Educational Need. Parents are supportive of the special needs co-ordinator and staff and have confidence in them. They welcome the clarity of the reports they receive and recognise and value the progress pupils and students make. One parent said at an annual review: "My child is now happy attending school and has developed independence skills... after being very unhappy at the last school".

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Strengths

- The headteacher's clear vision, high aspirations and strong and effective leadership.
- The successful fulfillment of the school's aims.
- The good match of teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum.

Areas for further improvement

- Monitoring roles of the senior team and middle managers in the school.
- The use of assessment information to inform curriculum planning.
- The role of governors in offering constructive criticism of the work of the school.

109. Leadership and management are good. The findings of the inspection confirm the very positive views expressed by those parents who completed the questionnaire.

110. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Several of the good features reported at that time are now very good. Some of the small number of unsatisfactory features have been dealt with but others, especially the use of assessment to improve teaching and the need to address imbalances in the curriculum provided, have remained until recently.
111. The new headteacher was appointed in April 2001. His considerable strengths of leadership are: a firm commitment further to raise standards; a sensitive respect for the traditional values of the school; the skilful management of the pace of change that ensures a very good degree of inclusion and an increasing readiness to embrace new initiatives and the development of the school's use of available data to set more challenging and realistic targets for pupils and the school as a whole. However, he has also recognised the urgency of some change needed to the building, resources, management structure and staff roles and has taken opportunities to address them without delay.
112. School development planning is satisfactory overall. The recently written plan is effective in setting the longer-term direction of the school. Priorities are well defined, predicated on raising attainment by recognising the improving attainment of pupils on intake and ensuring that targets are set to ensure each achieves appropriately.
113. The planning cycle is clear, including departmental plans and promoting the active involvement of governors. Links between the school plan and departmental plans are satisfactory overall. An important emphasis in current plans rivets outcomes to pupil attainment throughout.
114. The link between the school development plan (SDP) and the careful preparation of the annual budget is satisfactory, but departments are at an early stage in planning for developments as well as the use of budgets that maintain what is current. As a result, it is not yet possible to track and subsequently evaluate the effectiveness of funding additional to the basic budget.
115. The governing body is a very strong feature of the school's provision. Members have a long-standing commitment to the values of the school and bring high levels of expertise. The development of the strategic role of its members is less secure, which limits the extent to which they can be constructively critical in helping to shape the future direction of the school. The committees are very well led and managed. Procedures have been introduced by the headteacher to keep them informed, including various recent reports that provide a valuable review of need.
116. Although some curriculum issues remain since the last inspection, governors have exercised good leadership in managing a major building programme. Additionally, many governors make regular visits to link departments in order to support the implementation of developments although they are not sufficiently well informed to use these visits fully in supporting the work of the classroom. Currently, governors meet their statutory responsibilities in most aspects of the school with the exception of provision for ICT and DT throughout the school and religious education in the sixth form.
117. Members of the senior management team work co-operatively, diligently and generally effectively in their individual roles. Their individual responsibilities have been reviewed recently. Each has a role in line managing subject departments. However, partly because the team has expanded in recent months, the extent to which their roles function interdependently is underdeveloped, especially in using information from

monitoring or related to pupils' prior attainment to effect change. Similarly, subject leadership is good but their responsibilities for sharing the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and provision are underdeveloped. There is a clear strategy for performance management and related statutory requirements are met, but individual performance management objectives are not yet consistently dovetailed with school development priorities to ensure a clear impact on raising standards.

118. Staff other than teachers are also supported by a clear management structure. Partly in preparing for and subsequently gaining the award of Investors in People, all staff have clear job descriptions and the opportunity to benefit from a regular appraisal review system, which itself helps to inform the overall school development plan.
119. Procedures to review provision and performance are good overall. Evaluation is unsatisfactory. Provision for the monitoring of particular groups of pupils and students by gender is good, but is insufficiently clear, regular or rigorous in considering the attainment and targets for pupils of different ethnic groups, those who are gifted and talented or those who have English as an additional language.
120. Financial management is good. The pattern of expenditure is slightly below the median values nationally. The priorities of the School Development Plan are well supported through good financial planning although details of expenditure and sources of income are not described explicitly in the plan, making evaluation imprecise. The main issues raised in the last auditor's report have been addressed effectively. ICT is used effectively to support the management systems of the school, including the monitoring of progress and attendance.
121. Arrangements for the allocation of specific grants are satisfactory, but are not defined explicitly in the SDP. The principles of best value are generally well applied to all major expenditure decisions; for example, in the decision to lease rather than purchase computer equipment as part of the school's ICT strategy; tendering arrangements when managing the construction of the new building; obtaining the best value for resources by departments and competition in generating income from the use of the school's building at weekends. Best value principles have more recently been introduced in comparing and contrasting the school's performance with that of others.
122. The provision for special educational needs within the school is well managed. Identification and recording procedures are good. The overall management of provision is satisfactory, including the preparation of individual education plans. The management of the budget is only partially delegated to the special needs co-ordinator. Formal arrangements to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the provision have been developed along with recent restructuring of the learning support provision and its management. The special educational needs department has made good progress since the last inspection. Individual educational plans are now in place for all stages of the Code of Practice. Targets are clear and known and understood by all. Procedures are in place to improve the school's practice and commitment to inclusion. The school has been very successful in integrating pupils and students who have needs on the autistic spectrum or who have dyslexia.

123. The governing body has appointed a named special educational needs governor who has developed positive relationships with the department. Some visits have been made. However, formal structures for informing targets for visits or for monitoring the effectiveness of special educational needs provision have not yet been developed. Provision for those who have English as an additional language is managed satisfactorily. The school receives some additional funded provision from the local authority at present. Details of the expenditure plan and arrangements to evaluate its effectiveness and efficiency are unsatisfactory.
124. The development of the school's facilities have been prioritised and managed effectively. Since the last inspection, new facilities for the sixth form have been built, but resources and accommodation for ICT and facilities for physical education, which too often involve journeys off site, remain. The quality of displayed work is satisfactory. It is particularly very good in art, geography and physical education. The current accommodation is satisfactory overall. However, some parts of the building include narrow corridors which, although used in an orderly manner by pupils, cause congestion between lessons. Access for wheelchairs is unsatisfactory in some areas of the school.
125. The school has adequate resources. Provision is satisfactory overall. Facilities are excellent within the very well managed school library. Their planned and occasional use is very effective. The ratio of computers to pupils and students is below the national average. The resources are used efficiently and effectively, but it is only because ICT is insufficiently used across the curriculum at present that demand does not outstrip supply. Expenditure on learning resources is close to the median nationally for the last year as part of a well-managed improvement strategy.
126. Staffing of the school is satisfactory. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to meet the school's needs. Where necessary, the school is adept in securing suitable temporary and supply teachers. There are satisfactory arrangements for their induction, support and the monitoring of the quality of their work. However, in modern foreign languages successive changes of staff over a number of years have affected continuity and standards. In art and design the intermittent and then long-term illness of the subject head has depressed standards significantly over more than two years. There are some classes in the sixth form where the popularity of subjects has resulted in some overly large groups of students such as in science and physical education.
127. Staff who are new to the school are briefed well and newly qualified teachers follow a good programme of induction to support their work and development. The school benefits from partnerships with three providers of initial teacher training. The beginning teachers follow a well-planned programme of professional studies and are effectively supervised by experienced staff. The school has benefited by recruiting several teachers directly.

Sixth Form

Strengths

- Good teamwork in providing guidance and support for the students.
- A strong and shared commitment to high standards of personal integrity and social responsibility.
- Good mentoring provision for all students.

Areas for improvement

- The definition and evaluation of sixth form expenditure in both the school development plan and departmental development plans.

• The development of extra-curricular activities and work-related provision.

128. Leadership and management are good although the position of head of sixth form is currently vacant and to be filled at the start of next term. Good teamwork ensures that the various leadership and management functions are effectively integrated. As a result, the monitoring of standards, setting of targets, provision of guidance and the availability of careers advice is coherent, efficient and effective. There is no documented, sixth form development plan but the overall strategic vision is good. Day to day administration is good.
129. The governing body fulfils well its responsibilities towards the sixth form. Through its committees, it monitors very well both provision and performance. The Building and Sites committee has been alert to accommodation issues and has helped to address them well with the new building since the last inspection. The governors have supported very well the strategic development and best interests of the school's sixth form. They do not support the provision of time for compulsory religious education. As a result, statutory requirements are not fully met.
130. Resources are well used and the planning of the timetable is good. The sixth form is cost-effective overall, despite the provision of several very large and very small teaching groups. There is no evidence that large teaching groups are affecting standards or progress adversely but occasionally there is an unsatisfactory degree of match of work to the full range of capabilities in the group; for example, sometimes in science. Overall, the school spends slightly less than the defined budget share to fund the sixth form provision. Principles of best value are generally well applied; for example, in decisions concerning the provision of courses and their viability.
131. The current accommodation is good. The students' common room and study room facilities are very good. Their general appearance is both stimulating and attractive. The organisation of tutor rooms within the sixth form block has the disadvantage of not spreading the presence of the sixth form more widely but there are opportunities for the students to establish and demonstrate their influence in supporting younger age groups, as members of 'Take Action Groups', as prefects or school council representatives.
132. The quantity and quality of learning resources are satisfactory. The library provision and ICT suite for the sixth form are satisfactory although not fully utilised. Despite the recent increases in ICT expenditure, the quantity and quality of ICT hardware is insufficient to meet the needs of many of the students as it is extended across the curriculum.
133. The match of teaching expertise to the demands of the curriculum is very good. The preparations and professional development to teach Curriculum 2000 have begun, but at a slow rate. For example, literacy training has taken place within weeks prior to the inspection and numeracy and training in using information technology are scheduled for the next calendar year. The good level of specialist expertise across a wide range of academic subjects are very strong features of the overall sixth form provision.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) Ensure consistency of teaching within and between departments by:
 - identifying and sharing very good practice within and from outside the school;
 - adopting the range of teaching approaches to match best the needs of all pupils.(Paragraphs: 47, 50, 56, 58, 65, 66, 143, 164, 167, 170, 174, 177, 214, 228, 233, 238, 240, 243, 283, 287, 292, 295)
- (2) Use assessment information to refine plans for lessons to provide more appropriate challenges for all pupils and the school curriculum as a whole.
(Paragraphs: 96, 101, 110, 165, 166, 176, 185, 188, 202, 213, 222, 240, 241, 268, 278, 287, 298)
- (3) Improve the balance of and statutory requirements for the curriculum by:
 - addressing requirements for design and technology at Key Stages 3 and 4;
 - redressing the imbalance between subjects and associated time allocations resulting from the current organisation of the curriculum and the timing of the school day.(Paragraphs: 67, 93, 116, 176, 186)
- (4) Provide information and communication technology across the curriculum by:
 - using New Opportunities Fund training to develop staff expertise and confidence;
 - complying with National Curriculum requirements.(Paragraphs: 67, 116, 125, 167, 170, 175, 212, 216, 220, 222, 230)
- (5) Develop the roles of senior and middle managers, especially in monitoring teaching and learning quality, by:
 - integrating performance management initiatives more rigorously into school development planning;
 - refining job descriptions and staff and accountabilities to focus on consistently raising standards of achievement for all pupils.(Paragraphs: 118, 119, 214, 224, 233)

Sixth form

- (A) Extend opportunities for students to develop independent learning, investigational and ICT skills through the curriculum and its teaching.
(Paragraphs: 30, 88, 249, 256, 263, 283, 303, 313, 316, 320, 329)
- (B) Provide additional work-related opportunities for sixth form students.
(Paragraphs: 38, 40, 87, 88, 98, 294)
- (C) Address statutory requirements for religious education.
(Paragraphs: 85, 116, 129)

When drawing up the action plan it is recommended that attention also be given to:

- raising standards and achievement in speaking skills, art and design and music.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7-11	136
	Sixth form	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		93

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

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

Number	2	29	58	43	4	0	0
Percentage	1.4	21.3	42.6	31.6	2.9	0	0

Sixth form

Number	2	13	30	12	2	2	0
Percentage	3.2	21.3	49.1	19.6	3.2	3.2	0

Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for sixth form as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	938	233
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	167	14

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	10	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	90	3

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	348

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	34

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.9
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	121	68	189

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	89	102	101
	Girls	53	50	48
	Total	142	152	149
Percentage of pupils At NC level 5 or above	School	75 (68)	80 (74)	79 (65)
	National	64 (64)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils At NC level 6 or above	School	36 (36)	51 (40)	40 (30)
	National	32 (29)	43 (41)	34 (29)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	76	101	91
	Girls	48	48	46
	Total	124	149	136
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	66 (61)	79 (69)	72 (68)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	38 (20)	38 (36)	40 (31)
	National	31 (31)	41 (39)	32 (30)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	112	72	184

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	59	109	111
	Girls	46	72	72
	Total	105	181	183
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	56 (59)	98 (96)	99 (99)
	National	50 (49.2)	88.9 (88.9)	94.5 (95.5)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	43.7
	National	39.3

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-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	52	41	93

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	18.2	17.9	18 (16.4)	0	3	6 (3.6)
National	18.5	19.2	18.9 (18.7)			4.1 (3)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	81
	National	86.3

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	120
Black – African heritage	114
Black – other	60
Indian	109
Pakistani	30
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	15
White	584
Any other minority ethnic group	139

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	3	0
Black – African heritage	4	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	11	0
Other minority ethnic groups	2	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	61.88
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.97

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	373.5

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.1
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 2	0
Key Stage 3	27.1
Key Stage 4	22.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	3,304,160
Total expenditure	3,295,772
Expenditure per pupil	2,815
Balance brought forward from previous year	3,250
Balance carried forward to next year	11,638

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	34
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	28

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	11.5

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	1175
Number of questionnaires returned	581

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	43	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	46	47	4	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	45	9	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	45	13	3	2
The teaching is good.	36	53	4	1	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	42	15	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	35	4	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	31	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	35	45	13	3	4
The school is well led and managed.	45	45	2	1	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	45	4	2	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	35	16	5	14

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

ENGLISH

Overall provision in English is **good**.

Strengths

- Standards are above national averages.
- Standards are well above those in comparable schools.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Teachers establish good relationships which encourages pupils' learning.

Areas for improvement

- Not enough challenge for average and lower attaining pupils in writing.
- Not enough development of speaking skills for all pupils.
- Assessment schemes to identify and plan for the needs of all groups of pupils are inadequate.

134. Standards in English are above national averages for 14-year-olds and well above comparable schools. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests in 2001 show a good improvement on 2000 results. Pupils' performance has risen sharply since 1998 to above national expectations at the time of this inspection, indicating that their rate of progress is greater than the national trend.
135. All pupils entered for English language in GCSE passed. About one third achieved the top band (A*-C) which is a slight drop from Year 2000 but above national averages for 2000. Pupils did very well in English Literature at GCSE in 2001 where nearly one-half of the pupils entered achieved the top band (A*-C) grades. This is a slight improvement on Year 2000. These results indicate that good value-added gains are made by pupils at GCSE level (0.25 grade per pupil value-added in English language and 0.74 grade per pupil value-added in English literature). Year 2001 results in English language were similar to those obtained by the same group of pupils in mathematics and in science. Girls' performance has improved since the last inspection and there is less difference between boys and girls. In both English language and literature lessons seen, boys contributed well to discussions carrying their ideas and analyses through to competent written work. This is contrary to boys' performance in English nationally.
136. Provision in English is good and as a result, all groups of students progress steadily. Higher attaining pupils make good, often very good, progress in response to the challenging tasks set. However, the needs of average and lower attaining pupils are not always considered carefully enough. Teachers are tolerant of careless work in draft books that is peppered with common errors in basic spelling, punctuation and grammar. Written work, which is formally assessed, is presented well but the practice of letting mistakes go unchecked on a day to day basis hinders the progress of some pupils and inhibits the standards they reach. However, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported. For example, a good lesson was seen with the lowest attaining pupils in Year 11 who were tackling examination questions from a GCSE paper set in 1999, focusing on the differences between expressing facts and opinions. The teacher provided a secure framework for learning that allowed pupils time to understand the key points by securing references to underpin their arguments.

