

INSPECTION REPORT

HAYDON SCHOOL

Pinner

LEA area: London Borough of Hillingdon

Unique reference number: 102441

Headteacher: Mr P Woods

Reporting inspector: Mr A Shield
3569

Dates of inspection: 3 – 7 February 2003

Inspection number: 249553

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: Foundation

Age range of students: 11 to 18 years

Gender of students: Mixed

School address: Wiltshire Lane
Eastcote
Pinner

Postcode: HA5 2LX

Telephone number: 020 8429 0005

Fax number: 020 8429 9570

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr T Hill

Date of previous inspection: April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3569	Mr A Shield	Registered inspector	Educational Inclusion, including race equality	What sort of school is it? The school's results and students' achievements How well are students taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
8992	Mr J Vischer	Lay inspector		Students' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1085	Mr J Laver	Team inspector	English	
24891	Ms J Johnson	Team inspector	Mathematics	
18178	Mr I Matthews	Team inspector	Mathematics in the sixth form	
17799	Mr A Stoddart	Team inspector	Science Physics in the sixth form	
31680	Mr P Redican	Team inspector	Art and design Citizenship	
18188	Ms C Thompson	Team inspector	Design and technology	
8859	Mr T Dodd	Team inspector	Design and technology in the sixth form	
30046	Mr R Parker	Team inspector	Information and communication technology English as an additional language	
18032	Ms I Randell	Team inspector	Information and communication technology in the sixth form	
1994	Ms H Olds	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
1523	Dr T James	Team inspector	History	

32115	Mr J Foster	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
19532	Ms E Charlesworth	Team inspector	Music	Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
32241	Ms J Rundle	Team inspector	Physical education	
20719	Ms A Fraser	Team inspector	Religious education	
17530	Ms M Cureton	Team inspector	Special educational needs	The work of the SEN unit
15277	Mr C Vidler	Team inspector	Business studies Economics and leisure and tourism in the sixth form	
14633	Ms J Bannister	Team inspector	Sociology Government and politics	

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Bench Marque Ltd
National Westminster Bank Chambers Limited
Victoria Street
Burnham-on-Sea
Somerset
TA8 1AN

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Haydon is a mixed comprehensive foundation school for students aged 11 – 18, situated in Pinner in north west London. Students are drawn largely from the immediate residential area, and most, though not all, students come from socially and economically advantaged homes. The school has a reasonable balance of boys and girls, although overall there are more girls than boys. The school is over-subscribed. There are currently 1665 students on roll, with 447 in the sixth form. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is about average. Attainment on entry is above average, although writing skills are not usually as good as non-verbal skills and in some years are no better than average. The percentage of students with special educational needs is average, with 132 students with identified needs. Most of these students have learning and emotional and behavioural problems, although several have physical disabilities. Altogether 38 students have statements of special educational needs, including one in the sixth form. The school has recently established an Inclusion Unit providing lessons in behaviour management for students with unacceptable behaviour. The school is largely white but with increasing numbers of students from Asian and other backgrounds. There are 201 students with English as an additional language, and while most are confident English speakers, five are at an early stage of English language acquisition and are given extra support. In common with many schools in London, the school suffers from difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers. This does have an adverse impact on the continuity of learning and on standards.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective and improving school. High standards are promoted by good, and often outstanding, teaching. All students make good progress. The headteacher provides very good leadership and, well supported by senior management team and all other staff, has created a strong climate of learning and achievement. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are above average as the result of good and sometimes outstanding teaching.
- The very good leadership of the headteacher, strongly supported by his governors, management team and all other staff, has created a community which values learning and is socially and educationally inclusive.
- Good attitudes and behaviour, a pride in the school, a sense of responsibility and the personal maturity of students make a very good contribution to learning.
- Very good provision for students with special educational needs enables them to succeed very well.
- The very good personal development of students and relationships within the whole school community is the result of the very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students and the very good pastoral and tutorial system.
- The very good range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum in music, sport and languages in particular.
- The very good provision for information and communication technology in specialist classes and in some subjects.
- The outstanding impact of the language college status on aspects of the school's provision, particularly the curriculum and links with the community.

What could be improved

- More systematic monitoring procedures to develop all teachers' confidence in self-evaluation.
- More consistently good use of assessment data to plan for individual learning needs.
- The attitudes and motivation of a very small minority of students.
- Punctuality to lessons to ensure a crisper start to learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall improvement since the last inspection in April 1997 has been very good. Standards in test and examination results at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE have improved, despite a dip in GCSE performance in 2002. High standards have been maintained at A-level. The quality of teaching has improved and in particular the percentage of very good and excellent teaching is much higher than at the time of the last inspection. Key issues from the previous inspection regarding the school's ethos, the attainment and progress of students, management, and the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) have been well tackled, although the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship is still not met.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A
A-levels/AS-levels	2001			
	Male	Female	All	
	A	B	A	

Key

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

The school's results in tests taken at the end of Year 9 in English and science were above average and in mathematics they were well above average. When compared with similar schools, results were well above average in English and science and very high and in the top five per cent of schools in mathematics. Results in all three subjects have been improving at the same rate as nationally.

GCSE results in 2002 were well above the national average, and well above that for similar schools, despite dipping from the previous year. Results have fluctuated over the last five years, but overall the trend since the last inspection has been improving. Both boys' and girls' results have been well above average over the last three years. One of the reasons for the dip in performance in 2002 was the underachievement of some middle attaining boys. As a result, the school's target for the percentage of students gaining five or more A* to C grades was not met. Targets set for 2003 are challenging and indicate the school expects the percentage gaining this threshold to improve markedly. Inspectors judge the target to be realistic and achievable.

In work seen during the inspection, standards were above average overall at the end of Years 9 and 11, though higher in some individual subjects, notably mathematics, ICT and religious education. Standards are also well above average in science and art and design by the time students reach Year 11. In English standards of work seen in the inspection were above average. Given their attainment on entry to the school, most students' achievements are good throughout the school.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most students are confident in their approach to their studies and

	work hard. They are keen to do well, take pride in the school and involve themselves enthusiastically in the full range of opportunities the school provides. A few are less well motivated.
Aspect	Comment
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. For the most part, students behave sensibly and with consideration for others. A small minority behave less thoughtfully. Students report that bullying is not a problem.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The very good relationships amongst the whole school community are a strength, and contribute to the family ethos. Many are instinctively considerate to others. Senior students act with maturity and a sense of responsibility.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above average and the rate of unauthorised absence is well below average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching has improved significantly since the time of the previous inspection, and much less unsatisfactory teaching was observed during this inspection. Over three-quarters of lessons were judged to be good or better, and nearly one lesson in three was judged very good or excellent. Around four per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. Much good teaching was observed in all subjects. In English and mathematics teaching is good, while in science teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory although not all subjects are making a strong contribution to the development of literacy skills. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory.

Teachers' considerable knowledge and understanding of their subject, very good relationships and effective planning characterise much of the teaching. Many teachers devise interesting and challenging activities for the students. Planning is mostly effective in meeting the needs of all students, including those with special educational needs, although there are a few lessons where higher attaining students are not challenged sufficiently. In most cases, the quality of learning in lessons matches the quality of teaching, and the students work hard to progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school offers a very broad and well-balanced curriculum. The range of languages taught is particularly wide. The curriculum is increasingly flexible and designed to respond to the needs of its students, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Its very good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in music, sport and languages, is well supported.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Very good. The curriculum is well designed and relevant. Students' individual needs are met through a well-planned programme. In the Inclusion Unit, students follow a well-managed programme designed to improve their behaviour and motivation.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Good. Support for the very small number of students at an early stage of learning English is effective and their progress is carefully monitored.

Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school's values are clear and there are very good opportunities for developing moral and social awareness. Cultural development is promoted through a very good range of opportunities in art and design, drama and music. Opportunities for promoting spiritual awareness are presented in several subjects, and particularly religious education where provision is exceptional.
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Aspect	Comment
How well the school cares for its students	Very good. The school's caring values support a very good framework for pastoral support and social and educational inclusion. Good procedures for assessing and monitoring students' academic performance ensure that the school is able to provide effective support and guidance. The use of assessment data to help plan the next step for students is less consistently developed.

Parents are strongly supportive of the school and the school works hard to maintain a good partnership with its parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher leads with a clear sense of direction, shared values and common purpose. He is very well supported by senior staff and managers at all levels.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are committed and hardworking and bring a good range of experience and expertise to the school. They have a very good knowledge of the school's work and are increasingly confident in their role.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school monitors its performance carefully, and the school reflects on its practice. Line management procedures work well. Monitoring of teaching and learning is not systematic enough to ensure staff are confident in their approach to self-evaluation.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The budget is prudently managed and best value principles are applied. Funds are used effectively and efficiently to support educational developments.

The match of teaching staff to the curriculum is good, but the school suffers from difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff in some subjects. Accommodation is good and many teaching areas are attractive learning environments. Learning resources are adequate in most subjects.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That their children like school and there is an expectation that they will work hard and achieve their best • That good teaching leads to good progress • That the school is approachable • That the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minority expressed concerns about homework • Others felt that they would like to be better informed about the progress of their children • A minority expressed a wish to work more closely with the school

Parents are very supportive of the school and their children's learning. Inspectors agree with parents' views by and large, although they consider that there are many opportunities for parents to contribute to the life of the school if they wish to get involved. In general homework is used effectively to support the students' learning. Inspectors agree that written reports on progress do not give enough subject detail to

keep parents well informed, although the school provides opportunities each term for a discussion about individual students' progress.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

There are 447 students in the sixth form; 216 boys and 231 girls. This is much larger than most sixth forms nationally. There are 245 students in Year 12 and 202 in Year 13. Most are of white UK heritage, although there are significant minorities of students from an Asian (Indian) heritage, and small numbers from other backgrounds. The school offers a wide range of AS, A-level and vocational courses, appropriate to the students' needs. Most students from Year 11 continue into the sixth form. The school expects students on entry to the sixth form to have gained at least five or more GCSE grades A* to C.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The overall quality of provision in the sixth form is very good, and it is very cost-effective. Standards in most subjects are at least above average. Students achieve well. Very good and sometimes outstanding teaching in all subjects and mature and responsible attitudes by students have ensured that high standards are maintained. The sixth form is being very well led. The main strengths and areas that could be improved are:

Strengths

- High standards promoted by very good and sometimes outstanding teaching
- The maturity and confidence of the students and their very good attitudes to their studies contribute strongly to their good progress
- Very good leadership and management are ensuring a committed drive to improve standards and provision further
- The commitment of teachers to the support and guidance of students
- Very good relationships amongst the students themselves and between staff and students

What could be improved

- The consistency with which teachers encourage students to develop personal and independent study skills
- More systematic sharing of best practice across and within subjects

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 A-level courses are above average, with potential for further improvement. Subject staff have strong subject knowledge and teaching is good.
Physics	Good. A-level examination results taken over the last few years have been above average. Teaching and learning are good and teachers show expert subject expertise. The monitoring of students in Year 13 is good but students following the new AS course have little knowledge of their

	progress.
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Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Design and technology	Very good. Standards are improving as a result of some excellent teaching and strong leadership of the subject.
Business studies	Good. Standards are mixed. Good teaching and relevant commercial experience ensure most students are making good progress. Some, however, underachieve.
Economics	Very good. High expectations and very good teaching result in challenging lessons and very good examination results.
Information and communication technology	Good. Standards are above average and students make good progress as a result of good teaching and a broad range of opportunities.
Physical education	Very good. Standards are above national average as a result of very good teaching. Students work with increasing confidence as they move through the course.
Leisure and Recreation; Travel and Tourism	Very good. Teachers' planning of learning activities is excellent. Expectations are very high, and students respond with great enthusiasm.
Music	Very good. Students make very good progress because of the excellent example of their teachers. In recent years most students have gained high grades. There are good opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities.
Geography	Very good. Students attain above average A-level standards and make very good progress because the teaching is very good.
History	Very good. Standards are consistently well above the national average as a result of challenging teaching and enthusiastic responses from students.
Government and politics	Very good. Excellent teaching leads to well above average standards and very good achievement. The subject is consistently very popular, and many students proceed to higher education in this subject.
Sociology	Very good. Standards in 2002 were very high, showing strong improvement over the last five years from an unsatisfactory level. The subject is popular and very well managed.
English	Very good. Standards are above average as a result of good teaching. The students are enthusiastic and there is committed support and guidance from the teachers.
French	Good. Standards are average in Year 12, where teaching is good, but students' oral skills are not strong, and their achievement is only satisfactory. In Year 13 teaching is excellent; students achieve very well and standards are well above average.
Spanish	Good. Standards are above average in Year 12 and students achieve well. The small number of students in Year 13 make very good progress and standards are well above average. Teachers are expert linguists and use their expertise well to develop students' oral skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Students are sensitively supported by both tutors and subject staff. They appreciate the time given by teachers to support them individually. Realistic targets are set for each student and are regularly monitored. Guidance on sixth form courses is good and the programme for advising students on careers and future studies is also good.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Management is very good and there is a clear sense of purpose throughout the sixth form. The monitoring and evaluation of performance are good and have a marked impact on raising standards.

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"> • The quality and dedication of the teachers; teachers are prepared to support them outside lessons • The approachability of teachers and the very good relationships that exist in the school • Sixth form life and work is challenging but fun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of careers advice • Information on the progress they are making • Some felt that the advice given to them on what to study in the sixth form was inadequate

Students are very supportive of the school but not uncritical. Inspectors do not agree with the criticisms made by some students of the quality of careers advice, the information they receive on progress and of the advice given in Year 11 on what to do in the sixth form.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

1. Overall standards on entry to the school in Year 7, as measured by the students' attainment in national tests taken at the end of their primary schools, are above average. Higher proportions of students than in most schools enter with expected levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science, although in some years English results are close to the average. This is confirmed by cognitive ability tests taken by students on entry to the school. The school admits students of all abilities and the proportion of students with identified special educational needs is about average.
2. In national tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2002, the students' performance in English and science was above average, and in mathematics it was well above average. In comparison with schools with a similar proportion of students eligible for free school meals – 'similar schools', performance in English and science was well above average, while in mathematics it was very high and within the top five per cent of these schools. The three-year running average indicates a stronger performance in mathematics than in the other two subjects. Results in English improved in 2002 following two years of decline. In both mathematics and science results have been improving steadily. Overall standards in English, mathematics and science have improved since the last inspection, broadly in line with the rising national trend.
3. At the end of Year 11, the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades in 2002 was 57 per cent, above the national and similar schools' averages. The proportion of students gaining five or more A* to G grades was also above average. The average total points GCSE score per student in 2002 was 46.5, well above the national and similar schools' averages. Results dipped in 2002 after several years of improving results. However, predicted grades for 2003 indicate that results will resume their upward trend. Results overall since the last inspection have improved from 48 to 57 per cent of students achieving A* to C grades. The rolling three-year average indicates a continuing rising trend in GCSE results.
4. Students taking GCSE in 2002 achieved satisfactorily, despite the slightly lower results than in the previous year. Progress through the two years of the course as measured from their attainment in Year 9 tests in 2000, was average in comparison with schools whose students attained similar results in Year 9. Results in art, science, history, mathematics and sociology were significantly better than results nationally for the percentage of students achieving an A* to C grade. Performance in sociology was particularly impressive in 2002 with over one half of students gaining an A or A* grade. There were also high proportions of students gaining A or A* grades in art and design and history.
5. The most significant factor in these high standards is the good quality of teaching, which has a strong focus on maximising achievement for all students. In addition, the very good attitudes of most students to their learning, supported by the overall ethos for learning, promote good progress.
6. The school's GCSE targets set for 2002 were exceeded in relation to the percentage of students gaining one or more A* to G grades, but not met in relation to those gaining five or more A* to C grades. The school's careful analysis of its disappointing performance in 2002 was that a greater than expected number of boys failed to reach a

C grade in their examination subjects. The school has put a number of measures in place to ensure the performance of boys improves. Targets set for 2003 indicate that standards will resume an improving trend. Inspectors judge these targets to be both realistic and challenging, and have confidence in the school's ability to raise the performance of the boys in GCSE examinations.

7. Overall in work seen during the inspection in both Years 9 and 11, standards were above average, in line with recent tests at the end of Year 9 and GCSE results. Most students' achievements are good given their prior attainment on entry and good progress is made through the school.
8. The progress of students with special educational needs is good. A significant proportion makes very good progress against their targets, particularly in Years 7 to 9. In extra English lessons in Years 7 to 9, students with special educational needs consistently make good improvements in reading, spelling and mathematics. An intensive reading programme has shown good results. Those using an interactive computer program make very good gains in English and mathematics. Some students, for example, have added 2.7 years on to their reading age in nine months. Students in the support unit usually find motivation to learn, and there are few reported incidents amongst students in the Inclusion Unit although temporary exclusions occur from time to time. All are successfully included in classes with varying levels of support. All students with special educational needs leave school with at least one GCSE, and additional accreditation in numeracy and literacy.
9. Although over 200 students have English as an additional language, only five of these are at an early stage of language acquisition. The progress of these students is good and effective support is given both in the classroom and in extra sessions.
10. There is no variation in the progress made by different ethnic groups of students. The school monitors progress made against target grades, and students from Asian and other heritages make good progress. Students at all levels of prior attainment make good progress. Inspectors found no significant variation in the progress of boys and girls. In this respect all students are making good progress.
11. In work seen in English during the inspection, standards were above average in both Years 9 and 11. Given their attainment on entry, students make good progress and achieve well through Years 7 to 9. Progress is less marked in Years 10 and 11.
12. Standards of literacy are above average throughout the school. Students speak fluently and with confidence. Listening skills are also good and students listen with careful attention to both teachers and their fellow students. Most read fluently. They locate information quickly and bring a critical approach to what they have read. They are good at making deductions from the text and demonstrate these skills confidently in subjects such as history. Most write well at length, organise their work well into paragraphs, and use punctuation accurately, although a small number make errors in spelling. Most writing is characterised by clarity and a good sense of structure.
13. In work seen in mathematics, standards are well above average at the end of Years 9 and 11. Students' achievements in relation to their prior attainment are good through Years 7 to 9. Progress is less marked but nevertheless satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Standards of numeracy are well above average. Most students accurately use and apply numeracy skills in different contexts, and most, though not all, students are adept at mental calculations. Some effective work was seen with students using

graphs and formulae in both geography and science, and students confidently and accurately tabulate results and plot graphs.