137. Standards of pupils entering school in Year 7 are in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 9 they are achieving above average results in the National Curriculum tests. The introduction of 'catch-up' classes, using the progress units from the Key Stage 3 National Literacy Strategy, is effectively raising the standards of pupils who are underachieving. Pupils progress well through Years 7 and 8, developing their skills in reading and writing through working with language at word, sentence and text level. For example, pupils in Year 7 focus on the descriptive language used by Helen Cresswell as they explore her biography of Grace Darling. Pupils in Year 8 understand how to structure their own written work to keep the reader interested as they develop their stories. Pupils in Year 9 analyse the texts of poems, stories and plays exploring the language and style that writers use to create their effects. For example, a Year 9 class read aloud the Banquet Scene from 'Macbeth' gaining insights into the characters as they analysed Shakespeare's use of Banquo's ghost to allow the audience to share Macbeth's terrible feelings of guilt. Standards in speaking are not high enough. Pupils listen well and answer teachers' questions readily, discussing their work in small groups. However, the skills of extended argument, sustained discussion and informal presentation of ideas, opinions and concepts are not fully developed.
138. Pupils progress steadily through Year 10 and most 16-year-olds do better in the GCSE examinations than pupils at similar schools. Pupils in Year 11 develop their writing skills through their commentaries on a range of texts, both fiction and non-fiction. They explore different styles, genres and periods considering settings, developing relationships between characters and changing situations that impact upon the plot. For example, pupils in a Year 11 class discussed Golding's novel 'Lord of the Flies' exploring the growing hostility between the two principal characters as the boys on the island regressed into savages. Pupils are eager to learn and respond well to the good relationships encouraged by their teachers. As a result, behaviour in lessons is good and pupils work co-operatively with each other.
139. Overall teaching is good and most pupils learn well and make good progress. Teaching during the inspection was rarely less than satisfactory and three-quarters of the lessons seen were good or better. Teachers use the Key Stage 3 National Strategy for English profitably and this is having a good effect on learning in Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils learn best when teachers set a lively pace, moving quickly from one learning activity to another, keeping pupils motivated and focused on the text they are studying. Pupils in a Year 7 class all participated in the 'hot seating' of Hari, the young hero of their story text, 'A Village by the Sea', which resulted in some good character analysis. Pupils respond perceptively when teachers' questions are searching enough to excite their curiosity or arouse their emotions and they become aware of their own learning. For example, pupils in Year 8 built a 'bank of learning' as they explained how Ted Hughes personifies the pain of nature by writing of 'the fields quivering / the skyline a grimace' in his poem, 'The Wind'.
140. Teachers support the learning of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and those for whom English is an additional language by drawing them into discussions and checking that they understand directions given and tasks set. In some classes, lower attainers not on the SEN register are 'marking time' because they do not apply themselves to written work and contribute very little to class discussions. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sustained through the study of well chosen literature that encourages pupils to explore the feelings and emotions of the characters in texts read and to become aware of the effect of characters' actions on others in the story. Pupils in Year 11 compare and contrast poems, exploring relationships between men and women and the ways in which poets reflect men's or women's attitudes. For example, Andrew Marvell's teasing lyric 'To His Coy Mistress'

is contrasted with the more serious approach in 'Our Love Now'. Computers were not used in any lessons seen during the inspection. Homework is used profitably to reinforce learning in lessons and to research topics studied.

141. Curricular provision is good for all groups of pupils. The Key Stage 3 National Strategy for English forms the framework for study in Years 7, 8 and 9. The examination board syllabi provides the basis for pupils' studies in Years 10 and 11. Extra-curricular activities include breakfast club, homework club, 'catch-up' classes and a buddies scheme where older pupils and sixth formers support the reading for younger pupils.
142. Assessment procedures provide records of pupils' achievements but these are not being used to inform future planning, therefore, it is difficult to measure the rates of progress of different groups of pupils in relation to each other.
143. The head of department provides clear educational direction for her team of teachers who are all committed to raising standards and accelerating progress. Good progress has been made since the last inspection, but some inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching overall. These could best be resolved by closer monitoring of teachers' performance and the sharing of some of the good practice seen during this inspection.

Literacy

144. The Key Stage 3 National Strategy for English is being implemented successfully in Year 7. This is being extended for Year 8 from next term and Year 9 will be included at the beginning of the next school year. The co-ordinator for the teaching of Years 7, 8 and 9 has produced a concise and helpful workpack to share with other teachers of English. A Literacy Summer School is held for the first two weeks of the summer holiday to promote enhanced learning skills for literacy. This is offered to all pupils from 'feeder' primary schools who are underachieving or who feel insecure in their learning. Family literacy sessions are offered for all parents of pupils in Year 7 as part of the partnership with parents' initiative.
145. The DfEE document, Literacy Across the Curriculum, which provides advice for building literacy priorities into teaching across the curriculum, has been recently adopted for use in all subject areas. However, this is a new initiative and it has not yet been implemented fully. All subject inspectors reported on the quality of literacy skills practised in the lessons seen. In geography some good recording of environmental changes and explanations of ecosystems were seen in Year 9. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils focused on the topic of national hazards particularly earthquakes, developing a 'mind movie' on the impact of an earthquake and reporting the effect of this. Pupils used the literacy skills of listening and speaking to describe an imagined experience. Pupils make satisfactory, sometimes good, use of literacy skills in science. For example, pupils in Year 9 researched the effects of smoking on health. They learned to organise their information and communicate this clearly and effectively to the rest of the class. There is good use of literacy skills in history lessons across all year groups where a particular strength is the reading of source material with some detailed responses to complex texts.
146. A good example of speaking and listening skills was the response of pupils in a Year 8 class to the impact of the death of Lord Darnley on Mary, Queen of Scots. In art lessons, older pupils gain confidence as they speak about their work. Pupils in Year 11 write about the work of famous artists explaining how this has influenced their own studies. Literacy skills are exploited expressively in music. Pupils in Year 9 wrote

descriptively of the moods and emotions created by Saint Saens' 'Carnival of the Animals'. Pupils show perceptive appreciation of the repetition of key themes in the music for 'West Side Story' and describe when these occur. Overall there is some good development of cross-curricular skills although this is not yet being co-ordinated consistently across all subject areas.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- High levels of attainment at GCSE in mathematics and statistics.
- Strong leadership in the department.
- The quality of teaching.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and work hard.

Areas for improvement

- The staffing of the department needs to be consolidated.
- The department needs to develop its use of ICT.

147. Of the pupils who joined the school this year, four-fifths had attained Level 4 or higher in mathematics. This is a larger proportion than is found nationally. The proportion attaining Level 5 or higher is similar to that found nationally. The school uses its own very good diagnostic test in the first term, the results of which confirm that standards are higher than the national profile. The results identify what individual pupils do well and establish the areas of weakness both across the year group and for individuals. This information enables the school to set pupils effectively. The school has applied the tests over a number of years. The results show that the attainment of pupils in mathematics, when they enter the school, has improved steadily since the last inspection.
148. In 2000, the proportion of pupils at the age of 14 years attaining the expected Level 5 or higher is similar to that expected nationally when compared to all schools. It is well above the proportion found in similar schools. The proportion attaining Level 6 or higher is above that found in similar schools and is similar to the level found in all schools. These achievements demonstrate that the pupils have made satisfactory progress in mathematics since they started at the school. Results in 2001 show an increased number of pupils attaining the expected Level 5 whilst the national figure has remained almost unchanged. This continues the trend of improvement since the last inspection.
149. The number of pupils achieving GCSE grades A* to C was broadly similar in 2000 and 2001 and high when compared to the national average for all schools. It is very high when compared to similar schools. This represents good progress. Nearly all those who are entered attain a grade between A* and E and this is slightly better than the national figure. The top two sets in Year 10 take GCSE statistics as an additional course. In 2001, all 75 pupils who were entered passed with nearly nine out of ten pupils gaining an A* to C grade. This is similar to the results in 2000, which were well above the national average.
150. Levels of attainment have gone up for both boys and girls although it is slightly more noticeable for the boys. There are no noticeable differences in the attainment of those from different ethnic groups. Where differences in attainment are apparent in lessons, it

is more an issue of maturity than of race or gender. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well, make good progress and attain appropriately. Higher attaining pupils achieve and attain well as a result of the challenges provided by the organisation of different groups of pupils based on their prior attainment.

151. The quality of teaching is good because teachers plan well, lessons are well organised and good use is made of time and resources. A Year 11 lesson, planned around the use of graphic calculators, enabled pupils to sketch a number of curves on the same axes. The level of challenge was appropriate and the teacher kept the tasks coming in rapid succession. As a result, pupils worked quickly and were able to consolidate their understanding of the way a curve shifted as constants were introduced or changed. In only one lesson was the quality of teaching less than satisfactory. This is because the teacher did not ensure that pupils were quiet and hence they did not hear instructions and were easily distracted from their work. This situation led to a poor learning environment in which the pupils made too little progress. The quality of teaching in the department is significantly better than at the time of the last inspection.
152. Standards of work seen in the inspection were good most often because levels of expectation were high. For example, in the top set of Year 9 the work was set three levels higher than that normally expected of pupils at this age. Most pupils were coping well with calculations based on numbers in standard form and the teacher gave valuable support for those who were struggling to keep up. The philosophy of the approach is 'you have the wings, now fly!' - and they do.
153. The quality of pupils' learning is good. Pupils show interest, concentrate well and work hard. As a result, they gain new knowledge quickly and have plenty of opportunity to practise their technique. The high level of pupils' enthusiasm was seen in a Year 9 lesson that finished with pupils having to solve problems in ratio to find the answer to a joke. They were given a limited amount of time to complete the task, but carried on after the end of the lesson and out into the corridor trying to finish the sheet. Standards of behaviour are very good and pupils have a very positive attitude to the subject. In one Year 10 class, the pupils settled very quickly and were hard at work within a few minutes of their arrival.
154. All the lessons observed during the inspection started late, usually by at least five minutes. Calculated over the year, pupils lose the equivalent of a week of mathematics. This occurs despite their being gaps between lessons and that three out of five lessons each day follow a break or registration period.

155. The use of information technology is too limited. Good use is made of a number of graphic calculators but, as at the time of the last inspection, the computer is not being integrated with the curriculum sufficiently.
156. The department is currently facing significant staffing problems. Despite being well qualified, five of the nine staff are on short-term or temporary contracts. The school has attempted to attract new mathematicians but gets no response to advertising. Supporting trainee teachers has proved a valuable source of recruits but there are no students this year. As yet, the staffing problems have not impacted on pupils' attainment. This is largely due to the commitment of staff and the head of department.
157. The department is exceptionally well led. The co-ordination of work is very effective and there is appropriate monitoring of teaching and pupils' work. Despite small rooms and limited resources, the staff succeed in promoting an enthusiasm for the subject that is reflected in the good results, particularly at GCSE.

Numeracy

158. The school's approach to numeracy is underdeveloped. Although there is a clearly defined strategy to promote the development of numeracy skills across the curriculum, its planned implementation is taking place through the mathematics department only at present. Pupils' achievement in numeracy across the curriculum is not assessed and departments have yet to implement a common approach to the consideration of numeracy within the curriculum. Whilst the mathematics department is introducing the National Numeracy Strategy in Years 7 to 9, this is in the early stages of implementation and hampered by the uncertainty in staffing.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Examination results are above the national average.
- Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are encouraged to learn through well-chosen activities.
- The management and leadership of the department are good.
- Pupils work well together and enjoy the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Some lessons fail to address effectively the learning needs of all pupils.
- Examples of good practice in the department are not identified and shared sufficiently.
- Limited use is made of ICT.
- Some lessons provide insufficient challenge to pupils' understanding.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to learn independently.

159. By the end of Year 9 in the 2000 Key Stage 3 tests, attainment was in line with national expectations. The percentages of pupils achieving Levels 5 and 6 were well above those for similar schools. Over the previous four years, attainment levels broadly followed the national trend. During this period the levels of achievement of boys at the end of Year 9 improved at a slightly faster rate than that of girls. In the 2001 tests, the percentages of pupils achieving Levels 5 and 6 were higher than in the previous year and higher than schools nationally. Boys' achievement was higher than that of girls'.

160. By the age of 16 years in GCSE examinations in 2000, the percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades in double science was above the national average. The results obtained by boys and girls in these examinations were similar. The percentage of pupils gaining the highest grades (A*/A) in these examinations was lower than the national average. This was a consequence of the higher attaining pupils being entered for examinations in the three separate sciences. In the GCSE examinations for chemistry, physics and biology in 2000, the percentages of pupils gaining A*-C grades in each subject were higher than the national averages. In chemistry and biology the performances of boys and girls were similar; in physics, boys achieved better than girls. In the 2001 examinations, the results achieved by pupils in double science, chemistry, and biology were higher than in 2000. The percentage gaining A*-C grades in physics in 2001 was much lower than in 2000.
161. Pupils' levels of attainment in science on entry to the school are broadly in line with the national average. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Year 9 standards are slightly above average and pupils make satisfactory progress during the key stage. They are able to apply their scientific understanding to everyday observations and are beginning to make connections between scientific concepts. In Years 9 and 10, achievement is good overall. By the end of Year 11, the majority of pupils are working above the national average with most pupils who take single science subjects achieving well above. At this stage they have a good knowledge of biological and chemical concepts and can correctly apply mathematical reasoning to extend their understanding of scientific phenomena.
162. Most pupils in Years 7–9 display satisfactory attitudes to their learning. The response in Years 10 and 11 is good. Pupils work well together and show interest in the subject. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. In a small minority of lessons, some pupils are slow to settle to their work and are easily distracted. This is a feature, in particular, of lessons where teaching lacks variety and fails to sufficiently involve pupils in the work. Pupils respond best when the activities are linked well to their everyday experiences and where teaching challenges them to think for themselves. This was the case in a good Year 7 lesson on the origins of fossil fuels, where the teacher's stimulating presentation and clear explanation of scientific ideas allowed pupils to gain a real appreciation of the processes taking place. No significant difference was observed in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. This is a result of appropriately targeted assistance by teachers and additional help, when required, from support staff. Although plans did not identify particular objectives for pupils who had English as an additional language, pupils of different minority groups made progress in line with all pupils in the school.
163. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Years 7, 8 and 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Where teaching is most successful, lessons proceed at a good pace and pupils are encouraged to extend their own understanding through well-chosen activities. For instance, in the case of a good Year 9 lesson on the reactivity of metals, the teacher's high expectations extended the pupils' thinking. They progressed from familiar examples drawn from their everyday experiences, to the use of metals in preventing corrosion. This led to the introduction of sacrificial protection, with pupils being helped to relate their earlier understanding to this more advanced concept.
164. Much of the best teaching was observed where pupils were organised into groups based upon their ability. In these situations, teachers had more success in pitching the

work at the appropriate level. This is particularly the case with the top ability groups, where teachers' expectations are highest. Where pupils are taught in mixed ability groups, teachers often fail to sufficiently challenge the understanding of all pupils. This was the outcome even in the case of the otherwise good Year 9 lesson on metal reactivity. Although the teacher used a variety of worksheets to target the needs of different groups of pupils, their use was not effective. This is an aspect of teaching that the department needs to improve upon.

165. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject. They know their pupils well and provide good support and direction. A new assessment and marking policy has recently been introduced into the department. At present this is not being used consistently throughout Years 7–11. Although most work is marked regularly, there are differences between teachers in the use of grades and marks and in the quality of the comments made to help pupils improve. Standards of written work are satisfactory throughout the school.
166. Ongoing assessment of pupils' progress in lessons is not fully effective and does not inform teachers' planning sufficiently. This detracts from the levels of challenge and support provided for individual pupils. The department has recently begun to set achievement targets for individual pupils based upon their attainment at the beginning of each academic year. This is being supplemented by the use of self-assessment tests that pupils are encouraged to use. Pupils are responding well to this approach.
167. The science department has recently introduced a different scheme of work for Years 7-9. Teachers are still coming to terms with its new requirements and some lesson plans have yet to be finalised. Inspection evidence shows that at present the scheme is used too inflexibly. Teaching does not allow the learning needs of all groups of pupils to be adequately met. This is particularly true of higher attaining pupils who are not sufficiently stimulated.
168. ICT facilities in the science department are unsatisfactory. No use is made of data logging and remote sensing. Although some lessons are based in the school's computer room, teachers lack the skills and confidence to make full use of ICT. They have yet to participate in the nationally organised training. Whilst some pupils use ICT to improve the presentation of their work, this is not commonly found.
169. The work of the science department is well managed and co-ordinated. The recently appointed head of department has clear and appropriate strategies for improving standards, which are specified in the development plan. The priority is to ensure high levels of achievement by all pupils. Whilst a number of changes have been introduced, these are not yet having a noticeable impact. The monitoring of the work of the department is insufficiently focused on raising achievement. Classroom observation could be better employed to recognise and share the good practice that exists in the department.

170. The science department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Standards of attainment have improved. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The introduction of target-setting into Year 7 has improved the links with the work done by pupils in their primary schools. However, some weaknesses still remain. ICT is not used effectively. Teaching does not address the learning needs of all pupils or encourage them to work more independently. Inspection evidence shows that the department's development plan has the capacity to provide a sound basis for addressing those aspects needing further improvement.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11.
- The good relationships.
- The teachers' subject knowledge.

Areas for improvement

- Standards at the end of Year 9 and in the GCSE examination.
- The planning of the Key Stage 3 course.
- Arrangements for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress during Key Stage 3.
- Pupils' use of ICT.

171. Standards in art and design are below the national average at the end of Year 9. Assessments made by teachers at the end of Year 9 in 2001 judged standards in art and design to be below the national average and this is confirmed by the work seen during the inspection. Girls' attainment is stronger than boys, but by no more than is the case nationally. Over the last three years, reported results of Year 9 have fluctuated and there is no clear trend. Pupils can use sketchbooks to collect images, develop ideas, practise drawing skills and store reference material for later use. During Year 8, pupils demonstrate that they can skilfully mix a range of skin tones reflecting the mixed ethnic nature of the school, but in Year 9 they are not able to apply this knowledge well enough and return to painting in flat colour, with no attempt at modelling form. By the end of Year 9, pupils do not have well enough developed skills in a sufficient range of media and techniques. Pupils' achievement over Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory. This is because although individual units of work may be well enough planned, the three-year course does not ensure that established skills and knowledge are built on in an incremental way. Pupils are not able to experiment, investigate or develop ideas for independent work as required by the National Curriculum, because the opportunities to develop these skills are not explicitly planned in the course. The standard of girls' work is higher than boys, overall, because they are more focused on their work and make better progress in lessons.

172. In GCSE results for 2000 the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was below the national average. Those gaining A*-G were above, but those pupils unable to fulfil examination requirements were not entered. Boys' attainment was close to the national average at grades A*-C whilst girls' was well below. The proportion of boys gaining the top two grades was close to the national average whilst that of girls was below. Both boys and girls did less well in art and design than in most other subjects in the school. In 2001 GCSE results fell still further with just less than half the pupils gaining A*-C grades, a bigger percentage of girls doing so than boys. Those gaining A*-G was 98% and those gaining the highest two grades was 13 per cent. Taken over the last three

years, however, standards have risen from being very low in 1999. The standards of work seen during inspection are higher than those indicated by the most recent results. All pupils are able to sustain studies over an extended period. They gather images from first hand and secondary sources in sketchbooks and record information about artists and their work. They are able to explore themes and develop personal and imaginative responses in a range of chiefly two-dimensional media. The highest attainment is by girls. Their coursework is extensive and standards of presentation are generally higher. Overall, the standard of work seen matches expectations and represents satisfactory achievement from the end of Year 9.

173. Standards of attainment across all year groups have been very adversely affected by the intermittent and then prolonged absences of the previous subject head, due to illness. This affected the management of the subject throughout 1999 and 2000 and was only resolved earlier this year when the subject head retired and a member of staff was appointed subject head in an acting capacity. Work seen in lessons indicates that standards are now improving across all years. Pupils with special educational needs and others who have English as an additional language make progress that reflects achievements in art and design as a whole. However, detail records of attainment are not available to evaluate the extent to which targets for such pupils are appropriate in relation to their prior attainment.
174. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is satisfactory in Years 7, 8 and 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Individual schemes of work are well planned to support the learning of all pupils, although there is a lack of sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. Although they complete their work well, they do not achieve as well as they could. Teachers plan work that interests pupils, so that they work well, concentrate and sustain their efforts throughout the lesson. Pupils enjoy art and generally express positive attitudes towards the subject. Behaviour in lessons is generally good. In Years 10 and 11 it is very good. Relationships are good so that in most lessons a positive, productive atmosphere is established. Pupils learn to use sketchbooks regularly as an important part of their work. These are regularly marked and commented on, so that pupils know how well they have done and what they must do to improve. Homework is well used in all years to extend pupils' learning. Some teachers use a good range of teaching approaches, including whole-class and individual intervention and support, as appropriate, but this is not a feature in all teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9. In some lessons, there is an over-reliance on working with individuals when a well-judged teaching point to the whole group would be more effective and a more efficient use of time. The balance between whole-class teaching and individual support is better in Years 10 and 11. For example, in a Year 10 class the teacher talked to the whole group about imminent deadlines and reviewed progress towards them. The pupils had a clear idea of what they must produce and by when. The teacher went on to demonstrate the correct use of pastels to an individual pupil who was then able to use them more effectively. Teachers do not always set clear enough pupil targets for the lesson. Whilst they make it clear what pupils should do and in what order for example, by using flip charts, they often miss the opportunity to inject pace and excitement into lessons, so that pupils make less progress than they could.

175. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory because standards have fallen and insufficient progress has been made in developing pupils' knowledge and appreciation of the history of art. The coverage of ICT remains inadequate and does not fulfil statutory National Curriculum requirements.
176. Planning for the Key Stage 3 course is not sufficiently detailed or rigorous. Assessment and reporting are not clearly linked to elements in the National Curriculum Programme of Study so that attainment in relation to National Curriculum levels is not made apparent before the very end of Year 9. The staffing of the subject is now good after an extended period of instability. The subject knowledge and specialisms of the staff give pupils access to a good range of specialist skills, including expertise in the work of art galleries. The work of teachers is well supported by technician help, which makes a valuable contribution to the smooth and efficient day to day running of the department. The accommodation remains unsatisfactory, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Lack of adequate storage restricts the range and scale of work undertaken, especially that in three dimensions. The open plan nature of two rooms and the difficulty in accessing the third does not contribute to an orderly learning environment. ICT resources are inadequate and make it very difficult for the subject to fulfil its statutory requirements in this regard, despite curriculum plans having been made for it. Art and design makes a good contribution to the literacy skills of pupils, through a clear policy and opportunities to use writing in varied contexts, such as notes, recording and defining specialist art vocabulary, evaluations and letter writing in Year 7. The policy on numeracy is not clearly defined and opportunities to improve skills are not yet planned.
177. Since her temporary appointment earlier this year, the subject head has worked hard to address the lack of direction experienced when there was no effective subject head in post. The raising of attainment is a clearly identified focus for all subject planning. However, there is inconsistency in the quality of teaching across the department and the monitoring of teaching by the subject head and the identification and sharing of good practice is not undertaken. Extra provision has been arranged to support the attainment of Years 10 and 11 with improved monitoring of progress and the effective enlisting of parents' support. This is having a positive impact on the standards being achieved. Underachieving pupils are identified and encouraged to attend extra weekly classes after school. The department is open for pupils every afternoon after school and older pupils, in particular, are encouraged to attend. Numbers of pupils attending were high during the inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Examination results are above average and pupils achieve well.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Specialist teachers of design and technology have a secure subject knowledge and their experience and expertise are well used.
- Teachers are highly supportive of development and work very effectively as a team.
- There is a good ethos for learning in the department, which is mainly due to the effective leadership, commitment of teachers and good relationships which operate within the department.
- Pupils' behaviour is often good or very good.

Strengths (ctd.)

- Teachers have a very good knowledge of their pupils, which helps them to meet their individual needs on a day to day basis.

Areas for improvement

- Statutory National Curriculum requirements are not met for all pupils.
- Assessment is not used effectively to inform curriculum planning and monitoring of pupil progress to evaluate effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- Accommodation and resources for Computer Assisted Manufacturing (CAM). These areas are to be addressed next term, following a major refurbishment programme.
- Lack of continuity in some classes as a result of staffing issues.
- The department recognises the need to review links with industry along with the opportunities for pupils to research a variety of customs and cultures.

178. Standards in design and technology (DT) on entry to the school are satisfactory overall. Pupils' appreciation of the principles of design is less well developed than the practical skills of making. In the 2001 Teacher Assessment (TA) statutory assessments were above average with approximately two-thirds of the pupils at the age of 14 years reaching the national expectation, Level 5, or above. This was an improvement on the 2000 TA, where a little under one-half of the pupils reached the national average. The girls' results have consistently remained above the boys' results.
179. The 2001 GCSE results were overall above the national average with variations between each of the subjects. In DT resistant materials and electronic products results were significantly high and in DT food and graphic products, results were similar to national averages at the higher grades A*-C.
180. During the last three years there has been a mixed pattern in results across each of the subjects. In DT resistant materials there was a significant dip in the higher grades A*-C between 1999 and 2000, which was reversed in 2001. In DT graphic products there has been a steady climb since 1999 and although results in electronic products are high there has been a slow decline since 1999.
181. Boys' and girls' results were similar in graphic products and approximately three times more boys than girls were entered. In DT resistant materials, the gender imbalance was similar to graphics. This was increased to five times more boys than girls in electronic products.
182. In the work seen during the inspection, standards were at least similar, but more often above national expectations by the end of each key stage. There is a marked improvement in standards as pupils move through each key stage and in particular between the ages 14 and 16 years. Pupils' designing and making skills are at least satisfactory and occasionally good. There is, however, a variation across the federated group of subjects that collectively deliver the National Curriculum. Investigation, research, analysis and evaluation are used effectively as tools for learning. Pupils manage their individual projects well using a variety of materials and electronic components. The projects provide a firm foundation for later work. In the practical sessions observed, pupils demonstrated good practice in relation to health and safety, using tools and machinery responsibly. In systems and control; for example, skills using equipment and electronic components are developing well. In DT food pupils use sensory analysis of existing products well to inform individual and group preference against value for money and ingredients/nutritional value.
183. A significant majority of pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject and clearly enjoy the work, in particular the practical aspects.

184. By the age of 16 years many pupils are attaining at least or above that expected for their age. Correct methods of investigation, research and modelling are employed. Project work in graphic products indicates good use of sketching techniques to develop ideas. Pupils in electronic products have produced 'super-bright' LEDs in response to a 'bike-light' design brief. Pupils of all abilities become increasingly autonomous learners as they move up the key stage. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory and often good progress.
185. Teaching is at least satisfactory, often good and occasionally very good. This is similar to the previous inspection finding. Teachers are well qualified in the particular aspects of DT they teach. In Years 7, 8 and 9, a little less than one-half of the teaching is good and the common characteristic of all teachers in these lessons is their pleasant and supportive styles. In Years 10 and 11, over one-half of the lessons were good or very good. Teachers know the pupils well, insist on good behaviour and work energetically to help all pupils to make progress. In the best lessons teachers quickly establish their expectations of pupils with different prior attainment. In instances where teaching was satisfactory there was some over-reliance on worksheets/booklets and although teachers have detailed records of prior attainment, this is not always used alongside ongoing assessment to inform curriculum planning.
186. The school does not meet the National Curriculum statutory requirements at Key Stage 3. At the age of 14 years pupils choose either a DT course of study or ICT. Not all students in the sixth form have necessarily followed a DT course of study at Key Stage 4. The time allocation in Years 7, 8 and 9 is variable and overall low when compared to the national average.
187. Insufficient opportunities are available for the exploration of other customs and cultures and the department recognises the need to extend links with industry. Progress in addressing these target areas should be reviewed and included within a short, medium and longer-term strategic plan.
188. Leadership and management are good. The relatively new head of department leads well by example and has worked extremely hard to remedy some of the existing weaknesses, in particular the planning for the development of the subject. Schemes of work and assessment procedures have been reviewed, however, the assessment of pupils' work is not yet consistently applied to set targets for improvement and inform curriculum planning. The department makes very good use of ICT at both key stages.
189. Specialist teachers have very secure subject knowledge and their expertise and experience are well used in both key stages. Standards have remained high overall and the number of students taking GCSE A-level has risen. The level of improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.
190. The specialist technicians in design and technology, food and resistant materials are well deployed and make a valuable contribution to the smooth running of the department.
191. The accommodation has not changed since the last inspection; it was then described as old and a limiting factor with reference to access between the different areas. A major internal refurbishment programme has been approved and work is planned to begin in the early, which will enable the control aspect of the National Curriculum to be met in full.

DRAMA

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

Strengths

- Good standards achieved in GCSE examinations.
- Very enthusiastic teachers encourage creativity.
- Good accommodation that is used productively.
- Extra curricular activities support in school learning.

Areas for improvement

- Critical appraisal of pupils' practical work does not indicate what students should do to improve.
- Insufficient focus on key elements of commitment, concentration, control.
- Not enough time allowed for pupils to reflect upon the drama process.

192. Standards achieved in GCSE 2001 are better than the average in 2000. There was full pass rate in 2001 and three quarters of pupils entered were in the top band. Pupils enjoy drama lessons and tackle the tasks set enthusiastically. They gain confidence through drama activities as they progress through Years 7 and 8. An increasing number opt for drama at GCSE. Pupils in a Year 10 class were seen preparing their rehearsed improvisation for GCSE practical work. Each pupil devised a situation where they confronted their inner turmoil and tried to resolve their problems. Pupils considered carefully the impact of their actions on others. In this way their personal and social development was enhanced through the drama experience.