14. Standards in science are above average in Year 9 and well above average in Year 11. Students are making satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9 and good progress in Years 10 and 11. Students have a good grasp of scientific principles and are learning to apply them in a range of contexts.
15. In other subjects, standards in work seen in Year 9 are well above average in history religious education and ICT. They are above average in art, design and technology, modern foreign languages, music and physical education.
16. In Year 11, standards are well above average in art, history, ICT and religious education, and above average in design and technology, music and physical education. Attainment in modern foreign languages is average. Most students' achievements are good or very good in all subjects throughout the school, although in modern foreign languages achievement has been only satisfactory for students in Years 10 and 11, because of difficulties in retaining staff.

Sixth form

17. In 2001, the latest year for which national comparisons are available, the results of students entered for AS and A-level examinations were well above average. The average points score of candidates entered was 19 compared with the national average of 17.4. Results in most subjects have been consistently above or well above average over the last four years. In 2002, results were maintained at this high level. Evidence from the inspection indicates that this improvement has been sustained and standards, particularly in the current Year 13, are well above average.
18. Boys and girls do equally well. In 2001 students did particularly well in history, where results were very high, and in biology, economics, English (language and literature), French, mathematics, sociology and sports studies, where results were well above the national average for these subjects.
19. Ten candidates were entered for GNVQ Intermediate in leisure and tourism. One student gained a distinction, five a merit and four a pass grade.
20. The school prides itself on open access to the sixth form and has adopted an inclusive policy towards taking students onto courses. Although the entry criteria state that potential A-level students must have five or more GCSE grades at A* to C, there is some discretion and students are interviewed to determine their suitability for the course. Some are allowed in with lower grades. The school admits around 40 per cent of its students in to the sixth form from other schools. Overall attainment on entry is above average. Over recent years, A-level performance relative to the students' GCSE results has been good.
21. Inspectors judge the achievements of most students in the current sixth form to be good. Standards are improving as a consequence of increasingly very good teaching which offers good levels of challenge. Retention rates through courses are good with over 95 per cent of students successfully completing the course. Students rarely embark on courses to which they are not suited.
22. Not all subjects were inspected in detail during the inspection. Of those which were, standards observed in economics, physical education, history, government and politics

and sociology, were well above average for this stage in the course. Standards in mathematics, physics, design and technology, ICT, Spanish, music, leisure and tourism and English were above average, while standards in French and business studies were broadly what is expected at this stage. For most students on these courses, their achievements and progress through the course, given their attainment at GCSE are good, and very good in economics, physical education, leisure and tourism and government and politics, where teaching is consistently very good or better. In subjects sampled some very good work was seen in psychology, art, chemistry, biology and German. Both boys and girls do well, and students from ethnic minority groups achieve at least as well as others.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

23. Since the last inspection students' attitudes to school have improved; they are now good, apart from those of a very few students. Even when students become disengaged from lessons they often still remain loyal to the school. Relationships between staff and students and students themselves have also improved markedly. These high standards, which are reflected in the high number of positive responses from parents to whether 'my child likes school' in the pre-inspection questionnaire returns, are a strength of the school. This positive picture is also reflected in the attendance figures which remain above average.
24. In most lessons students' constructive attitude and enthusiasm help drive the lesson forward. Students try hard, and are proud of their achievements. However, they are not always clear about what they need to do to improve. They are confident, enjoy the challenge of learning and usually involve themselves in activities well. For example in a Year 10 English lesson, students had to respond within a very short time in writing to five challenging questions on the plot of *Macbeth*, a task which most successfully achieved. Students like to show initiative and a willingness to generate fresh approaches to problems beyond what would be expected. For example, a group of Year 9 students had the confidence to raise with inspectors their concern that although their ideas for improvements were listened to via the House Council they were not always acted on. Students take pride in carrying out their responsibilities. Younger students act as 'runners' on reception duty while sixth formers take a full part in fulfilling their 'contracted' service to the school community. These very positive attitudes are let down by the lack of urgency many students show when moving between lessons. As a result lessons frequently begin late or are held back by students arriving late, and consequently standards of achievement are affected.
25. Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is good. Students can be very attentive but can also resort to cheekiness if the purpose of the learning is not clear. A very small number of students behave badly in Year 8 and Year 11, which undermines the very good behaviour of the majority. The number of student exclusions is below average. There were no major incidents of oppressive behaviour with regard to bullying, sexism or racism noted during the inspection; although incidents of bullying have occurred students interviewed had few concerns. This is further supported by parents' positive views. In assemblies students behave very well. They sit very quietly and, as they leave the hall, manage the potentially hazardous task of clearing and stacking chairs with remarkable ease and speed. Outside at break or lunchtimes they move about sensibly and, if they are not players, steer clear of zoned areas for football. In the busy and often crowded dining hall students are patient and behave well.
26. The attitudes of students with special educational needs to learning are very good. They are eager to learn, and capable of extended periods of concentration. Those with

behaviour difficulties are helped to stay on task and clearly enjoy the activities. The promotion of students' personal development in the special educational needs department, Inclusion Unit, and student support unit is key to their success. The majority of students thrive. They know their work is valued. They make real gains in social confidence, with notable improvement in behaviour, emotional stability and self-esteem.

27. Relationships are very good between students and between staff and students. During lessons students unselfconsciously help others and work co-operatively together in pairs and in groups. When called upon unexpectedly to assist the teacher, students respond willingly. The majority show respect for others who might not share their own priorities in activities or cultural background. Students are instinctively considerate to the above average number of wheelchair users. Year 11 students speak with fondness and appreciation of their memories of Year 7 when they were 'buddied' with sixth-form students. All students know they can choose between various members of staff if they have a grievance or a worry. These very good relationships form the basis of the family ethos of the school and contribute very effectively to their learning.
28. Attendance is good. Authorised absences are below the national average and unauthorised absences are well below the national average. There are always a few latecomers in the morning but because the first period begins ten minutes after the register closes this has little regular impact on learning. However, assemblies are affected by the arrival of latecomers as they begin promptly when registers close.

Sixth form

29. Students have very positive attitudes to the sixth form especially in Year 13. This is reflected not only in the questionnaire responses where over 90 per cent of all students agree that they enjoy being in the sixth form but also in student interviews. Students interviewed were especially positive about being able to pursue their preferred subjects. They cited this as a major reason for choosing Haydon. The other significant reason for their choice, especially for the majority of students who have come through the main school, is the friendly spirit of community in the school, of which they are justifiably proud. Students praise the high quality of teaching, they feel that they are challenged and encouraged to do their best, but particularly that learning is fun and involves them.
30. Most students are very satisfied with the quantity and range of extra-curricular activities and especially pleased with the range of educational trips. All students express a mature approach to discussion and the free exchange of ideas and beliefs. Students interviewed during the inspection praised the support they had received through the careers advice service which contrasts sharply with the findings of the questionnaire which show that the majority of students feel that this advice was not very relevant.
31. Relationships between students and between staff and students are very good. Students have a high degree of confidence in, and respect for, the head of sixth form. In Year 12, students are especially happy that staff are not condescending. The vast majority of students have progressed from the main school and feel that the very good welfare and support they have received there is maintained in the sixth form. Students feel secure because they are confident that the teaching staff track their progress closely and, when they feel overwhelmed, will give them the encouragement to succeed. However, in the student questionnaire about a third of those replying feel they could have been kept better informed about their academic progress. Students enthusiastically pursue opportunities for helping to enrich school life and being of assistance to others. For example, the contracted 'community service' which helps the

smooth running of the school and beyond, through the very good link with a local special school.