193. Teaching is never less than satisfactory with some good and very good teaching of older pupils. In a Year 11 lesson pupils focused on images, developing this by creating a role, building a character, planning a setting and devising a situation using Stanislavsky's technique of emotional memory to recall a sense of persecution as they focused on feeling disadvantaged. Pupils responded well. The outcomes were individual and distinctive from each other.

194. The department is managed by an enthusiastic teacher, dedicated to the teaching of drama and determined to raise the standards overall.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Levels of attainment at the age of 14 years are well above the national average.
- Pupils develop an understanding of basic geographical concepts and apply them to make progress in lessons.
- Teaching is generally good. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives.
- Pupils show a keen interest in geography and concentrate well in lessons.

Strengths (ctd.)

- The subject is well led and managed.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment data needs to be used more effectively to inform curriculum planning.
- There is a greater need to match work with pupils' individual abilities across Years 7-11
- Key skills need to be fully incorporated into the new schemes of work.

195. Standards of attainment in geography at the age of 14 years are well above the national average. In 2000, 69 per cent of pupils attained Level 5 or above in the Teacher Assessments for geography compared with a national average of 63 per cent. In 2001 this figure climbed to 80 per cent.
196. Standards of attainment in geography at the age of 16 years are broadly in line with national expectations. In 2000 just over half the pupils attained an A*-C pass in line with schools nationally. All the pupils entered achieved a grade between A*-G. In 2001 the percentage attaining an A*-C pass fell slightly, although there was a marked increase in the number of pupils attaining A*-B grades. However, the performance of the pupils entered for geography compares favourably with their results elsewhere, with over one-half of the pupils doing better in geography than in their other subjects.
197. In the lessons seen, the levels of attainment matched and occasionally exceeded national norms. In Year 7 pupils can identify the components and links in the water cycle and use this information to explain the causes of flooding in Bangladesh. Year 8 pupils are aware of the nature and causes of tectonic processes and can describe their effects on landscapes and people. They use clearly annotated diagrams to explain the sequence of events associated with different types of plate boundary. In Year 9 they can explain the processes of weathering and erosion and describe their impact on coastal landscapes using appropriate geographical vocabulary. A range of graphical techniques is used to represent statistical information and analysis of this data is used to develop numeracy skills. In some lessons there were missed opportunities for the development of other key skills and the department needs to develop a more standardised approach in this area.
198. In Year 10 the pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding water management in a less economically developed country and how they differ from the UK. They are able to analyse and evaluate evidence from both a video and a textbook and justify their findings. Pupils in Year 11 can identify and explain the components of the drainage basin hydrological cycle and link this to the geomorphological processes that operate in river valleys. A variety of revision techniques are used to prepare the pupils for the GCSE examination. There is a clear focus here on the use of the correct geographical terminology and the importance of case studies. When statistical data and written text are being analysed, teachers must emphasise the importance of literacy and numeracy skills in reaching logical and accurate conclusions.
199. Teaching is good overall and the pupils learn well as a result. There were no examples of unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers show good subject knowledge and have high expectations of the pupils. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and they proceed at a brisk pace. Teachers use good classroom management skills to sustain the interest and concentration of the pupils and develop information and communication technology skills effectively where resources permit. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of close liaison with the learning support staff. However, a wider range of teaching and learning strategies are needed to fully engage the thinking skills of the higher attaining pupils and prepare them for the more rigorous demands of the higher tier examination papers.
200. All pupils learn well. They are attentive in lessons and focus quickly on the tasks set. Both boys and girls show a keen interest in their work and respond well to supportive teaching. They work collaboratively when required and relationships with both one another and staff are good. In a Year 8 lesson on earthquakes, the pupils listened in silence whilst the teacher read a dramatic account of an earthquake disaster. A

number of the pupils then offered their own thoughts as to how the account would unfold, whilst the class listened attentively.

201. The subject is enthusiastically led and managed by a new acting head of department with a firm commitment to raising levels of achievement. The small group of teachers work well together as a team and recognise the importance of common objectives and the sharing of good practice. Displays of pupils' work and current geographical issues create a positive working environment within classrooms.
202. Academic monitoring of the pupils takes place in all year groups. Pupils are assessed at the end of each teaching module and they are encouraged to evaluate their performance and set targets relating to future progress. The department needs to build on this and make greater use of the available statistical data to monitor pupil performance by gender and ethnicity and use the results to inform curriculum planning and develop more sharply focused targets.
203. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last Ofsted inspection in 1996. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and a lack of resources no longer hinders progress. Class sets of textbooks are available for all teachers at Key Stage 3 and all GCSE pupils are provided with their own textbook.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Well-prepared and highly motivational teaching.
- Pupil enthusiasm.
- Pupil attainment at the end of Years 9 and 11.
- Pupils functioning as investigative historians.

Areas for improvement

- The introduction of ICT as a regular feature of the history curriculum.
- Greater consistency in subject-specific target-setting in marking and reporting.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the department's practice.
- Timetabled provision for Year 8.

204. Standards in history are well above national expectations at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.

205. GCSE results at higher grades (A*-C) were significantly above the national average in both 2000 and 2001. This strong situation represents a significant improvement in standards since the last inspection, but there were important variations in the comparative performance of boys and girls between these two years. In 2000 their performance was broadly comparable but in 2001 the results of boys significantly exceeded those of girls. This latter situation does, however, reflect the relative capability of boys over girls on entry to the school.
206. Classroom observations and the scrutiny of pupils' written work confirm that the 2001 standards are being maintained in the present Years 10 and 11. Pupils throughout Key Stage 4 are adept at interpreting historical evidence and drawing valid conclusions.
207. At Key Stage 3, the teacher assessments in 2001 recorded that 76 per cent of pupils were at Level 5 or better. This is substantially above national levels and represents a marked improvement on the two previous years. Although the ratio of boys to girls in the 2001 cohort was 2:1 and the girls have relatively lower average attainment on admission to the school, their results in each of these three years have been broadly similar. This does, therefore, indicate that there is still an element of relative underachievement on the part of the boys and so explains why boys' achievement is still a priority for this department. These standards reported were identified by careful and accurate assessment and are being maintained. Classroom observations and the scrutiny of work throughout Key Stage 3 confirm that attainment is generally above national expectations. Pupils are seen to be exercising the full range of skills of the historian, analysing, evaluating and interpreting evidence. They do so in contexts where they use accurate historical terminology and exercise a degree of empathy that gives them insight into historical contexts and personalities. Writing skills are strong throughout the key stage, with potentially low attaining pupils from Year 7 onwards producing very clear prose.
208. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language succeed well in history because they are regularly provided with different materials that meet their different needs well and with a high degree of individual attention in the classroom.
209. Progress is good throughout the key stages and is a response to highly motivational teaching which, in response to the last inspection report, now promotes investigative learning extensively, encourages thoughtfulness, builds on previous and wider experiences and is supported by work that matches pupils' individual abilities. The result is that most pupils are now able to make good progress, although more opportunities need to be identified to extend the most gifted and talented.
210. Attitudes in history are generally positive and potentially sensitive issues are handled in a mature manner. Behaviour is generally good and arises from the positive atmosphere promoted in every classroom. There is a degree of stubbornness amongst some Year 9 pupils in some classes in the afternoon lesson before lunch, but their behaviour is not disruptive and their response to the teachers is always respectful. Relationships are generally good and the confidence that this is so enables more imaginative teaching to occur.
211. At the last inspection the quality of teaching was reported to be always sound, usually good and occasionally very good. This continues to be the pattern with the teaching being especially characterised by strong subject knowledge and methodological knowledge; well-planned lessons with clear objectives; a highly motivational approach that assumes high standards; good support for individual pupils, linked to the careful use of materials that match pupils' abilities; varied teaching and learning strategies that

provoke pupil thinking and ensure a rapid pace to lessons and a heavy emphasis on historical skills and appropriate vocabulary. Active learning frequently draws all these traits together in such contexts as a re-enactment of a coroner's court investigating a cholera outbreak; a news broadcast to enliven the study of Mary Queen of Scots and an official inquiry in Spain into the failure of the Spanish Armada and very accessible learning ensues from this approach.

212. The curriculum is imaginatively presented and meets requirements in terms of content and syllabus but it is constrained by the absence of a regular commitment to ICT-related learning. Access to the curriculum is constrained by inadequate timetable provision in Year 8 and the option blocking arrangements at GCSE level. There is a clear learning pathway from Year 7 to Year 11, which supports pupils' needs and motivates them very well. It has particular strengths in spiritual, moral and cultural education. This is well illustrated by GCSE work on the USA in the inter-war years, which inspires pupils to explore and record the feelings of people caught up in racial tension and deprivation in a very sensitive manner and by local studies in Key Stage 3 in Ilford and Seven Kings, which instil a sense of local cultural identity. In terms of curricular extension an annual visit for Year 10 is arranged to the Belgian battlefields.
213. Staff awareness of individual pupil attainment, informed by various assessment strategies, is strong, but this is not conveyed to pupils in a sufficiently consistent manner because in both marking and reporting there is insufficient emphasis on identifying strengths and weaknesses or on recommending subject-specific targets for future improvement.
214. The department is carefully led, with the staff working as a team in terms of consistent classroom delivery of teaching and learning, but the monitoring and evaluation of professional practice needs to be established at a more formal level. There is a strong commitment to in-service training and the department is reviewing the expectations of the Literacy and Numeracy strategies. It does have the professional capacity to secure further improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Strengths

- Teaching in discrete ICT lessons in Years 7 and 8 as well as in ICT examination courses at GCSE and AS-level.

Areas for improvement

- Standards achieved by age 14 years.
- The procedures used for assessing ICT capability at the end of Key Stage 3 should be reviewed.
- The use of ICT within the subjects of the curriculum needs to be adequately developed to ensure that subject requirements are met and pupils have more opportunities to develop and use their ICT skills in all years.

Areas for improvement (ctd.)

- Responsibilities for management of different aspects of the ICT curriculum need to be clarified.

215. Standards attained by age 14 years have been below the national average but are improving. Standards at age 16 years are in line with the national average for those pupils who take a GCSE examination in ICT, but below expectations for many who do not.
216. Teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 in 2001 indicates that attainment was below average in 2001. Work seen during the inspection indicates that attainment is improving, particularly in Years 7 and 8, where it is in line with expectations in those ICT applications that are covered in the ICT course. Pupils in a Year 7 lesson covered a range of skills for presenting information including manipulating text, creating and re-orientating shapes, then layering and grouping the text, shapes and pictures for their presentations. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils were creating a spreadsheet as part of a project on a school ski trip. Most pupils could enter data effectively although some were reluctant to use both hands on the keyboard. They were able to enter appropriate formulae for simple calculations and could demonstrate several methods of replicating and copying formulae to different parts of the spreadsheet. Pupils in Year 9 do not have as much time to develop their knowledge and skills and do not make as much progress. The lack of opportunities for pupils to use ICT across the curriculum also inhibits progress in ICT at Key Stage 3 and prevents pupils applying the skills and reinforcing the learning gained in ICT lessons. The procedures for assessing pupils at Key Stage 3 do not provide a complete and up-to-date picture of attainment in all of the aspects of ICT that have been covered by age 14 years. As a result, an evaluation of the relative achievements of pupils over time - in terms of prior attainment, gender, special educational need or whether they have English as an additional language – is not possible to make.
217. In work seen during the inspection, the attainment of pupils taking the GCSE course in ICT was, overall, in line with expectations although there was evidence of a significant number of strong candidates in some of the groups. Pupils in a Year 10 lesson were able to discuss, in detail, the security issues associated with the use of various software applications used in business and were able to relate this to their current coursework projects. Pupils in a Year 11 class were working on a spreadsheet design for a specific client that included an appropriate range of formulae and sorting functions as well as constructing their own web pages that were, for the most part, imaginatively designed featuring appropriate graphics, text and animations.
218. Pupils in all years have a very positive attitude towards their work in ICT lessons. Their sustained levels of concentration enable them to keep up with the brisk pace maintained in most lessons. They are keen to learn and make progress, responding well to questions. In GCSE classes, many pupils were able to offer extended answers and explanations and sometimes provided effective support to peers. In Years 7 to 9, where pupils often have to share computers, very effective classroom management ensures that pace is maintained and good progress is made. Pupils can work effectively in pairs taking turns to develop skills and perform tasks but would benefit from having adequate numbers of computers in all lessons.

219. The recent significant improvement in resources and accommodation used for ICT examination courses is having a positive impact upon standards. Teaching is good and often very good. Work is challenging and guides and activities produced by teachers are good. The pace of most lessons is brisk and appropriate homework activities are set. On the GCSE course, individual support is very well targeted for the lower and higher attainers to ensure that they are making progress appropriate for their abilities. A small group, which follows an ICT skills course, including some with special needs, applied themselves diligently to the course activities and were making good progress in relation to their abilities. The activities were appropriate for individual needs and support from the teacher was good. Although some text entry was slow, it was entered accurately with appropriate use made of spelling and grammar checkers. Documents were set out correctly to meet the course requirements. In all Key Stage 4 ICT classes, much detailed diagnostic comment is provided for pupils when they are working at computers. Assessment is thorough and meets examination requirements.
220. The significant number of pupils who do not follow an examination course in ICT are able to develop further skills in some of their design and technology lessons, but the lack of adequate opportunities to use ICT in most other subjects at Key Stage 4 is adversely affecting the development of pupils' ICT capability. In all years, opportunities to use of ICT to measure, record, respond to, control and automate events are unsatisfactory. Resources are inadequate to ensure that requirements are met in these aspects of the ICT curriculum.
221. Until recently, the number of computers was inadequate and the system was unreliable. However, there has been very significant improvement in the quality of the infrastructure, the number of computers and the level of technical support. Several of the new ICT suites contain over 30 machines. There is now wider, more reliable access to up-to-date software and the Internet. This is resulting in a greater willingness among some teachers to use ICT facilities. The number of machines is now in line with the average for a school of this size although ICT resources in the learning resource centre are poor. Many of the new computers are currently underused although room bookings are increasing. Plans are in hand to map the curriculum in detail and a significant programme of staff training, using the 'New Opportunities Fund' is scheduled to begin at Easter.
222. The pace of change has been unsatisfactory since the last inspection. Standards at GCSE have been inconsistent in recent years and the development of ICT across the curriculum, including coverage of the control and measuring aspects, has not been adequately addressed and some subjects are still not complying with requirements. Assessment at Key Stage 3 still has deficiencies. However, there have now been very significant improvements in the ICT infrastructure. Although levels of monitoring and evaluation have been insufficient to make the necessary impact on standards, the current ICT management structure has been reviewed and is being reorganised to make it more effective and a programme of staff ICT training is in place. The school is now moving into a position where the ICT curriculum can improve significantly.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Teaching staff and expertise.
- The range of languages offered.

Areas for improvement

- To involve pupils in self-evaluation and target setting.
- To encourage pupils to use the foreign languages more spontaneously in class.
- To focus on extended higher level writing skills.

223. At the end of Year 9, in 2001 the teacher assessed French tests were above averages with 63 per cent of the pupils reaching Level 5 and above. Girls performed better than boys. The benchmark is different from 2000, which makes comparisons unrealistic.

224. At GCSE level, 44 per cent gained A*-C grades in the 2000 French examination, which was close to national average. There was a considerable drop in 2001 to 30 per cent, but more of the top A and A* grades were attained and a large proportion of borderline Ds just failed to reach the higher grades. Entry numbers are low in German and Spanish. Thirty-five per cent gained A*-C grades in German in 2001, with some A and A* grades and 50 per cent in Spanish, again with some A and A* grades. Girls are performing better than boys, which is a national trend. A contributory factor to the low GCSE results is the large number of staffing changes over several years, which has had an impact on continuity and pupil motivation. Strategies are in place to raise standards, including after school revision classes, focusing on weaker skills and targeting borderline pupils.

225. In Years 7, 8 and 9 in lessons seen and from scrutiny of work, good progress is being made and pupils are positive about their language studies. High standards are set from the start, leading to attainment that is in line with national averages in all three languages by the end of Year 9. In a Year 7 lesson on sports for example, pupils were quick to respond to brisk teaching. Pronunciation was good and, without prompting, pupils were giving full answers, including reasons for liking and disliking sports, thus incorporating work learnt in previous topics. It was a fun learning experience obviously enjoyed by all. Beginner Spanish pupils gave details about their own families following an introduction to the topic via photos and the Simpsons, which stimulated their imagination. Year 9 German pupils were quite confident in the use of more complex structures. Listening and reading skills are well developed, so that pupils are able to readily understand and extract information required in answers, through skilful teaching and practice. Independent reading is encouraged and a selection of interesting readers is available. Pupils are also borrowing language books from the library. In written work seen, the majority was consolidation and reinforcement. There were few examples of extended writing; for example, full accounts, descriptions, or imaginative work. Lower ability groups tended to be far less accurate. Few pupils had any idea of the level of work they were attempting, which is essential in raising attainment.

226. Standards in each language are in line with averages overall in Year 11. In Years 10 and 11, much emphasis is placed on oral work and pronunciation. Even the lower ability classes took class repetition seriously. A lively Year 11, German revision class saw pupil confidence boosted through a series of related activities, linking reading, listening, speaking and writing. Paired work was particularly enjoyed. There was a great amount of interactivity and mutual respect. Pupils were interested in all the

advice the teacher gave. They asked searching questions and left the lesson feeling positive about their learning and confident about their ability. In listening and reading activities, pupils show understanding of texts. There was more evidence of higher writing skills in Years 10 and 11. There were examples of holiday accounts, descriptions of self and family, but with limited use of vocabulary and expressions required for high grades.

227. Teaching overall is good. In Years 7, 8 and 9, well over one-half of the lessons were good or better and there was one excellent lesson. Of the four lessons seen in Years 10 and 11, all were satisfactory, with three being good or better.
228. In the very best lessons, objectives were shared with the class at the start, with quick recap at the end to round off the lesson and check learning. The good teaching is a result of careful planning, variety of methodology, good sequencing, clear explanations and high expectations. A Year 8 French class was able to use the past tense correctly, including irregular verbs to describe a holiday. The tasks were closely linked requiring attentiveness on the part of the pupils and firm understanding. It was difficult and the teacher enabled the pupils to be successful, through her explicitness. Year 10 German pupils had to use 'weil' clauses, which is a difficult grammatical structure to explain. The teacher built up the sentences by stages, a form of 'scaffolding learning', so that, with practise, pupils were very clear about the word order, resulting from the use of 'weil' and were confident in its usage. Lessons are conducted in French, German or Spanish throughout and teachers are to be congratulated on this. It provides the environment essential for language learning and helps to ensure understanding. Staff are well qualified and include a native Spanish teacher and three foreign language teaching assistants. The teachers have complementing skills and work well as a team. A departmental priority is to enable teachers to observe one another, thereby sharing good practice. Very good use is made of support staff, so that pupils with special educational needs are able to progress according to ability. Teachers are making their own worksheets and revision booklets, to enable all pupils to reach their potential. There is still much scope in this area, to stretch the higher attainers and support the less confident, especially in the case of mixed ability classes. Pupils respond to praise and the merit system. The greatest progress occurred where there was some element of competitiveness. Teachers give freely of their time as evidenced by the revision clubs, with good turnout by pupils, and the organisation of trips abroad, which add to the language learning experience.
229. Leadership and management in the subject are good. There has been a difficult period with staffing changes and many gaps to fill in the teaching and learning processes as a result. Staff have been deployed to best cover these areas, but it has meant that all the German is taught by the head of department at a time when it would have been advantageous for him to teach the current Year 11 French. Regular departmental meetings are held. Course books have been updated and schemes of work accordingly. Good use is made of finances and a bonus is that all pupils have a textbook each.
230. Since the last inspection, satisfactory progress has been made in that all teaching is satisfactory. There is a wider variety of methodology and more pupil involvement in lessons. However, ICT remains a departmental priority. There is much scope to fully involve all pupils in self-evaluating their own work and being aware of levels of work and to help them to set manageable targets for improvement.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Very good results at GCSE.
- Strong links to the liturgical and spiritual dimensions of the school.
- Very good opportunities for individual instrumental and vocal learning and for performing in extra-curricular ensembles.
- Very good relationships between pupils and staff.

Areas for improvement

- Provision of the intended time allocation for the teaching of music at Key Stage 3.
- Strategic use of resources, especially of keyboards and computer technology.
- Effective management of pupils' behaviour in Years 8 and 9.
- Further development of teaching strategies that enable pupils to draw clearer connections between composing, performance, appraising and listening in their learning.

231. The number of candidates taking GCSE in 2000 and 2001 was small, making statistical comparison unreliable. However, the results for both years point to standards being well above the national average and the average for similar schools. Since the last inspection the improvement in results at this level has been significant and a larger percentage of pupils now opt for the subject. The standards, as measured by teachers' assessments in 2001, at the end of Year 9 are also well above the national average. The standards of work seen during the inspection do not, however, corroborate this.
232. Standards observed in the current Year 9 are below average, polarised between those who should well exceed the national expectations and those who will fall short of them, representing overall unsatisfactory achievement and progress. In Years 10 and 11, standards observed were above the national average. Pupils achieve well, making good progress in their work. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Talented pupils make very good progress in instrumental lessons. Singing is particularly popular with many pupils and boys participate almost as actively as girls. From Year 7 they sing in parts with good pitch control and attention to phrasing and expression. By Year 11, pupils sing mixed voice repertoire. Some individuals aspire to very high standards in solo singing. Pupils also play keyboards, but there is inconsistency in their ability to apply appropriate playing techniques, and many, especially in Years 10 and 11, perform and compose using guitars and other instruments not taught in class. In Years 7 to 9, pupils improvise on given structures from musical starting points, such as the 12-bar blues in Year 9, and from non-musical starting points, such as inspiring animal poems in Year 7. Vocal compositions often reflect strongly the spiritual values of the school. A Year 11 pupil for example, composed, to her own text, a solo religious song of such well-gauged gradation of intensity that an almost ecstatic level of expression was reached. In general, pupils listen with respect and interest to the work of their peers, applauding frequently and spontaneously. Pupils also listen well to a range of classical, popular and non-European music and comment intelligently, showing aural acuity and, in most cases, correct technical and descriptive language. Spelling of basic words, however, is not consistent. In Years 7 to 9, few pupils use notation to develop compositions and many are unsure of basic concepts, such as scale types. Only very few pupils use information and communication technology to support their learning. By notating their compositions in Year 7 in graphic scores, pupils enhance their spatial and aural awareness.
233. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. A small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Pupils, especially in Years 10

and 11, build a good knowledge base and are able to express themselves well because good teaching reinforces vocabulary with challenging questioning and systematically links the appraisal of music heard to exercises in composition and performance. Work booklets in certain study units help pupils to know clearly what is expected of them and how to achieve this. The collaboration of permanent and visiting staff members in producing and delivering materials combines expertise to the benefit of pupils' learning. This is particularly evident in the gamelan projects and singing. Excellent lessons from the visiting singing tutor were observed. Where learning is good, such as in the 'Carnival of the Animals' project in Year 7, listening and appraisal of music is tied into stimulating composition exercises and realised through performance, which is also appraised. There is also a very good relationship between pupils and staff, based on mutual respect and appreciation of humorous incidents. However, opportunities for integrating the various musical disciplines are often overlooked and pupils' learning is consequently passive, with only limited evidence that they can apply what they are learning. Many lessons lack a clear conclusion to enable pupils to reflect on what has been achieved during the lesson. Also, informal homework, requiring resources (computers, keyboards) that are not available to every pupil, impinges on the continuity of learning. As a result, many pupils, especially in Years 8 and 9, become unfocused in their work, restless and even insolent. However, there are two much more significant inhibiting factors on learning at this level. No headphones are available in the keyboard room for individual and group work; in one Year 8 lesson several pupils reported not being able to hear what they were playing, even at the piano. Continuity of curricular provision is lost in Year 9 with pupils taking only three half-termly modules. Demands on teachers to manage pupils well are therefore much greater than they need to be and essential teaching and learning energy is squandered. Some capable pupils (not exclusively boys), under-challenged in this environment, compound the situation through mischievous provocation. While teachers use information technology in preparing their lessons for example, downloading a backing track for Year 11 performance, pupils have inadequate access to computers and keyboards with recording and editing facilities, a factor which particular restricts progress in composition. Although there are many useful displays, key words are neither clearly visible, nor are their spellings clearly referred to in lessons. They are often overlooked in the monitoring of pupils' work.

234. The department works tirelessly to offer pupils a very good range of extra opportunities in music. The curriculum is enhanced and expanded through excellent liaison with eight visiting teachers from the Redbridge Music Service and a well-supported student teacher. Over 100 pupils take supplementary lessons and talented pupils take highly demanding courses at the local music centre. Many boys participate in singing activities and the school's large four-part choir is able to sing for liturgical purposes at short notice, both in the school and in the community at large. Singing underpins most worship in the school, significantly enhancing its spiritual message. As well as a band and orchestra, there are also activities - most notably a samba school, gamelan workshops and a Year 8 Caribbean project - which reflect the multi-racial mix of the school.
235. The curriculum time in Year 9 is inadequate for delivering the National Curriculum. Pupils therefore have almost 15 per cent less than the intended delivery time for Key Stage 3. Curricular entitlement is further undermined by advice that only instrumentalists or singers should opt for GCSE courses. The integration of computer technologies into the subject does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, neither do reports to parents, which neither indicate the National Curriculum level attained by the pupils or refer in course descriptions to the current National Curriculum structure. The leadership and management of music, dependent

on one full-time member of staff who is the head of department, is satisfactory. She has established a very good collaborative spirit among her 11 staff and the many pupils who avail themselves of the many extra-curricular activities she offers. Many of these are essential in promoting the values for which the school stands. She also devotes much time and attention developing good materials for new examinations specifications.

236. Overall, the subject has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection, with many strengths maintained and enhanced and with less weakness in teaching observed. However, low attainers are not being appropriately challenged and supported in Years 7 to 9 and pupils in Years 8 and 9 are less attentive and determined to succeed. In order to improve further, the school should extend curriculum time in Years 7 to 9, so that the intended National Curriculum delivery time is met; seek expert advice on refurbishing the keyboard room, so that headphones, seating and computer linkage produce an environment in which constructive and stimulating learning can take place; ensure clearer structuring of lessons, so that passive learning is reduced in favour of activities that integrate the main disciplines of the subject; ensure that behaviour management procedures are effective and ensure that all teachers in the department have formal training and qualification in contemporary techniques of classroom teaching.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- A significant minority of boys attain very high standards.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is good.
- Standards in football and basketball are good and excellent in judo.

Areas for improvement

- Achievement of girls is not high enough.
- Insufficient progress has been made since the last inspection.
- Assessment needs to make closer reference to standards in the National Curriculum.

237. Teacher assessments indicate that standards were below national expectations at the end of Year 9 in 2001. Examination results over recent years have been in line with national averages. However, although among the lower third of the school's subject results, pupils obtain higher grades in physical education than the same pupils achieve in their other subjects. Boys are more successful than girls at the practical component of the examination and girls more successful than boys at theory. The standard of school teams in sports such as football, athletics and basketball is good. Pupils achieve excellent standards in judo and the school is both boys and girls English Schools' Champion. Standards have been fairly static since the time of the last inspection.

238. Overall, standards are average at both ages 14 and 16 years, but marginally higher at age 16 than 14 years. A significant minority of boys reach very high standards. Whilst achievement of most pupils is satisfactory, throughout the school an unacceptable minority of pupils, mainly girls, underachieve. This is largely due to lack of continuity of learning because of changes in teachers, split teaching groups and organisational problems associated with the predominance in numbers of boys. Standards are uneven within both key stages, 11-14 and 14-16 and across activities and range from

well below, to above average. The standard of boys' games are significantly better than girls', as girls lack competence in basic skills and this is because good extra-curricular provision is better for boys than girls. A club has now been established in Year 7 specifically to target girls' basic skills. The work of pupils on the examination courses is average.

239. Although the pattern of pupils' progress is uneven, the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, usually make steady gains in lessons. Pockets of pupils make unusually good progress. For example, high attaining boys in Year 8, with little previous experience in badminton, execute long and short shots consistently and accurately. Whilst most pupils are effectively building on their previous knowledge, understanding and skills in the examination courses, a minority of boys in a Year 10 theory lesson seen made little significant progress due to negative attitudes. Despite adequate literacy skills, some boys actively prevented their classmates from learning by demanding too much of the teacher's attention with challenging behaviour. However, the majority of pupils have positive attitudes to physical education as reflected by the high take up of pupils on examination courses.
240. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, ranging from unsatisfactory to good. Teachers' good technical knowledge and understanding of examination work enable pupils to make sound progress. The development of new and more difficult work is a strong feature of almost all lessons resulting in at least sound acquisition in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers make best use of time, ensuring that pupils are physically active for a large part of the lesson and work at a good rate. Pupils work in a safe, orderly and co-operative environment because teachers have good pupil management. Uneven coverage of the National Curriculum results in gaps in pupils' skills for example, in how to evaluate the work of others independently of the teacher. Teaching strategies, approaches and styles vary across the department, stemming from deficiencies in schemes of work. Some pupils know how to conduct or lead warm-ups whilst others do not. Teachers' feedback to pupils in lessons is effective, but opportunities are missed to link informal assessment to National Curriculum levels. In the best lessons seen, such as a Year 8 dance class, the teacher's good choice of content, feedback and emphasis on quality work strengthened learning. All pupils made significant strides in acquiring an appreciation of the rhythm, beat and style of African drum music in their dances. Lack of variety in tasks set, weak pupil management and low expectations led to poor pupil progress in one unsatisfactory lesson.

241. The leadership of the department is good. The new head of department has made some effective changes to procedures, which has resulted in improvements in pupils' participation in lessons and standards of kit, which had deteriorated since the time of the last inspection, particularly among boys. Priorities for improvement are accurately identified, but teaching and learning are not monitored closely enough, either at departmental or senior management level, to identify and deal with weaknesses. Although examination standards have not declined since the last inspection, developmental issues have not been adequately addressed and progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Formal assessment procedures are not sufficiently linked either to schemes of work or to National Curriculum levels and are of little use as tools for informing the planning of further work. Curriculum planning in order to ensure continuity of learning and progression between key stages is inadequate. Good resources, especially examination textbooks for homework, impact positively on learning.