32. These positive attitudes and very good relationships are reflected in the attendance figures which show a high level of attendance in Year 12 and good levels of attendance for Year 13.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

33. The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 11. There is much teaching that is of a very good quality. Teaching has improved significantly since the time of the previous inspection. In this inspection, around three out of four lessons were judged to be good or better, and much teaching observed was skilfully delivered. Around one lesson in four was very good or excellent. However, some unsatisfactory teaching remains, some taught by temporary or supply teachers who have not yet established secure relationships with the students.
34. The quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science is good, although in Years 7 to 9, science teaching is only satisfactory. Characteristics of the teaching in all three subjects are good relationships between students and teachers, and the teachers' own subject knowledge and understanding, which enable them to explain things with clarity and confidence. However, the quality of marking and the use of assessment to set the next targets for learning are less consistently developed. The key factor limiting the students' progress is the extent to which they are aware themselves of how to improve their work, and what the next step should be. Although most students are aware of their predicted level or grade, they are not so aware of how they might achieve this.
35. In other subjects, the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good, and very good in some subjects. Teaching in all years is very good in religious education, and in Years 10 and 11 in history and modern foreign languages. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, it is often because of poor attitudes from a small minority of students, combined with the teacher's inability to control and interest the students. When teaching is good, the teacher knows the students well, expectations are high and the teacher has planned work appropriately to meet their needs.
36. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory, although more needs to be done to ensure good practice is shared across all subjects. Teachers regularly encourage speaking and listening skills through the effective use of questions and an insistence that students give extended responses. Reading is also encouraged widely. However the development of writing, an aspect which is weakest on entry to the school in Year 7, is not so consistently practised. In some subjects, particularly history and geography, students are given regular opportunities to write for different purposes, and are given effective support in structuring and expressing their ideas. However, in other subjects opportunities for writing are more limited. A narrow range of styles is expected and there is little extended writing.
37. The teaching of numeracy is also satisfactory, although there is no whole school numeracy policy in place. As a result, practice is currently inconsistent. Some work has been done to increase awareness across all subjects and several subjects, particularly science, geography and design and technology, are devising well-considered approaches to supporting numeracy. However, even in mathematics, there are insufficient opportunities for students to practise mental arithmetic.

38. Teachers' skilled classroom management characterises much of the good teaching, and, in particular, the sensitive handling of some potentially challenging behaviour and poor attitudes from some students is very good. The calm, authoritative and non-confrontational approach adopted by many teachers is successfully involving all students in their learning. On rare occasions, this is not so successful and too much time is wasted in gaining the full attention of the class.
39. It is the high expectations of what students can achieve which characterises the most effective teaching. In one excellent Year 9 art and design lesson, the students responded confidently to the teacher's high levels of challenge and expectation. Taking a poem as their starting point, the students made excellent gains in their media handling skills and produced exciting and imaginative work. Working on a scale which they might in other circumstances have found daunting, the teacher's skilled approach ensured a bold and inspiring response from the students.
40. The teachers' very good subject knowledge and understanding leads to assured and confident teaching. In one Year 11 history lesson on the emergence of Nazism, the teacher's deep reserves of knowledge were unlocked by careful questioning from the class. In addition, the teacher's wider understanding of European history and communism was used to good effect in establishing the context. In another good Year 9 English lesson, the teacher's very good subject knowledge ensured that the students gained confidence in the quality of their public reading. The teacher's lively approach and challenging expectations ensured all students, including one with English as an additional language, made good progress in improving their ability to read aloud from Shakespeare.
41. Good relationships between teachers and students ensure generally positive attitudes. Typical of the friendly and respectful relationships observed was a Year 9 mathematics lesson on probability. The teacher's high expectations of both work and behaviour and good match of activity to the different learning needs of the students led to good progress. Above all, it was the good quality of relationships between the teacher and students which enabled the learning to proceed in an atmosphere of relaxed goodwill.
42. Planning of lessons is very good and is usually effective in meeting the needs of all students. Teachers take considerable care in ensuring that work is planned at an appropriate level of challenge. In mixed ability classes, work is often planned to successfully engage both high, middle and low attaining students. This is not always the case, however, and in a very few lessons, including those where students are grouped according to prior attainment, the work set was inappropriate, and all students were moving at the same pace.
43. Teaching of students with special educational needs is consistently good and sometimes very good. Planning is systematic. A climate of praise is rapidly established in lessons so that students realise that there are some things they can do well, which helps their confidence. There is a high level of individual support, which enables students to succeed in the simple but interesting activities in which they participate. Skilful questioning enables them to marshal their thoughts. Phonics is consistently and very well taught. Resources are suitable and engaging. The pace of lessons is well judged so that much ground is covered. Expectations are high, and usually realised. Well-planned plenary sessions consolidate students' knowledge. The teaching of core subjects in the Inclusion Unit is charismatic and highly skilled.
44. The marking of work by some teachers is thorough and comprehensive. Teachers' comments are often supportive and encouraging, without missing opportunities for

challenging the students to improve. However, the quality in some subjects is more variable, and in some cases, marking fails to give the students clear signals as to how to improve. Some marking in mathematics is of a high quality, but it is not universally of such a standard. Although there is not an expectation that every piece of a student's work is marked in detail, some work, for instance in science, had not been marked for some time. As a result, students are unaware of their progress. The use of different systems for recording achievement in ICT is leading to some confusion amongst students about how well they are doing. Students' knowledge of their own progress is improving and increasingly they know the level at which they are working and the target for which they are aiming. However, sometimes this is not translated into meaningful knowledge of the next step that they need to take in their learning.

45. Homework is usually set regularly and often used effectively to consolidate learning. The setting of homework in geography, for example, is a model of good practice. In other subjects, opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage students to develop research and enquiry skills independently of the teacher. However homework is not always recorded in the student diaries. This, and the fact that sometimes homework is used merely to finish off work done in class, probably accounts for some parents' perceptions that homework is not set regularly.
46. Teachers are increasingly confident in their use of ICT to support learning. Most have now received specific training and are beginning to incorporate ICT into their teaching. Some good use of computers was observed in modern foreign languages, but in other subjects access and use remain limited.
47. The quality of learning in lessons and the rate at which the students' progress are good in all years. Good teaching, however, is not always reflected in good progress of students. Although, the quality of learning matches the quality of teaching in almost all cases, a small number of lessons were observed during the inspection where the rate of learning was not quite as good. In most cases this was because of the poor attitudes, motivation and behaviour of some students which got in the way of good progress. However, this was not common and the overwhelming majority of lessons were characterised by positive approaches to learning and good behaviour by the students. In general, students work and try hard, concentrating and listening well.

Sixth form

48. The overall quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form is very good. During the inspection four out of five lessons were judged to be good and two out of five were very good or excellent. Just two per cent were judged unsatisfactory. In the subjects inspected in detail, teaching was judged good in mathematics, physics, business studies, sociology, English, French and ICT; it was very good in economics, physical education, travel and tourism, music, geography, history and Spanish; and it was judged excellent in design and technology and government and politics.
49. Strengths of the teaching include the teachers' subject knowledge and understanding which enable them to approach the syllabus confidently, pose and answer questions which challenge the students' thinking, and plan lessons and schemes of work which successfully build on prior attainment in a meaningful and relevant way. The confident approach of teachers to their subject at this level was characteristic of teaching observed in most subjects and is a key factor in students' good achievement. The commitment and hard work of staff is another important factor.

50. Marking in a number of subjects is detailed and thorough, pinpointing areas for improvement. The marking in history and business studies is a model of good practice. Comments are developmental and challenge the students to justify and exemplify their opinions. This process, alongside the on-going assessment during lessons and the discussions held regularly with each student, enables them to have a very good sense of their own progress. Encouraging comments build confidence and self-esteem. Students themselves reported how much they value the time given by teachers to their work and to supporting them when they had difficulties. Teachers will go out of their way to advise and support individual students. The high quality of relationships is another key factor in the students' good progress. However, not all subjects mark the students' work with the same level of care and attention to detail. In mathematics, although marking is satisfactory, the department's policy is inconsistently applied.
51. The attention given to marking by most teachers is an indication of the high expectations teachers have of what all the students in the group are capable of achieving. Students respond very positively to this approach. Although some lack confidence in their learning, most adopt a very positive and mature attitude to their studies. They are keen to do well and succeed to the best of their ability. This enthusiasm for learning has a very positive impact on the progress they make.
52. Many teachers adopt good strategies to promote students' independent learning and perseverance in solving problems and overcoming difficulties themselves. In mathematics, physical education, travel and tourism, geography, government and politics and Spanish, teachers adopt good strategies to encourage students themselves to take responsibility for managing their own learning. Students are encouraged to develop ideas of their own and to research and investigate work independently of the teacher.
53. For some students, this more independent and self-reliant approach to learning is the biggest challenge of sixth form work. Not all subjects are as effective in promoting these skills. In English classes for example, students are over dependent on a high level of teacher support and structure. To some extent this is true also in sociology and French. At times there is a tendency for teachers to over direct the learning, and not allow students to pursue their own thinking and ideas. Establishing a balance between directed learning and opening doors for the students to pursue their own thinking remains a challenge for some sixth form teachers. In discussion with the students themselves, it was clear that they have a mature and sensible view of what makes for effective teaching. They reported that one of the key factors in the most successful teaching was the fact that the teacher made the learning relevant to everyday events and to contemporary issues. In this respect, teaching in ICT, geography, and travel and tourism was judged to be successful.
54. Other students indicated that teaching which encouraged active learning was most helpful, and that too much note taking was considered dull. Students also reported that lessons in which their own views and ideas were valued were effective.
55. Students' learning skills are good. Most students take care with the presentation of their work, and files and notes are well organised and can be used effectively for revision. Much work is undertaken independently of the teachers, and in general students' skills in self-study and research are good.