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

In the inspection, 13 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, the latest year for which national comparisons are available.

GCE AS-level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	4	33	62	0	15	0.33	1.51
Music	5	100	84	0	29	1	2.41
Sociology	1	100	63	0	7	2	1.17

GCE A-level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	29	86	87	28	43	4.97	5.80
Chemistry	18	94	90	39	43	5.78	5.90
Biology	24	79	88	29	34	4.67	5.25
Physics	14	93	88	36	40	5.43	5.67
Full Design and Technology	9	100	91	22	30	5.33	5.38
Business Studies	28	89	92	46	32	6.14	5.50
Sports/PE Studies	7	100	92	-	25	4.86	5.09
Art and Design	4	100	96	-	46	4.00	6.57
Music	3	100	93	-	35	4.67	5.74
History	9	89	88	44	35	6.44	5.45
English Literature	26	96	95	31	37	5.46	5.91
French	5	100	89	20	38	5.20	5.59
German	2	100	91	-	40	6.00	5.81
Spanish	2	100	89	100	39	8.00	5.70
General Studies	41	95	85	32	30	5.66	4.91

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
GNVQ Business	14	71.4	N/a	14.3	N/a	0	N/a
GNVQ Leisure and Tourism	4	75	N/a	0	N/a	0	N/a

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The inspection focus was mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics. Results in each have improved in recent years but dipped in biology in 2001.

A small number of lessons were observed. The provision was at least good. Discussion with students and analysis of their written work indicates that progress is good as a result of the high level of staff expertise, good curriculum development and good teaching.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Strong leadership within the department.
- Subject knowledge and understanding of syllabus requirements are very good.
- Pace and direction of lessons keep students focused.
- Students enjoy the subject and are making good progress.

Areas for improvement

- As staffing permits to increase the number of staff able to contribute to and share in the teaching of sixth form mathematics, through appointment and/or training.
- Enabling and encouraging students to make more in-depth contributions to discussion of mathematical processing.
- ICT provision.

242. This very well led department has had significant staffing changes over the past year. The dedication of the head of department ensured that A-level results in 2001 were good and almost paralleled those of 2000, results being close to national averages in A-level. They were good in AS-level but below average in GCSE resit examinations. In the observed four lessons, covering Years 12 and 13 A-level/ AS courses, attainment was good or better, with good quality teaching and learning and students making very good progress. This standard was not matched in the one Year 12 GCSE resit lesson observed. Retention rates of students moving to and staying in the sixth form are good.

243. In the GCE A-level examination for 2001 86 per cent of entrants secured A-E grades, a small increase over 2000 figures, although a higher average point score was obtained in 2000, grades this summer being more evenly distributed across the range. Figures are close to national averages. As the department had experienced significant staffing problems from the beginning of 2001 these results reflect credit on the candidates. The two A-level classes had had to be combined under the head of department, their timetables adjusted and with after-school teaching to facilitate completion of their course. AS candidates achieved a 50 per cent pass rate, girls less successful than boys. Overall there is good progression from GCSE.

244. Current Year 13 students, taught in two groups, are pursuing a modular A-level course, comprising three pure, one mechanics and two statistics modules. The standard of work seen is of good quality. It is significantly assisted by the able contributions made by their two teachers, whose awareness of the subject and the course requirements is high. Assignments are well done, pride being taken in the work and supportive comments made in the marking. Progress is monitored; individual target-setting

however was not apparent. Students are encouraged to contribute in lessons to assist forward movement, mainly through question-and-answer; such response is often brief but there is very positive progression. They have confidence in the teacher and application to work is high.

245. Lessons in Year 13 were seen in statistics and pure mathematics and the quality of teaching and learning in each was at least good. Skewness, of both discrete and continuous distributions, was well illustrated using the OHP and followed by appropriate exemplar material from which standard deviation and coefficient of skewness were calculated. Rightly, stress was laid on 'showing your working', on rounding values only where appropriate in solution and on the need to make evaluative comment upon results obtained. Interpolation to determine median values was reviewed and students proceeded confidently on to graded examples, using calculators effectively. In the pure lesson, good exemplar questions of practical situations involving rates of change enabled students into effective use of the Chain Rule, although one student was unsure how to obtain dr/dA having just calculated dA/dr . Progress with confidence was evident in both lessons.
246. Both Year 12 A-Level lessons observed involved pure topics. Second differentials had been introduced to one group and in their use in 'open-box' type calculations, attention was drawn to cases where an extra variable required substitution from another equation. This brought a very clear exposition by the teacher, assisted by occasional responses from the class, but opportunity was lost for extended contributions from students. Integration was being introduced to the other group providing very good interchange between teacher and students, their sound previous learning being illustrated by their responses, such as dealing with rational indices and surds. Their rapid progress into demanding questions also highlighted previous, thorough learning of multiplying out or squaring algebraic expressions.
247. Students on AS courses attend the same classes as the A-level students, in both Years 12 and 13. Depending on topic and module they work with the class or undertake independent study, guided by the teacher. Students appreciated that tasks were set which matched their individual needs. All students learn well and are attentive and diligent. Lessons seen were well paced, work was checked through the course of the lesson and follow-up questions assigned. Students who had been absent for a previous lesson were catered for by individual/group attention from the teacher whilst the rest of the class tackled other work. There was gender, cultural and ethnic diversity amongst students and staff but no apparent variation in treatment or standards; inter-relationships are educationally inclusive and behaviour very good.
248. GCSE re-sit opportunities are provided for sixth form students who have not attained C-grade or better at GCSE, many having been on Foundation GCSE courses. One lesson was observed, the topic of ratio failing to excite the students many of whom experienced difficulty in making real progression, particularly with decimal quantities and conversion of units. A clearer lesson strategy with better focused examples and awareness of individual weaknesses would have promoted learning.
249. Study facilities for sixth form mathematics students are good, particularly in the library environment. Most mathematics books on the shelves are alternative textbooks. Broader reading of the history of mathematics and mathematicians should be considered. Recent acquisition of a class set of graphic calculators is promoting teaching and learning, but the poor provision of and use of ICT needs urgent attention.

250. Leadership of the department is energetic and dedicated, the head of department having to cope with considerable difficulties in staffing, particularly during this past year. Her determination and creditable preparedness to undertake a heavy workload has ensured that many sixth form mathematicians have value added. Record keeping is good, with well-documented performance data. Students expressed satisfaction with the courses offered and feel well supported in their mathematics learning.

Chemistry

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

Strengths

- Results in 2000 were well above average.
- Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and promote high academic standards.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of their students' strengths and weaknesses.
- Students enjoy the subject; they work hard to meet the expectations placed upon them.
- The subject is well led and the work of teachers is co-ordinated effectively.

Areas for improvement

- Some lessons provide insufficient challenge to students' understanding.
- There are not enough occasions for students to learn independently.
- Limited use is made of ICT. There are too few opportunities for students to use computers to collect and analyse data or to work with simulation programs.

251. Results in the examinations in 2000 were well above the national average. The achievement of boys was very high compared with all boys nationally. Girls achieved above average results. In 2001, results were in line with national averages. The percentage of students gaining A and B grades at GCE A-level was lower than in 2000 (41 per cent). All students who took the examinations in 2000 and 2001 obtained a pass grade. Most of the students who started the GCE AS-level chemistry course in 2000 opted to continue with the A-level course. Eighty-one per cent of the students who took the GCE AS-level examination in 2001 obtained A-E grades.

252. The standards of work achieved by current Year 13 students are in line with national expectations. Some students have a very good understanding of chemical concepts and can apply these successfully to unfamiliar situations. They were, for instance, able to relate the reduction products of a vanadium compound to the electron transfers taking place during the reaction and to suggest possible mechanisms. In some instances, students have important gaps in their knowledge of chemical principles that hinder their progress. In the same lesson on vanadium compounds, a few students were unable to recall how to construct equations relating to the reduction and oxidation of ions, despite previously having had considerable practice.

253. Students in Year 12 have made a good start on the GCE AS-level course. They enjoy the subject, feel well supported by their teachers and are comfortable with the more rigorous demands of AS-level work. Most of them are achieving well. They have a good grasp of basic chemistry from previous work at GCSE level, which they are able to apply to more advanced situations. In one very good lesson on the chemistry of Group 7 elements, students were able to compare the properties of the less familiar element fluorine with those of chlorine and bromine, by linking the information that they had already from Year 11 with ideas about electronic structures that were introduced skilfully in the lesson by the teacher.

254. Teaching is good and students learn effectively. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and they demand high academic standards in lessons. Students respond positively and with interest; they strive to fulfil their teachers' expectations. Lessons are well structured and the work is planned carefully with evident links to the course objectives. Teachers use a combination of explanation and questioning to assist students' understanding. This sometimes fails to challenge students' awareness sufficiently. Questioning does not always probe understanding deeply enough and students are not always given sufficient opportunities to think through issues for themselves before being given an explanation. As a result, some students are too reliant on their teachers for information or are reluctant to respond.
255. Teachers have a good knowledge of each of their students' strengths and weaknesses and they place an emphasis upon providing individual support. This was evident during a Year 13 practical lesson involving the determination of the iron content of a food supplement. The teacher worked with each student individually to improve practical techniques and to ensure understanding of the processes. As a result, students made good progress and learned to recognise possible errors in their results and how to reduce these.
256. Students have too few opportunities to learn independently. Whilst homework is set and assessed regularly, this does not promote investigative work sufficiently. Research skills are underdeveloped. The development of students' independence is also hindered by too little use being made of ICT. A lack of computer facilities reduces the opportunities available for collecting and interpreting data and using computer simulation exercises.
257. The subject is well led and managed. Where the teaching of groups of students is shared between the two chemistry teachers, the work is well co-ordinated. There is close communication between them and planning is generally well integrated. Monitoring of work in the subject is effective and ensures the maintenance of high standards. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection.

Biology

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

Strengths

- The organisation and management of the curriculum.
- Feedback to students about their work.

Areas for improvement

- In Year 12 there is a need to give greater thought to pupil activity to meet the wide range of prior attainment in the groups.
- Increase opportunities for students' independent work or individual research.

258. Biology is a popular subject in the school. A-level results in 2000 were well above average. There was a steady improvement in results from 1998 to 2000, for boys in particular, and the average point score per pupil showed a steady increase. Girls achieved good results in biology compared to their performance in other subjects. In 2001, however, the results are less good. Although in line with national averages, a lower percentage attained an A or B grade and 24 per cent of pupils failed to obtain a pass. This could be due to the ability range of students allowed entry to the course, many of whom have an average GCSE point score below that normally following such courses. In the Year 12 AS-level examination a good proportion (25 per cent) obtained

A or B grades but six pupils failed to gain a qualification. Altogether, eight pupils did not continue their studies into Year 13.

259. The standards of achievement of current students in Year 13 are good. Files show the full range of the subject specification and students' responses to homework questions show a good understanding of the work covered. Coursework assessed practical work was evident and was of an appropriate standard, but routine practical work was less frequent than is usually found and of a less challenging nature. There was no practical work evident in the folders of the Year 12 students.
260. Teaching is good overall. Teaching knowledge is good and content accurate and appropriate for the topic. The tasks offered are appropriate for learning new knowledge and consolidating information, but in some lessons, there was a lack of flair and inspiration in delivery. The teachers were particularly good at explaining to individuals when there were misconceptions. There is a very clear focus on achievement and students are aware of how well they are doing and what needs to be done to improve. In Year 12, there is a need to give greater thought to pupil activity to meet the wide range of prior attainment in the groups.
261. Written work demanded of students consists of class notes with supplements made from additional reading. Folders are generally not well presented and there is no evidence of feedback on the sequencing of work or quality of notes. Providing students with many examples of examination questions coupled with good marking ensures good feedback on their understanding. End of topic tests consisting of past, short answer questions are also provided and marked effectively. The department makes regular recordings of homework and test marks. Attendance registers are taken each lesson.
262. Students in Year 13 learn well. They are attentive and show a willingness to learn. Relationships in the classrooms are good, the atmosphere being relaxed, friendly and supportive. There was some lack of confidence in offering answers that proved to be correct and some students hesitated to seek clarification of their understanding by asking questions. Year 12 students were less focused on their work and were, at times, inattentive and a significant number worked at a slow pace. This could be a feature of the large size of the group coupled with the wide range of prior attainment.
263. There is little evidence of students' independent work or individual research for example, in the form of presentation notes or extended writing. There is a need to encourage students to become more responsible for their own learning, make greater contributions to the learning of the group and investigate a wider range of sources of information. There is little evidence of work using ICT.
264. The overall good standard of teaching and learning in the department result from careful organisation and planning by the head of department. Great care is taken to ensure that the subject specifications are fully met and support materials are available. The subject specification is the basis of the scheme of work.

Physics

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

Strengths

- Improved results.
- The quality of teaching.

- The subject is well organised and managed.

Areas for improvement

- Consolidate the staffing of the subject.
- Ensure that work is set at a level for each student.

265. In 2000, A-level results were one-half of the national figure. In 2001, the results improved and the number of pupils attaining the higher levels was similar to the national average. Nearly all students achieved a grade A to E. The school results in physics in 2001, which had been lower than either chemistry or biology in 2000, are now similar to chemistry and better than biology. The percentage of students who completed the course was high.
266. In 2001, the first year of the new AS-level examination, nearly all pupils attained a grade A to E and one-half of the pupils attained a grade A-C. This means that, within the school, physics results for A to C were similar to those attained in chemistry and biology. These standards are mirrored in the work seen in lessons and in students' files. The work is at an appropriate level for this stage in each course.
267. Pupils' practical skills are at an appropriate level in both years. Year 13 pupils were able to complete a task in simple harmonic motion with reasonable attention to detail. They did not, however, consider the accuracy of their readings when; for example, recording timings to one-hundredth of a second in a situation where one-tenth of a second was difficult to measure accurately. Similarly, in Year 12, pupils were able to complete a simple practical task using a linear air track to establish a relationship between kinetic energy and potential energy. The timings were measured using a computer, but no question was made of the appropriate level of accuracy. One or two students needed support to complete simple tasks; for example, in how to use a stopwatch.
268. The observed practical work was undertaken in pairs or small groups. In the Year 12 lesson this was appropriate since it made good use of the available resources. However, the Year 13 pupils should have been working individually. This would prepare them more effectively for the practical assessment.
269. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Teachers use good subject knowledge to set an appropriate level of challenge to the group. It also helps them provide good explanations to students who raise questions. Lessons are well planned and prepared ensuring that they start well and flow effectively. All this results in students being able to work hard and productively. The best lessons start well and then develop a theme into the main body of the lesson. In a Year 12 lesson; for example, the teachers asked students, as soon as they got into the room, to write down their understanding of the phrase 'conservation of energy'. This simple task made a brilliant start to the lesson. It meant every student was settled and working in seconds, having been forced to focus on the main principle behind the lesson from the start. In the short discussion that followed, the teacher gained a very clear insight into individual levels of understanding and the students knew how well they understood the topic.
270. Students consolidate and acquire knowledge quickly and increase their understanding effectively. This produces a good learning environment. In a lesson exploring the properties of a thermocouple, students showed that they had understood the principles behind the thermocouple and they were then able to apply these skills in a practical situation where they had to calibrate against two fixed points. During this they managed their work effectively, sustained concentration and showed a genuine interest. As a result, the lesson had good pace and students worked hard and productively.

271. Attitudes to the subject are positive. Students find the subject interesting and challenging. They have a clear idea of how well they are doing and are confident that help will be available if needed. Entry requirements to the AS and A2 courses are appropriate.
272. There is a wide range of ability in both years. Each class has higher attaining pupils together with those who need greater levels of support. Most work is set at a level appropriate to the demands of the syllabus and this establishes the common level of challenge in each group. The department provides satisfactory support to those who find the work demanding. However, the department needs to consider how it can stretch the higher attaining students particularly where they demonstrate a natural flair for the subject.
273. Three staff teach physics in the sixth form. Only one is a physicist and this teacher is on a one-year contract. The school has attempted to attract a person to be head of physics but has yet to find a suitable applicant. Despite this, results have improved and the quality of teaching is good. The subject is very well co-ordinated by the head of science who has managed to implement successfully the recent changes brought about by the introduction of AS and A2 syllabi. This is a significant achievement. Clearly the school needs to ensure that the successful beginning can be developed further.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

Design and technology was inspected in detail in this area of the curriculum.

Design and technology

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

Strengths

- Examination results are in line with national averages overall and students achieve well.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Specialist teachers of design and technology have a secure subject knowledge and their experience and expertise are well used.
- The two teachers involved in the delivery of product design have a very good knowledge of the students, which helps them to meet students' individual needs on a day to day basis.

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation and resources for Computer Assisted Manufacturing (CAM) are unsatisfactory.
- The department recognises the need to review links with industry along with opportunities for students to research a variety of customs and cultures.
- Assessment is not used effectively to inform curriculum planning and monitoring of student progress to evaluate effectiveness of teaching and learning and to ensure continuity between the teachers who are responsible for the delivery of the units of work.

274. Standards in design and technology on entry into the sixth form are variable. Not all students; for example, have followed a similar course of study (DT) at GCSE level. In these instances, levels of students' understanding of material properties and processes are a limiting factor in their overall success.
275. In 2001, results were in line with national averages. In GCE A-level DT product design, nine students were entered and all achieved grades A-E. This 100 per cent pass rate has been maintained since 1999. The number of entries climbed from five to nine students between 2000 and 2001 and two of the cohort gained the highest grade A in 2001. At AS-level, 88 per cent of the students achieved grades A-E.
276. In the work seen during the inspection, standards were variable and overall there is a marked improvement as students move through the final stages of their course of study. Graphicacy is well developed, alongside the understanding of a broad range of materials and their properties and processes. Students develop elements of technological understanding through investigating products. These products and solutions are evaluated from several viewpoints and consideration is given to the purposes for which the products are intended; for example, in the investigation of a broad range of commercial designers' work and the application of Edward De Bono's 'Thinking Hats'. Skills using ICT are developing well, not only in research and the Internet, but also Computer Assisted Design (CAD).
277. Teaching is at least satisfactory and occasionally good. This is somewhat similar to the previous inspection in finding that teachers are well qualified in the particular aspects of DT that they teach. Teachers know the students well and work energetically to help them make progress, including opportunities for students to continue with their work beyond school hours.
278. Specialist teachers have a secure subject knowledge including training in assessment and moderation of coursework. However, teachers do not apply the outcomes of assessment of students consistently to set targets for improvement or inform curriculum planning and continuity. Insufficient opportunities are available for the exploration of other customs and cultures and the department recognises the need to extend the links with industry.
279. Leadership and management are good. The relatively new head of department leads well by example and has worked extremely hard in terms of planning for the development of the subject. The level of improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Achievement has remained high and the number of students taking A/AS-level has increased significantly.

280. The accommodation has not changed since the last inspection when it was described as old and a limiting factor in terms of access between the different areas. A major internal refurbishment programme, to include Computer Assisted Manufacturing (CAM) facilities, has been approved and alterations are planned to commence in the Spring Term, 2002.

BUSINESS

The focus was on business studies.

Overall, the quality of provision in business education/accounting is **good**.

Strengths

- Advanced level accounting results are very good.
- Advanced level business results are good.
- There is high teacher commitment to students.
- Relationships in classes are very good.
- Most teaching is good.
- Teacher support is rated highly.
- Students' attitudes to their studies are very positive.
- The new accommodation provides a good learning environment.

Areas for improvement

- There is minimal use of ICT.
- Written assessment is rarely formative.
- The range of teaching and learning styles is limited.
- Resources are limited.

281. Attainment at A-level and AS-level accounting was very good in 2001 and above national averages. At A-level all 19 students passed with grades A–C, including 12 grade A passes. At AS-level all 18 students passed, 14 with grades A or B. In business studies at GCE A-level, 25 out of 28 students passed with 13 at grades A or B. For AS business studies, 30 out of 35 students passed, with 15 at grades A and B. The school has not previously used a commercial A-level value-added scheme although one is being introduced this year. Correlations from the school's internal value-added system show that accounting and business studies both add more value than the median for all A-level subjects.

282. Pass rates for GNVQ Business Intermediate are sound although no distinctions have been awarded in the last three years. A wide range of secretarial and business administration qualifications are offered discretely or alongside A-level study and pass rates are typically high overall and at the higher grades. A-level law is offered in the school but is not managed within the business studies area.

283. Overall, the attainment reached in lessons, written work and discussions, is slightly above what might be expected from the students. There are, however, considerable variations between subjects and between teachers. The opportunities for students to be stretched to display their full potential are often frustrated by planning and teaching aimed at the middle section of ability. Where teachers and students related their own experiences to textbook examples and theory, as in examples related to job applications or ordering goods, there was a higher level of thought and discussion. Teaching tends to move from the plenary to the individual without the use of pair work or small group work, which can often give students confidence to engage in plenary

discussion. There were, surprisingly, no examples of the use of ICT to support learning in the lessons inspected and its use, as a component of independent learning, is underdeveloped in this subject area.

284. The knowledge base of teachers is always strong and there is good use of open questions and, in the better lessons, more challenging follow-up questions. Explanations are clear and students make ordered notes, often spontaneously. In accounting, difficult questions on the procedures for suspense accounts are posed orally and these require some lateral thinking. High expectations are set and students react well to this with the extensive plenary preparation enabling them to work unaided on further examples.
285. Although examples of pair work and small group work were seen, the didactic lesson was the prevalent format. Teachers commonly prepared their own handouts and these were modern and appropriate. GNVQ intermediate lessons were based on photocopied sheets and a range of textbooks from the department's stock. In addition, some students chose to purchase their own revision books.
286. The attitude of students to their studies is very good. They are keen to achieve and remain on task. Many of them are passive in class although there is a readiness to seek clarification from teachers if needed and these questions are well answered. Students help each other appropriately and relationships are very positive.
287. Business, accounting and secretarial courses are grouped under one head of department. There are departmental policies in place and these include the observation of colleagues in lessons. A temporary staffing shortage has impeded this scheme, however, as teaching loads have increased to cover the absent colleague. There is a system of setting target grades for students. In one area inspected, these grades were proved to be considerably over-pessimistic and this is an area for greater refinement. Across teaching and assessment, there is too little consistency.
288. All sixth formers from any subject area can participate in Young Enterprise as a generic enrichment. For business students, there is no developed scheme of work experience for sixth formers and no opportunity for a course-specific community involvement. A potential opportunity to enrich the study of these subjects is therefore missed.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus was on physical education.

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

Strengths

- Students are well prepared for AS and A-level physical education.
- Guidance given to students starting the course is good.
- Take up by students of A-level and AS courses is good and rising.

Areas for improvement

- The development of higher order skills of enquiry, debate and hypothesis.
- The lack of curriculum time for all students.

289. Examination results at A-level in both the last two years have been in line with national averages. All students entered in 2001 obtained a pass grade (A-E) but no student obtained a higher grade pass (A or B). In the AS examination all students obtained at least a pass grade (A-E) and one-quarter of students obtained higher grade passes

(A–B). In this summer's AS examination, students' practical marks were higher than their theory marks.

290. Inspection evidence shows that students currently in Years 12 and 13 are producing work of an average standard, similar to the time of the last inspection. All students are achieving satisfactorily having obtained higher grade passes at GCSE (A-C). In football, students show a very high standard of skill acquisition. Higher attaining boys move the ball around with excellent technique, speed and use of space. Lower attaining students are able to evaluate the work of others effectively and, with prompting, give accurate reasons for their comments. The most competent students articulate their views skillfully using the appropriate technical language, such as 'visual guidance'. Students' knowledge and understanding of the psychology and history of sport are good but lower attaining students show some weaknesses in their understanding and use of technical language in anatomy and physiology, of which they are aware. Higher order skills, such as those of enquiry, debate and hypothesis are insufficiently well developed. This is partly because students are inclined to receive information without question.
291. The majority of students in Year 12 have made at least satisfactory progress since they started the course and are achieving well. They have a sound grasp of the similarities and differences of the various theoretical models of information processing. In netball, students competently lead activities with understanding and good technical knowledge. Despite low numbers, high-attaining students showed flashes of success in transferring skills learnt to the game context, such as tactics for passing the ball into the circle.
292. Overall, teaching of AS and A-level is satisfactory with several good features. Students are well prepared for the examinations and comprehensive coverage of the syllabi enhances their success. Teachers ensure that students understand clearly the aims of the lessons so that they know what they are to learn. Planning includes a good range of tasks, but does not include sufficient strategies for developing the higher order skills of enquiry, debate and hypothesis. High numbers in theory lessons hinder planning for the needs of individual students and this depresses levels of achievement.
293. Students show a mature and responsible attitude to their work and enjoy good relationships with both their fellow students and teachers. This has much to do with the quality of extra-curricular provision, such as a recent outdoor educational residential visit, which enabled students to get to know one another better. Most are able to express themselves clearly, for example, when discussing their views of current sporting topics.
294. Teachers are accurate in their evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of provision and show a commitment to raising standards. A significant minority of A-level and AS students hold representative honours at county and regional level and this contributes positively to standards achieved. There are insufficient opportunities for all students to participate in sport, although extra-curricular activities - for example, swimming, football and netball - are open to all students.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus of the inspection was on art and design and music. Drama was sampled, but not included as a main area of focus. Overall, the quality of provision in drama is good. It is an increasingly popular choice for students entering the sixth form. 2001 A-level results show a great improvement on Year 2000 and are now in line with national averages. Results at AS-levels in drama, taken for the first time in 2001, were good with the majority of students attaining grades B and C. Improved accommodation in the new drama studio is providing a

better drama space. Teaching observed was good. Drama skills are reinforced very well through the many extra-curricular activities offered. For example, A-level students work with artists in residence from the Mousetrap Foundation.

Art and design

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

Strengths

- The good quality of teaching.
- The good relationships.
- The teachers' subject knowledge.

Areas for improvement

- Standards achieved in examinations, especially in the higher grades.
- The recording of assessments in addition to the minimum examination requirements.
- Students' use of ICT in the development of their work.

295. In 2001, the first year of entry, five students were entered for the GCE AS-level examination. All gained a A-E grade, but none gained the higher two grades. The small numbers involved make comparisons with national averages unreliable. Taking into account the grades that the students gained in the GCSE examination in the previous year, this represents unsatisfactory achievement. In 2000, seven students were entered for the GCE A-level examination. Standards achieved were below the national averages. All but one of them gained an A-E grade, but none gained the higher two grades. The small numbers involved make comparisons with national averages unreliable. In 2001, four students were entered for the GCE A-level examination. All gained an A-E grade although once again none gained a higher grade and results overall remained below the national averages. The continuity of teaching was disrupted for most of these two years by the intermittent and then long-term absence of the subject head, who was chiefly responsible for these teaching groups. Remaining members of the subject staff were not sufficiently experienced, at that time, in the teaching and examination of post 16 courses.

296. On the basis of work seen during inspection, standards in both Years 12 and 13 have recently improved so that some students are now producing work that reflects attainment at the higher-grade levels and overall standards are in line with average expectations. Students are able to explore broad themes with extended and extensive studies from direct observation and secondary sources. Photography is also used to gather visual information and students are able to use ICT to generate and modify images in a basic way, which some students use to inform their further work. A female student modified her photographs of the local town centre using a computer. She worked again from the modified image in a traditional medium. The work has grown out of a visit by the group to the exhibition, 'London Lives'. Students' work reflects their personal interests, preferences and individual responses. A male student developed a large acrylic painting that captures his response to the September 11th attacks on New York. He was able to relate his work to studies he has made of the anguished work of Edvard Munch and the pop art of Jasper Johns. Students' drawing from observation is not as well developed as expected. Lowest attaining students have a limited amount and range of work and they do not fully explore the themes, resorting to quite direct and literal responses.

297. In Year 13, students produce large bodies of work that reflect many hours of work at home in addition to the time spent in the art room. Students exploit the characteristics

of media very well to explore themes and develop ideas. A female student examines the work of artists using novel combinations of monoprinting, newspaper and coloured paper collage and some basic ICT. The unit of work is a coherent study around the theme of 'Trees'. In extensive studies there is some degree of duplication without progress. For example, a male student produced many drawings of flowers in support of his study of the artist, Georgia O'Keefe, but it is not clear that each is progressively adding to his understanding of her work.

298. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Students work with independence and focus and show commitment to their studies because teachers plan work that is well matched to their abilities and encourages them to bring their interests, beliefs and backgrounds to their work. Teachers support students' work very well, spending considerable time individually discussing progress, giving technical advice and questioning students so that they clarify their intentions for their work. They have high expectations of the students who respond well, making good use of time and sustaining their creative efforts for the duration of the lesson and beyond. In a Year 12 lesson the teacher spent time with each student. She checked their work journals, gave encouragement, set targets and reminded them of deadlines. Students know what they need to do, how they are going to achieve it and by when. The progress of students is closely monitored. In weekly tutorials, teachers discuss and evaluate their individual progress with students, but the conclusions of these tutorials are not recorded and valuable assessment information, which could improve planning, is lost.
299. Students have very positive views about the art and design course, their teachers and their monitoring and support. They feel that they have made good progress since the GCSE examination because they have more time and more individual attention and greater demands are made upon them. Relationships are good. The growing popularity of the subject is reflected in a group size of 13 in Year 12. Of the five students who studied GCE AS-level last year, three have continued to study for A-level whilst the other two concentrate on their other subject choices.
300. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Students value the input of three staff, reflecting a good range and depth of subject knowledge. Accommodation does not limit the scale and range of work that students attempt because of the smaller numbers studying the subject. If the popularity of the subject continues to grow as it recently has then the space to store larger works will be insufficient.

Music

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

Strengths

- The individual learning needs of the students are well catered for.
- Teachers have a good subject knowledge.
- Students have a good grasp of technical language.
- The subject is well led, establishing opportunities and resources to enhance learning.

Areas for improvement

- Ongoing formal assessment of students' work.
- Provision of appropriate computer-based learning resources.