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

56. In Years 7 to 9 the school provides a very broad and well balanced curriculum, which meets legal requirements. All subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE) are included. Since the last inspection, improvements to the curriculum in geography, ICT and religious education have been made. However the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship is still not met. Improvements in ICT have been particularly marked. ICT is taught in discrete lessons from Years 7 to 9. From Year 8 the school has introduced a GNVQ Intermediate ICT course and students will sit their first examination in Year 9.
57. The impact of acquiring Language College status has had a strong impact on the curriculum. In particular it has encouraged the development of an outstanding range of related activities for both taught and extra-curricular activities. Most students now follow two languages in Years 7 to 9. They choose either French and Italian or German and Spanish. A third language for some high attaining students is examined in Year 9. Drama is timetabled in each of the three years, and some drama lessons are held in French. As part of the school's extra-curricular provision, Portuguese, Cantonese, Punjabi, Gujarati, Japanese and Urdu may be studied. High numbers of students follow two languages in Years 10 and 11. The TAFAL project, 'teach a friend a community language', run earlier this year, was a great success. The Spanish Family Learning Zone helps parents begin to learn the language alongside their Year 7 children. The college's four full-time and one part-time foreign language assistants make a major contribution to these extra-curricular activities.
58. All students in Years 10 and 11 study English, mathematics, science, religious education, ICT and at least one modern foreign language from French, German, Spanish and Italian. They also follow a course of non-examination physical education and continue with PSHE. There is a very wide range of optional subjects. Students choose either three further GCSEs from the 19 subjects offered or one vocational course from business studies, leisure and tourism, health and social care and one GCSE from classics, drama, media studies and sociology. Lunch-break and after-school courses extend the curriculum opportunities for the most able students in Years 10 and 11. Students can gain qualifications in up to 13 GCSE subjects. The work-related curriculum is well designed for those students who are likely to benefit with off-site provision at a local further education college. All students in Year 10 have opportunities for work experience.
59. The curriculum for students with special educational needs is very good. The special educational needs department teaches English and Extra English to very small groups of students in Year 7 who are identified as having literacy difficulties. These students follow only one modern foreign language. In Year 9, students who still require additional help are enrolled on a sophisticated and effective interactive computer programme to further improve their skills. This programme is widely used by others during lunchtime. A number of students receive one-to-one lessons by well trained and experienced special needs teachers, as specified in their statements.
60. In the Inclusion Unit, students are included in some mainstream lessons if they behave well in them and succeed in learning. Experienced teachers teach the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT to them. In other lessons in which they are taught separately, they learn how to behave appropriately in a variety of social situations, including that of a student in a classroom. Conflict resolution, social skills, citizenship, organisational skills and the building of self-esteem are systematically addressed. Skills of non-verbal and socially appropriate communication are key features of provision. The student support unit provides anger management courses, circle of friends' meetings to bolster the confidence of some socially isolated individuals

and links with a variety of therapies and support for those in difficult personal circumstances. Therapies such as speech and language therapy, and physiotherapy, form part of the programme for students with special educational needs for whom these are specified in statements.

61. Although the school does not formally identify its gifted and talented students, opportunities for extension and enrichment activities exist for all students. A number of students are invited, together with other Hillingdon students, to a two-week summer school.
62. The school has satisfactory strategies for promoting literacy across the curriculum. There is a whole-school policy and a working party to co-ordinate the strategy, but it is implemented more effectively in some areas than others. Most subjects pay due attention to increasing students' facility in literacy and emphasise the key vocabulary. In some subject areas like history and geography, teachers provide good opportunities for thoughtful, extended writing. Reading is encouraged in science. However, in other subject areas there are missed opportunities, for example there are limited opportunities for discussion in ICT, and in music, teachers do not encourage students to do extended writing which would help them to achieve the highest grades. Whilst standards of speaking, literacy and reading are generally good, there remain inconsistencies in a whole school approach to improving writing.
63. Strategies to promote numeracy are also satisfactory across the curriculum. There is as yet no agreed numeracy policy, and consequently the use made of students' skills, although satisfactory overall, varies considerably between subjects. In a Year 7 science lesson based on balanced diets, students examined the numerical data on food packaging to work out totals of carbohydrates, proteins and fat. In design and technology Year 10 students measured and drew out nets of solids during a lesson based on packaging. Good use is made of students' numeracy in geography, particularly for Years 10 and 11 through the collection and interpretation of statistical data and analysis of graphs relating to population, for example. Overall, however, opportunities to enhance and support numeracy learning both in mathematics and other subjects are missed.
64. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. At the time of the inspection the course supervisor was on long-term sick leave and the course was being managed by house managers in conjunction with form tutors. Although the quality of the weekly sessions is inconsistent, students' views are very positive about the drugs awareness and anti-bullying sessions held previously in the year. The general ethos of personal support and guidance that permeates the school supports the impact and significance of the provision because support and guidance are so well directed towards the individual in the school.
65. This also positively affects the quality of careers and vocational advice. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Students are very positive about the advice they receive and the assistance afforded them through the Connexions programme. This programme is a strong feature of the careers provision as it is well known to students and available four days in the week. Research facilities on the computer network are very good.
66. The range and quality of the school's links with the community are very good, and a significant strength of the school. These links cut across all areas of the school and involve students and staff alike. They have a pronounced impact on the personal development of students. The school has made innovative links, for example with the

police, whereby police recruits are placed in school to get to know students. There are regular links with local special schools, and the drama department makes effective links with the Harrow Arts Centre. Visiting speakers are drawn from the local population to talk to students about, for example, the holocaust. The school newsletter is distributed to local residents in addition to parents, and local residents are always warned in advance of parents' evenings when car parking and traffic threatens to become a nuisance. Local charities are regularly supported with fund-raising initiatives.

67. Eye-catching multilingual notices and displays celebrating various international links, exchanges, cultural events and festivals are the outward signs of a school whose work has a strong international dimension. In the last year there have been 16 international trips and exchanges, a number of them receiving financial support from Language College funds. Examples are the Japanese exchange, the history study trip to Ypres, and the economics study trips and physical education camp in France. The whole of Year 7 enjoyed a day-trip to Boulogne. Further links have been established with schools in France, Germany and Japan, which offer exciting new opportunities for correspondence and e-mail contacts. A regular video conference link has been established with students in an Italian partner school. In design and technology a lesson in product analysis focused on games manufactured and marketed in various foreign languages.
68. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities which do much to enrich the curriculum and extend and develop students' interests. In addition to the wide range of additional languages already mentioned, there is extensive provision of sports, music and drama activities. In addition, enrichment clubs for students in geography, design and technology, religious education, and ICT extend the range of opportunity for students.
69. Provision for students' personal development is very good. The introduction of citizenship has been soundly planned and the subject is making a good contribution to students' personal development. There is no whole-school policy for promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, but individual departments are providing valuable opportunities. Provision is helping students become mature and responsible adults, and every pupil has the opportunity to express their views personally to a member of the senior management team. Their views are collated to form the basis of staff development, so that provision is closely matched to need. Assemblies are an important part of the social and spiritual life of the school, when students meet in houses to celebrate successes and to foster their corporate identity.
70. Spiritual development in geography, art, physical education, music and religious education is very good. Teachers foster students' self-esteem and self-confidence by celebrating their achievements with them. In music, students are made aware of the effect which music has on mood and feelings, and experience the sense of wellbeing which comes from making music. Through the school council students express their views about how to support less fortunate people in the world through nominating charitable causes.
71. The school's provision for moral development is very good. The school has a series of policies which give students guidance on behaviour and how to behave towards one another. This helps to foster a sense of right and wrong, and as most students follow the behaviour code the school is an orderly, safe place in which to work.
72. Provision for social development is also very good. Students are learning the importance of promoting principles of democracy through electing fellow students to

run the school council. On a more personal level they have many opportunities to work together in lessons. This gives opportunities to develop good working relationships with their peers.

73. Cultural provision is very good, and the strongest area of the school's provision for personal development. This is largely because of the school's status as a language college. The culture as well as the language of many countries in Europe and beyond, is promoted. Students are very open-minded about the differences which they find in different cultures and this is good preparation for life in multicultural British society. In the arts faculty Year 7 learn about the music, art and dance of many countries, some of these reflecting the origins of their teachers. In music, western, classical and popular music is studied alongside the traditional music of countries around the world.

Sixth form

74. The quality of the sixth form curriculum is very good. The school provides a wide range of courses, designed to build on the knowledge, skills and understanding students have already gained up to Year 11. The curriculum is well designed to provide equality of access and opportunity. There are 32 AS and A-level courses available as well as four AVCE courses. The language provision is extended further through after-school classes in community languages. Urdu, Japanese, Portuguese and Punjabi are taught to AS-level, and business competence courses are conducted in Japanese, Spanish and Italian. The school is particularly proud of its social sciences. Subjects offered include psychology, law, sociology and politics. These subjects are very popular. Most students take four AS-level subjects in Year 12 and three A2 courses in Year 13. A minority study for intermediate GNVQ courses, while others may study a mix of academic and vocational programmes.
75. In addition to the main academic or vocational programme, all students follow a range of other courses. A PSHE course, which includes an element of religious education, is well planned, but the religious education element is inadequate to fully meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus. Students also participate in a key skills for industry conference and a video conference in Italian. There are opportunities for some students to re-take GCSE in English and mathematics. However, there is no provision for sport on the timetable. Students in both Years 12 and 13 have appropriate time on their timetables for private study.
76. Sixth formers are encouraged to take part in a wide range of enrichment activities. In the questionnaire completed by students before the inspection over four-fifths of the students believed that the choices of courses allowed them to follow a suitable programme, and interviews with students during the inspection confirmed this.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

77. Since the time of the last inspection the school has worked hard to improve its already good provision for students' welfare. The procedures for monitoring and supporting personal development are now very good. All details are carefully recorded in personal files. Child protection procedures are excellent, and all staff are aware of the importance of vigilant and careful monitoring. Links with the local education welfare officer (EWO) are good. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory in the classrooms, and first aid arrangements are carefully supervised.
78. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. Teachers use the referral room effectively as an additional sanction. The school operates individual

improvement awards consistently across the school, and students are encouraged to improve through achievement awards and house points. Sixth form students help guide and ensure the safety and personal welfare of Year 7 students. Sixth formers themselves were responsible for devising the anti-bullying policy and, through peer mentoring, help with its implementation.

79. The school operates a very good system for monitoring attendance. A clear system of sanctions and rewards ensures that all students are aware of the importance the school places on regular attendance. Form tutors conscientiously mark the register on time and ensure that late students report to the office. Reasons for absence are rigorously checked. The school is less consistent in its response to lateness to lessons. Although the school site is large, too many students arrive late to lessons, and teachers are inconsistent in their response.
80. Procedures for monitoring students' personal development are very effective. The house system works well in promoting a family ethos. Form tutors have a good knowledge of individual students and house managers take a responsible overview of each student's progress and development. Detailed records are maintained. Consequently staff are able to give support and particular attention when, for example, students are experiencing difficulties in non-academic areas. Target review days offer students a good opportunity for reviewing their progress. Senior staff interview each student every year, thus providing an excellent means of monitoring their development.
81. The school cares very well for its students with special educational needs. Baseline testing is thorough, so that the school rapidly establishes a high level of appropriate provision for its students, who begin to make immediate progress. Individual education plans (IEPs) are of good quality. Students in the Extra English and English groups have appropriate IEPs with group targets, reviewed half termly. The majority of students reach their targets. All statemented students have an individual IEP. These are frequently monitored. Students' targets mainly cover behaviour, literacy, attendance and the useful requirement to read to adults on a regular basis appears frequently. Arrangements for annual and transitional review are exemplary.
82. In the Inclusion Unit, students' behaviour is observed in lessons under 'beneficial' and 'unacceptable' to give a snapshot of improvement. Self-evaluation of behaviour is encouraged by means of a successful monitoring procedure. The level of assistance given to students with special educational needs in the classroom by learning support assistants is good, although liaison is not always effective in an emergency, and support can be thin on the ground when there is staff absence. Wheelchair users are fully integrated into physical education lessons because of the school's strong commitment to inclusion, and special needs assistants enable students with physical difficulties to gain full access to the curriculum.
83. The monitoring of student performance is a high priority and is very good. The school has developed an elaborate recording and monitoring procedure, supported by new technology. All students are tracked from admission to the school in Year 7, against a combination of their cognitive ability tests (CATs) and national tests taken at the end of their primary schools. All students have target minimum grades which are monitored by house managers and form tutors, and compared with on-going assessment data from departments and from national tests taken in Year 9. Throughout the school, intervention procedures are in place to provide additional support and to alert parents when any performance wavers below what is predicted. To enable parents themselves to monitor their children's developing attainment and progress the 'Haydon Scale' has been introduced. This uses a system of grading between National Curriculum levels

breaking progress down into smaller steps. The relative performance of boys and girls and students from ethnic minorities are monitored and followed up as necessary.

84. At faculty and subject level, procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are generally good. There is clear understanding of the performance of individual students. However some staff are relatively inexperienced in the interpretation of performance data and are not using it confidently to help plan their teaching. However the use of assessment data by different subjects to guide and inform curriculum planning is satisfactory overall. There is good practice in geography, history, mathematics, science and religious education, but in some other subjects practice is less effective.

Sixth form

Assessment

85. The assessment and monitoring of each student's performance at sixth form level is very good. Very effective processes ensure that students are tracked from admission to the sixth form and that their performance is monitored against their prior attainment, defined by GCSE scores. All students have target minimum grades, of which they are fully aware, and these are regularly monitored by the head of sixth form and her staff. Detailed procedures exist, and are used, to pursue any performance which falls below the projected target minimum grade. Students are very positive about the support that they receive, and they recognise that their individual needs are being very carefully supported and developed.
86. The use of assessment at subject level is good, with particular strengths in the social sciences and vocational courses. Procedures for monitoring and supporting students' academic progress are also very good, with a particular strength in modern foreign languages where there is very good quality of feedback to the students.

Advice, support and guidance

87. The quality of personal support and guidance that students receive throughout their time in the sixth form is very good. Tutors provide both academic and pastoral support, know their students very well and are sensitive to their needs. The very good relationships between students and tutors give students confidence to raise any concerns they may have, knowing that they will be dealt with sympathetically. Students were particularly appreciative of the commitment and approachability of teachers, and their willingness to offer advice and support.
88. Admission arrangements for students entering the sixth form are very good and students are given clear advice about possible course options. Some sixth formers' perceptions that they are not well advised at this stage of their school career are not well founded.
89. Provision for careers education and guidance is very good. Students benefit from the major university and careers conference hosted by the sixth form. Although students who responded to the questionnaire were not all positive about the careers advice, the school tackles this very well. At key points in the sixth form, students are given good guidance and support about opportunities in higher education, future careers and employment. The newly designed PSHE programme contributes strongly to this in Year 12. Parents are very well involved in sessions for drafting university application forms. All students fill in destination sheets and thereafter receive good support in their

choices, from form tutors and from the careers advisers in the main part of the school. The library is well stocked with careers brochures and prospectuses and many students use the Internet to access further information.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

90. Parents' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive and most parents are very supportive. The school works hard to establish and maintain good links with parents. The headteacher has established a tradition of being available to parents, and access to both form tutors and house managers is also good. The combined prospectus and governors' annual report is clear and informative. The school has good, well-established channels of communication between school and home. Regular newsletters are informative and give detailed information on forthcoming events. All teachers send Good News Notes to parents when a student has achieved well or served the school community well. The school keeps parents well informed about what their children are studying through the issue of curriculum guides for each year and a regular programme of curriculum evenings. Parents' evenings and open days are well attended.
91. The school provides termly progress reports in which information on progress is given. Although this gives information on progress and targets and is sufficient to alert parents to potential problems, the lack of subject comment and specific information on what the student needs to do to improve was criticised by a number of parents. One in four parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire did not feel well informed about how well their child was getting on. Inspectors support parents' views that additional detail would be helpful. In addition to the termly reports, parents are invited to attend progress review days in which form tutors discuss progress and set targets with individual students. This provides a very useful opportunity to review progress.
92. The school works very well with the parents of students with special educational needs. Parents are effectively and jointly involved and encouraged to support students with their homework and in hearing them read. Parents attend almost all annual and transitional reviews. Parents' evenings are well attended and parents frequently visit the school by invitation or at their own request. In the Inclusion Unit, parents and family members are encouraged to become involved in the process of behaviour modification.
93. The impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is good. Parents are much involved in supporting events organised by the active and well-established parents association, which raises large sums of money to support the school through holding many small events. The committee follows the spending priorities agreed between the headteacher and the chair of the association, which ensures that school priorities become shared within the community. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home ranges widely but is satisfactory overall. A good number of parents help with school trips. Parents regularly attend school celebrations and events. Parents sometimes work in the student support unit to help with reading, writing and basic numeracy.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

94. Leadership and management are very good overall. The school aims to ensure that all students achieve individual excellence within a caring community. These aims provide a touchstone for the school's ethos and purpose and are very well met. The school's caring values and strong commitment to social and educational inclusion are evident. In

addition, there are high expectations of what students can achieve and a strong commitment to improve further.