301. The GCE A-level examination results have remained broadly consistent, close to the national average, for the past four years. All students have achieved at least an E grade and a proportion, in line with national averages, have attained a B grade or higher. Group sizes have been very small; a mixture of boys and girls.
302. The standards of work of current students is close to national expectations. In Year 13, students are achieving well in relation to teachers' predictions based on available GCSE results and interim examinations. In the work observed, students are learning well in most areas of the course. In performance they all sing repertoire well suited to their technical accomplishments with confidence and sure technique. They have a good grasp of technical language, but with unfamiliar styles of music, such as twelve-tone music, they are less successful at linking aural stimuli to their experience. They make intelligent links between techniques learned from the study of Bach's chorales and accompaniment, writing in their own original song compositions.
303. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into their course. Only one student took GCSE in music. Whilst they are beginning to consolidate their technique in harmonisation and develop their performing skills, the main tenor of the course to date is in listening and appraisal. Students show interest in their work and, in the jazz course, are able to identify similarities and differences between different trends and to reflect on how jazz and classical music share common ground.
304. Teaching overall is satisfactory. With the small group sizes, teaching is characterised by much face-to-face teaching and individual support is very strong, with very good teacher-student relationships. Students work through exercises at their own pace and are encouraged to resolve the problems posed in harmonising melodies for themselves. Students negotiate the amount and level of the homework with the teachers and exercises are generally monitored through individualised discussion at the next lesson. Whilst this has undoubted strengths, there is also an over-reliance on this technique. Where students' work is not assessed prior to the lesson, opportunity is lost and teaching is not appropriately planned to make the most of the group dynamic and to make connections between the three main disciplines of the subject. The subject knowledge of the teachers is good; but for example, in a Year 13 lesson on harmonising in the style of Bach, comment made on students' work failed to resolve problems well, because there was no reference back to Bach's originals. This would have revealed the flexibility of the art of composing, countering the rigid preconceptions in the students' minds. The use of well-devised booklets on all aspects of the course ensures that students know clearly what they need to learn and what techniques they need to master. There is a satisfactory balance between reliance on these booklets and the encouragement of individual learning skills.

305. Students are very positive about the courses. They are attentive, work productively and respond well to their teaching. They are supportive of each other and contribute enthusiastically to the musical life of the school. One Year 13 student with English as an additional language who came to the school in the sixth form without a formal music qualification has settled very well into the demands of the course and is currently repeating Year 13 to improve on her pass marks before applying for university courses.
306. The curriculum is well planned and there are many opportunities for students to extend their interests through the extra-curricular activities that the department provides for the whole school. Further performance opportunities for sixth formers alone evolve out of these. For example, sixth form members of the choir performed at the Year 12 assembly. On another occasion the choir was suspended so that Year 13 students could rehearse in public (before the large number of other choir members) the repertoire for their mock examinations. Several students contribute to the activities of the Redbridge Music Centre and others involve themselves in performing arts projects in the community. Students feel well supported by the department in planning for higher education. There is good liaison through direct contact and the involvement of former students of the school. Two Year 12 students assist in Year 7 music lessons as part of their community service commitment, thereby contributing to the caring ethos of the school and at the same time developing insight into a possible career in teaching.
307. The leadership of music in the sixth form is good. There has recently been specific strategic resourcing for music in the form of new textbooks and recordings to begin to meet the needs of the new specifications. Schemes of work are appropriately written, without being too prescriptive. Accommodation, shared with the rest of the school, is good. A flexible approach to timetabling enables students' individual learning needs to be accommodated. Opportunities for learning with the assistance of information and communication technology resources are, however, poor. There is only one PC in the department and this is not linked to the Internet. Consequently, students may use music software, but accessing important resources, such as streaming audio files or academic sites, to encourage independent learning, is greatly limited.

HUMANITIES

The focus was on geography and history. Provision in other subjects includes law, which was not sampled and psychology, which was through lesson observation, analysis of results and discussions with key staff and participating students. Examination results in law are low; by contrast those for psychology are high. The quality of teaching observed in psychology was very good and students were highly motivated and actively involved in their learning.

Geography

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

Strengths

- Examination results showed a marked improvement in 2001.
- Students have a sound grasp of geographical concepts, principles and theories and apply them well in lessons.
- Teaching is good; lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives.
- Students work productively in lessons and have a positive attitude towards the subject.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Areas for improvement

- A rather limited range of teaching and learning strategies resulting in a lack of challenge for the higher attaining students.

308. In recent years the numbers entered for A-level geography have been too small for meaningful comparisons with national averages. Although there were no A-level candidates this summer, 17 students sat the AS examination and all attained a pass grade, with three students getting an A-B grade. Both boys and girls attained equally well. In the present Year 12 there are 10 students studying AS geography.

309. The standards of work of both the AS and A2 students is in line with national expectations. In all the lessons observed there were significant gains in the acquisition of knowledge and understanding and the development of geographical skills. The AS students were able to analyse statistical data relating to the use of water resources and the management of a coastal area and put forward feasible solutions to environmental problems. The A2 students were able to explore successfully the historical links between trade and development and develop their thinking and reasoning skills in an exercise based on the Demographic Transition Model.

310. Teaching is good overall and the students learn well as a result. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. They use time and resources effectively and lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Where the teaching is very good there is a greater degree of challenge and an emphasis on independent, rather than teacher-directed, learning. Teachers have good classroom management skills and have developed a productive working relationship with the students. Homework is used effectively to reinforce and extend learning and develop research skills.

311. The students show a keen interest and enjoyment in their work. They are keen to participate in lessons and offer mature and well-founded contributions to class discussions on issues such as slavery, population growth and the long-term effects of coastal management. They work collaboratively when required and relationships with both one another and staff are positive and constructive. In lessons they have the ability to make and take notes, interpret a variety of evidence and present their findings in a clear and logical fashion.

312. The subject is well led and managed by a new acting head of department. The new schemes of work effectively reflect the subject requirements of the Edexcel examination board and provide the necessary framework for good teaching and the development of key skills. The department is well resourced and students are provided with individual copies of the accompanying AS/A2 textbooks for use in lessons. The number of students studying geography in the sixth form has greatly increased in the last two years.

313. In order to fully engage and extend the higher attaining students, teaching needs to encompass a greater degree of challenge where the emphasis is placed more firmly on independent learning. A wider range of teaching strategies would further stimulate the spectrum of learning skills of the students, including the capacity for critical evaluation of their own work.

History

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

Strengths

- A-level history results.
- Student attainment and enthusiasm.
- Well-researched and imaginative teaching.

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT within the curriculum.
- Subject-specific target-setting within marking and reporting.
- Group size at AS-level.

314. Standards within the sixth form are above national expectations, with many students exhibiting well-developed historical skills in the interpretation of historical personalities and of source material.
315. At A-level in 2001 the school secured a 44.4 per cent pass rate for higher grades (A-B) and an overall pass rate of 89 per cent. This is a significant improvement on the previous year and now exceeds the standard reported at the previous inspection.
316. In the inaugural AS-level in 2001 the school secured a 100 per cent pass rate, although only one of the eleven results was a higher grade (A-B). This indicates that the teaching had enabled all students to pass but that it had not sufficiently propelled them into the higher-grade category. However, the evidence of written work and classroom observations indicates that standards of attainment are now being fully maintained in line with national expectations and that this cohort are becoming confident historians.
317. The evidence from Year 12 is that students are already confident historians who expect to analyse and debate the various aspects of medieval history that they encounter and their performance reflects the capability that they demonstrated with the school's high level GCSE pass rate in 2001.
318. The students' personal responses revealed that they had been attracted to the course as a result of the historical education that they had received in Key Stages 3 and 4 and the exciting atmosphere that they had previously experienced. They indicated that they continue to find the challenge of history to be very exciting and several specified that they intended to continue with their historical studies into higher education. They felt that they are challenged by the learning, but that they are always strongly supported so that they can succeed.
319. The teaching is always good and frequently very good. It is based on extremely careful preparation and wide research and it continues the skill development pathway from Year 7 with a heavy emphasis on promoting individuality in historical thinking. Students are trained to analyse key sources such as the Domesday Survey and the writings of

medieval chroniclers and the evidence is that this is a successful endeavour. Teacher subject knowledge is a particular strength of the sixth form history provision.

320. The curriculum is generally appropriate but ICT is not yet a feature of the regular classroom provision. In Year 12, because there are 22 students in the class, some of the curriculum is being delivered in a relatively formal manner because the group size does not lend itself to a more student-focused approach.
321. Relationships in the sixth form between students and staff and between students, are good and the students all work well in collaborative assignments. A strong context has been established from which to secure further improvement.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English was inspected and drama courses at AS and A-level were sampled. French A-level was inspected in full within the area of modern foreign languages. German and Spanish were sampled in Years 12 and 13 respectively. Standards in Year 12 German, from the group already attempting AS examination papers, were in line with expectations. In Year 13 Spanish, students were able to discuss, at a very mature level, the topics of 'drugs and abuse' and 'immigrants'. The quality of teaching degree was good. Completed coursework was further evidence of high standards of work.

English

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

Strengths

- Good teacher knowledge shared with students to enhance independent learning.
- Skilled student management to ensure commitment to independent learning.
- Challenge to elicit students' maximum effort in exploring and analysing texts.
- Critical evaluation of literature studied and coherent expression of findings.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment systems to track students' prior learning and monitor progress made.
- Checking attendance to ensure that students benefit fully from the lessons provided.

322. Results in English literature at A-level in 2001 have been maintained at similar levels as those in 2000. These are in line with national averages. Year 2001 was the first year for examinations in AS-level English literature. Although there are no figures with which to compare, attainment was high. On the basis of these results, one-third of the students entered for A-level achieved the top band (A or B grades) and all 24 students passed. One-third of the students entered for AS-level achieved the top band (A or B) and of the 27 students entered only one failed to pass.
323. Students achieve well during their A-level course. This is confirmed by the good standards of work seen during the inspection. In Year 13, students comment perceptively on the texts studied, showing a depth of understanding. Students exchange ideas, sustaining their arguments and growing in confidence. This reinforces their learning and prepares them for organising their thoughts when writing their essays. The higher attainers make assured statements based on analysis of the texts studied. For example, when studying Keats' 'Ode to Melancholy' students identified the poet's intention 'to feed deep' on all experiences because both joy and pain must be experienced to the fullest. Students write for a range of purposes and many are developing their own personal style. They select the appropriate forms of language to

convey significant aspects of the text and the techniques used by writers to sustain interest. For example, writing a critical assessment of Chaucer's 'Wife of Bath's Tale' students explained the use of simile, metaphor and alliteration to create effect and interest the reader.

324. Many Year 12 students are still coming to terms with the increased challenge of AS-level, nevertheless, achievement is good for this stage of the course. Students of all abilities respond well in class, freely contributing to lively discussions. For example, when studying Philip Larkin's poem, 'Ambulances', students explained that the images used remind us of the frailty of life; the closeness of death within life. Students at AS-level are gaining some confidence in the use of literary terminology. Their essays show a developing understanding of writers' main ideas and most use references from the texts to illustrate their points. An impressive quantity of work was produced in a Year 12 class writing a timed essay on Brontë's 'Jane Eyre'. However, the quality of the writing varied considerably. Some wrote concisely, expressing their views clearly; others meandered through a string of comments with haphazard use of punctuation, careless spelling and many grammatical errors. Sensitive insights into the texts were spoiled by an over colloquial, clumsy style. All students need to develop their skills in structuring a coherent argument and expressing this concisely.
325. Teaching in the sixth form is good. One-half of the lessons seen were very good and an excellent lesson was taught on the poems of Seamus Heaney. In the best lessons good teacher knowledge is shared with the students to enhance independent learning. Teachers establish an ongoing dialogue with the class so that students are involved actively in their own learning. This skilled student management ensures commitment to improvement. Students are challenged to make the maximum effort to enhance their performance in all aspects of English. Teachers let students experience the delight of making discoveries from the text for themselves. For example, one student read aloud a complete stanza from Heaney's poem, 'The Tollund Man'. As there was no punctuation she was breathless by the end! Students realised that because one complete idea is being developed in this stanza there are no full stops until the end of the thought.
326. Skilful teaching is providing students with a foundation for lifelong learning that equips them well for further education. Students appreciate the individual support they are given by their teachers, the good relationships established and the value of English studies to their personal development. Teachers share ideas well but there is a need for assessment procedures to ensure that students' needs are addressed systematically. This is particularly important because some students begin AS-level studies from a low base of attainment at GCSE. Attendance checks should be made regularly. During the inspection some classes were very low in student numbers. For example, a Year 13 class with 12 students on roll had only six present for a poetry lesson on Keats. Only nine students out of 13 were present for a Year 13 lesson on 'Room with a View'. Only 18 students out of 24 on roll were present for a lesson on Philip Larkin's poem, which was followed by a lesson on Brontë's 'Jane Eyre' so students missed two lessons from their quota for AS-level studies.
327. Overall, the department is well managed with some inspirational teaching from the head of department.

Modern foreign languages

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

Strengths

- Range of languages offered.
- Teaching and high expectations.
- Work experience in France in Year 12.

Areas for improvement

- To develop strategies to increase pupils' confidence in French.
- To further develop independent study skills.

328. Examination results in 2001 in French were good at AS and the average point score was in line with national averages at A-levels. In the 2000 A-level examination, 40 per cent gained top A–C grades. This increased to 50 per cent in the 2001 examination and 72 per cent over all three languages - the best results ever. Year 2001 was the first year for the AS-level examination. Forty per cent gained A–C grades in French, 60 per cent with top grades over all three languages. Coursework is a particular strength, requiring a very high degree of accuracy and linguistic talent and good content as a result of careful research. Topics were chosen by the students themselves; for example, Islam and a study of Maupassant. This fully involves the students in their own learning.
329. In the current Year 12, it is encouraging to see two boys studying French. In lessons seen, from work scrutiny and discussions with the students, it is clear that all are very positive about their studies and intend to study at a higher level, to further their careers. Year 12 is a transition period and the first term involves teaching of higher level linguistic skills, building on the GCSE experience. Consolidation of grammar is an all-important part. Topics seem to be suddenly very adult, requiring discussion and debate, which students are finding difficult. They rely very much on the teachers, who work hard to encourage independent research at the appropriate level. However, in Year 12 three teachers are teaching the course. Although they know the students well, continuity is difficult from a student's point of view. The teachers collaborate and work as a team when planning lesson content and materials. The students are lacking in confidence in reading. Pronunciation is good, but understanding shaky, as was evident from the poor intonation when a passage was read aloud by the students. When practised for comprehension work, reading and comprehension skills were better and students were able to understand the gist of passages, with advice and help from the teacher. Despite achieving success at AS-level the two students in the A-level lesson seen were extremely quiet and found it hard to discuss the death penalty. They shared few ideas of their own and found it difficult to express themselves, although they understood the text well.

330. Teaching overall is good. All lessons were satisfactory or better. Lessons were delivered throughout in French. Even when checking understanding, sentences were rephrased or synonyms used, encouraging students to think and deduce for themselves. Lesson materials are authentic and taken from a variety of sources, including textbooks, magazine and newspaper articles, audio materials, the Internet and videos. They are carefully chosen with the interest of the students at heart. The teachers provide students with good strategies for success in all four skills, highlighting exactly what is required; for example, how to pick out key vocabulary and phrases for reading and listening comprehension. Tasks and activities are planned to encourage students to acquire and practise the language skills needed for communication purposes, including independent study. Teacher expertise aids progress significantly. Marking is thorough and informative, showing strengths and areas for improvement and how to achieve this.
331. Leadership is good and everyone works as a team.
332. An excellent feature of the sixth form is the work experience in France, which raises student competence and confidence and extends their knowledge of French culture and society.