95. The headteacher's thoughtful and confident approach to leadership has inspired the loyalty and commitment of the whole staff. He leads with a clear sense of purpose and direction, and his vision is widely shared. He has the committed support of both governors and his deputies. Together they are giving the school very good leadership.
96. The senior management team is a large team which brings a good range of experience and expertise to senior management meetings. Individual members of the senior team are reflective and analytical, confident in their roles and responsibilities. They work effectively together, continually evaluating the school's practice and seeking ways to secure further improvements. Decisive action is taken where necessary to tackle areas of underperformance. For example the underachievement of some middle attaining boys in their GCSE examinations in 2002 has been rigorously analysed and tackled.
97. Management at other levels is good. A number of heads of faculty, subject leaders and house managers are providing effective leadership of their teams, working hard to maintain high standards and secure improvements in teaching and learning.
98. The school has made considerable improvements to its management systems since the last inspection. The result is that the school now provides a more coherent model of management practice in which shared values and common approaches are consistently applied. Most aspects of the school are monitored effectively. Detailed and comprehensive analyses of individual subject performance in test and public examinations are used at whole-school level to monitor performance against targets. Evaluation of performance is honest and realistic. Agreed targets are the main focus of the departmental improvement plan, and action to be taken to secure improvements is recorded.
99. The monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out through regular reviews of subjects, involving external consultants and peer observations. This has led to effective and sustained improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Performance management has been introduced effectively and in a non-threatening manner. However the monitoring of teaching and learning by senior and middle managers is less systematically carried out. Although visits to classrooms are made, they tend to be informal and not all visits are recorded. Many visits are made because teachers have requested support with particular classes or when new qualified or appointed teachers are in post. This is an increasingly reflective school in which all members of the school community are involved in monitoring and reviewing practice and seeking ways to improve standards. However, if the school is to be more confident in its approach to self-evaluation, all managers should be involved in a systematic way in monitoring the work of their teams, of spreading best practice and in taking action to address weaknesses.
100. Line management meetings between middle and senior management are held regularly and are useful opportunities to raise issues and to review the work of teams. This approach is welcomed by staff, who feel that their ideas and views are valued. Notes are taken of action points, and followed up at subsequent meetings.
101. The school improvement plan is a one-year plan in which agreed whole-school priorities are addressed through individual subject plans. Priorities arise both from the school's own review process and national initiatives. Most are appropriately linked to

raising attainment. Overall, the improvement planning process is sharply focused and provides a good framework for improving standards.

102. The school makes an impressive commitment to educational inclusion. It has drawn up a draft policy which reflects current practice and an assistant headteacher is responsible for ensuring the school's practice remains welded to the school's ideals. Examples of the school's very good practice in this area include the work of the Inclusion Unit for students with behavioural problems, the counselling programme for students at risk of exclusion, the specialist reading programme for students in Year 7 with a reading age below their chronological age, and the flexible curriculum which is designed to meet individual needs, including those of the most able students. However, the school has not yet formally adopted a race equality policy.
103. Governors are committed, supportive and hard working. Many are relatively new to the governing body. The chair of governors adopts a strong, business-like approach and has a good professional relationship with the headteacher and other senior staff. Governors are kept well informed, and comprehensive performance and financial data are provided for them to make informed judgements and decisions. They are consulted on strategic and school improvement planning, and are increasingly confident in their monitoring role. Statutory requirements are largely met, although requirements in respect of collective worship and religious education in the sixth form are not fully met. In addition, some statutory policies, for example on racial equality and health and safety, are under review.
104. The school's budget is very well managed. An experienced financial manager has an assured grasp of financial procedures and budget planning. Governors have a good overview of the budget and are kept regularly updated with clear monitoring statements. Budget priorities are made in the light of the school's educational priorities, and best value principles are applied wherever possible. The school, for example, tenders for minor building works, consults stakeholders about major spending decisions and challenges current spending on energy suppliers. The budget is subject to an annual audit by external auditors and the last audit dated May 2002 judged the financial systems and controls to be secure. Designated funds, including those for special educational needs and social inclusion, are used well. The school is efficiently administered and it makes good use of information systems to process data, ensuring that information is readily available for governors and staff to manage the school effectively.
105. The leadership and management of the language college is very strong, committed and energetic, and is guided by a clear vision for the future direction of the college's work. The stated objectives of its development plan have been substantially fulfilled, although one of the objectives, concerning performance at GCSE level in modern foreign languages, was not met in 2002. There is now greatly increased curriculum provision for modern foreign languages, both in the school and the community. More students in the school are learning more languages. Across the curriculum academic success at GCSE level, behaviour and attitudes to learning have all improved. There is a strong international dimension to the education students receive in the school and its primary partner schools, and this is of considerable benefit to their personal development and to their knowledge and understanding of other cultures.
106. Management of the provision for special educational needs is very good. Excellent relationships within the department promote the very good teamwork seen during the inspection. All statutory requirements are fully met. Departmental documentation is of a very high standard. Management of the annual reviews and transitional reviews of

statemented students is excellent. The management, training and monitoring of staff promote high-quality learning for all students with special educational needs very well. The department runs smoothly and its work is respected by parents.

107. Management of the Inclusion Unit is good. Evaluation of provision is a key feature and the school's approach has already been improved as a result. The student support unit is managed well, with a good level of co-operation between all partners in the special educational needs provision.
108. Although the school experiences considerable difficulties in recruiting and retaining teaching staff, the overall match between teachers' subject specialisms and the subjects they teach is good. Several subjects have been adversely affected by a high turnover of staff since the last inspection and the single most pressing concern of parents is of staff turnover. The school does its best to minimise the impact of this high rate of staff turnover, but inevitably some classes suffer. The school offers recruitment and retention packages and is assiduous in its induction and support for staff new to the school. A residential weekend for new staff in November does much to integrate them successfully into the school's ethos and procedures. The school successfully provides initial teacher training and graduate training programmes, and many beginner teachers subsequently join the school staff. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are good.
109. Accommodation is good overall and very good for ICT, modern foreign languages, mathematics and physical education. Recent refurbishment of several subject areas has improved the provision. The school has invested heavily to provide lifts to make all school buildings fully accessible to wheelchair users. Some other aspects of the accommodation are not so satisfactory. The canteen is very crowded at break and lunchtimes and some sixth form teaching rooms are too cramped. In design and technology the textile room is poor, and some lessons are still taught in poor quality huts. The overall accommodation is enhanced by the wide variety of stimulating displays of students' work in both classrooms and corridors.
110. Resources for teaching and learning in departments are satisfactory overall, although there are a number of good aspects to the school's provision. The library provides a good collection of reference books to support learning. Investment in computers and interactive whiteboards means that the school is now well provided for. Those in the library are well used. The library is part of a very well managed provision that is effectively supporting teaching and literacy in particular. Resources for students with special educational needs are appropriate and sufficient. Networked computers and a highly effective interactive programme to support basic skills are a feature of the provision. The special educational needs department contains a good variety of differentiated resources, and a small but appropriate library. The Inclusion Unit is well provided with ICT.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

111. Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. The headteacher offers a clear sense of direction and purpose to the whole school and takes an active part in ensuring that the sixth form provision is coherent and adds value to other aspects of the school's activities. Management of the sixth form is the responsibility of one of the school's assistant headteachers. She is careful to ensure that students in the sixth form act as excellent role models for younger students. The success of the sixth form

contributes to the very strong school ethos of hard work and achievement. Students in the sixth form are treated differently from their younger contemporaries. They have both more responsibility and slightly more freedom, yet the sixth form is very much connected, and integral, to the success and good reputation of the school.

112. The sixth form aims to promote both academic excellence and personal development. These aims are understood by all, and expectations are high. Students are expected to make a positive contribution to the school community and take part in a range of activities outside the academic curriculum. Students spend a minimum of one hour a week in community service. In many cases this means supporting younger students through the 'buddy system' or in working in local partner primary schools. This emphasis on taking responsibility and setting an example is readily accepted by students. The highly visible and successful presence of sixth form students contributes to the ethos and reputation of the school as a whole.
113. The school has been successful in increasing numbers staying on into the sixth form, and in recruiting students from other schools in the area. Rising numbers have been accompanied by improving standards and the sixth form is now very well placed to sustain and build on its considerable successes.
114. Monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the sixth form are good. There is a sharp focus on reviewing and improving examination success. This is carried out by the headteacher with each head of faculty. The head of sixth is not part of this meeting but is increasingly being involved in following up issues that are raised. The monitoring of sixth form teaching is similar to the rest of the school, and is a priority in the current school improvement plan. Opportunities for teachers to share best practice are not provided on a systematic basis.
115. The governing body is well informed of the performance of the sixth form, although there is no single governor with responsibility for sixth form matters. Governors play an active role in contributing to the constant drive to raise standards of achievement still further.

Resources

116. Sixth form provision is very cost effective and the school manages to achieve both high retention and course completion rates. In addition, the high standards that are achieved along with a generally good average class size in the sixth form, indicate that the school's provision is efficiently managed.
117. Teachers are very well qualified and experienced. Students are well supported by the range of adequate learning resources available. Resources in the library and access to computers are good and support sixth form work well. Accommodation for the sixth form is just adequate to meet the needs of the growing numbers of sixth formers.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

118. In order to maintain and improve standards and the quality of provision further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

Develop more systematic procedures for monitoring in order to develop teachers' skills in self-evaluation by:

- ◆ reviewing current procedures and introducing more systematic and formal procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning which involves managers at all levels and improve teachers' confidence in self-evaluation.

Paragraph 99

Improve the consistency with which aspects of the assessment and marking policy are implemented by:

- ◆ ensuring all teachers understand and use data more effectively to analyse performance, including value added measures;
- ◆ ensuring a more consistent application of the marking policy;
- ◆ using assessment information to plan the next learning step for students.

Paragraphs 34, 44, 50, 84

Continue to work to improve the attitudes and motivation of a small minority of students by:

- ◆ ensuring there is a consistent level of support for those students who need it;
- ◆ continuing to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum in the referral and inclusion units.

Paragraphs 23, 25, 47, 60

Improve the punctuality to lessons by:

- ◆ reviewing the timing of the school day;
- ◆ ensuring a more consistent response by teachers to the late arrival of students to lessons.

Paragraph 24

Sixth form

Improve the consistency with which teachers encourage students to develop personal and independent study skills by:

- ◆ reviewing the opportunities that teachers provide for students to take more responsibility for their learning.

Paragraph 53

Provide more systematic opportunities for teachers to share best practice in teaching and learning.

Paragraphs 99, 114

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	184
	Sixth form	74
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students		85

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 - 11							
Number	7	40	89	39	8	1	0
Percentage	3.8	21.7	48.4	21.2	4.3	0.5	0
Sixth form							
Number	14	17	34	7	2	0	0
Percentage	18.9	22.9	45.9	9.4	2.7	0	0

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

Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	1214	447
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	105	0

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	37	2
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	92	2

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	201

Student mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	43
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.9
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	1.2

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	120	120	240

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	84	102	94
	Girls	104	97	95
	Total	188	199	189
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	78 (66)	84 (80)	79 (71)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	45 (29)	65 (57)	38 (37)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	91	102	95
	Girls	99	91	93
	Total	190	193	188
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	80 (77)	81 (82)	79 (70)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	48 (39)	57 (49)	41 (33)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	120	119	239

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	60	117	120
	Girls	77	109	114
	Total	137	225	233
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	57 (68)	95 (96)	98 (100)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per student	School	46.5
	National	39.8

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	57	96	153

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	63	112	175
	Average point score per candidate	18.5	18.3	18.4
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	18	17.5

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	57	96	153	8	17	25
	Average point score per candidate	19.4	18.8	19.0	9.8	15.2	13.4
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.9	17.4	9.8	11.4	10.6

Ethnic background of students

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1365	134	6
0	0	0
28	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
154	1	0
15	0	0
13	0	0
0	0	0
12	7	0
3	0	0
6	0	0
18	0	0
57	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	90.86
Number of students per qualified teacher	17

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	43
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1242.92

Deployment of teachers Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77
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Average teaching group size: Y7 - Y11

Key Stage 3	22.1
Key Stage 4	19.3

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	5,660,728
Total expenditure	5,729,993
Expenditure per student	3,449
Balance brought forward from previous year	484,035
Balance carried forward to next year	414,770

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	56.9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	65.6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	5.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	5.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1665
Number of questionnaires returned	132

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	25	64	6	5	0
My child is making good progress in school.	29	61	8	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	17	65	8	3	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	52	23	8	1
The teaching is good.	14	62	8	3	13
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	52	18	7	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	39	47	6	5	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	36	8	1	6
The school works closely with parents.	23	44	20	8	6
The school is well led and managed.	28	54	7	5	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	25	56	8	4	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	45	10	1	10

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Students achieve above average standards
- Good teaching is leading to good progress by most students
- Students have positive attitudes which contribute to their good learning
- Good leadership and management of a committed team of teachers

Areas for improvement

- There is some underachievement in Years 10 and 11
- There should be more spreading of good practice across the department to improve the overall consistency of teaching
- The department should make better use of assessment as a means of monitoring and raising standards

119. Standards in English overall are above average in both Years 9 and 11. Results in the 2002 national tests for students in Year 9 were above the national average. These students joined the school with standards which, whilst good in speaking and reading, were only average in writing. The 2002 results were part of a longer-term trend of good attainment. Current standards of students by the end of Year 9 are particularly good in speaking, listening and reading. This represents good achievement for students of all levels of competence, including those with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language, and gifted and talented students.
120. The proportion of students who achieved an A* to C grade in the English Language and Literature GCSE examinations in 2002 was just above the national average. These results represented a considerable decline on the 2001 and earlier figures, although the students in 2002 had joined the school with relatively low levels of attainment. The inspection found that knowledge and understanding and analytical skills are above national expectations for students by the end of Year 11. Whilst this represents good achievement for some students, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language and more competent students, including the gifted and talented, a significant minority, more boys than girls, achieve only satisfactorily, principally due to slower progress in developing good writing skills.
121. By Year 9, students develop good speaking and listening skills. They enjoy opportunities to read aloud in class, as seen when Year 8 students made short presentations on pieces they had produced for a unit on persuasive writing. Many students also read with confidence and fluency, and respond well to the department's focus on encouraging good reading skills. Most students also make good progress in developing a range of writing skills, with a developing vocabulary and increasing accuracy in grammar, spelling and punctuation. In Year 7, students work at different styles of creative writing, learning how to structure a story better and to tell it from different viewpoints, as when reworking a story such as *Little Red Riding Hood*. By Year 9, students have made good progress in learning how to analyse different styles of writing, such as journalism and war poetry, in addition to improving the accuracy and range of their own creative writing. There is good cross-curricular work, as seen when

Year 7 students used drama techniques as part of an inter-departmental project on the culture and traditions of Spain.

122. By the end of Year 11 students have built on these foundations satisfactorily. In particular, they learn to develop the skills of evaluation and critical analysis, although the progress of some less competent students is restricted by variable presentation and technical errors in their writing. Through activities such as comparing different versions of *Romeo and Juliet*, students learn to appreciate imagery and the potential of various dramatic devices. Students also learn to make effective character analyses when studying texts such as *An Inspector Calls*. They develop the skills of constructive discussion, as when debating the characteristics of the American Western genre.
123. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. It builds effectively on the positive attitudes of students. Where the teaching is effective, for students of all ages, teachers have high expectations and use active methods to motivate students and help them to become independent learners. The challenging expectations were evident in a Year 9 lesson in which the teacher used worksheets and a lively presentation to teach students the pronunciation of Shakespearean verse in *Twelfth Night* and helped them to understand the use of dramatic irony. Teachers also have good subject knowledge, and use questioning well to assess students' understanding and to extend their knowledge further. They also feed back information on how well students are doing and what they need to do to progress further. This was particularly evident in a Year 11 lesson in which the teacher asked students to evaluate the qualities of various commentaries on *Romeo and Juliet* and match them against the examination criteria, thereby giving the students good models for their own analyses.
124. Where the teaching is less effective, teachers do not make the objectives sufficiently clear, or do not use a range of methods to meet the particular needs of more competent students; this was evident in a Year 7 lesson in which drama techniques were used ineffectually.
125. Leadership and management in English are good. Previous staffing problems have mostly been resolved, and there is a team of teachers committed to their own professional development and successfully implementing initiatives such as a reading programme. There is some good collaborative planning. The use of ICT as an integral part of English teaching is still relatively undeveloped, other than in wordprocessing. The department's use of assessment strategies to further raise attainment is also undeveloped, and although monitoring is mostly effective, there are still inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, for example in the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.
126. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. The strengths identified in 1997, such as good student attitudes and good leadership and management, have been maintained. Teaching is now more consistently good, and standards are now better for students by the end of Year 9.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Effective teaching is leading to well above average standards at the end of Years 9 and 11
- Good leadership and management with a clear focus on developing the quality of provision
- Good relationships between students and teachers
- Good assessment procedures

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT to support learning
- Effective implementation of the three-part lesson recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy
- Provide further opportunities for students in Years 7 to 9 to use and apply their mathematical skills.
- Develop the use of mathematics in other curriculum areas

127. National test results at the end of Year 9 have been consistently well above average for the past four years. Students enter the school in Year 7 with above average attainment and achieve well during their first three years at school. Results are in line with those schools whose students have similar prior attainment on entry. The performance of boys was significantly better than that of girls in 2002 but during the last four years the results of boys and girls have been similar on two occasions.

128. Students' attainment continues to be well above average in Years 10 and 11 and GCSE results in 2002 were well above the national average and above those of similar schools. Students maintain their very good standard of attainment throughout the course and achievement over time is satisfactory. The school has experienced difficulties recruiting and retaining staff and the department is now at full complement for the first time in three years. Taking this into consideration the school has done well to promote this level of performance by its students. The percentage of students achieving grades A* to C has increased since the last inspection.

129. Current standards are well above average in Year 9, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Students' response in lessons and work in books confirm the good achievement that is made during Years 7 to 9. Students with special educational needs also make good progress relative to individual prior attainment and the achievement of students whose first language is not English is in line with that of other students. The continuity of numeracy skills is good, building on students' good standard of attainment at the end of primary school. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, students of average attainment examined an array of lengths expressed in fraction and decimal forms and in different units of measurement matching those that would combine to equal one metre. In Year 8, higher attaining students deal with percentages, competently finding increases and decreases in problem questions as part of their examination revision lesson. In Year 9, students of average attainment solve equations with the unknown included on both sides of an equation. Overall the students make good progress in most of the relevant areas of mathematics. However, the students' skills in investigative work are not as well developed, although there are plans to improve these.

130. Standards in Year 11 are also well above average with students of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, making sound progress in relation to their prior

attainment. Students develop confidence in their work in algebra and in Year 11, for example, higher attaining students factorise quadratic expressions accurately in the process of developing appropriate skills in simplifying algebraic expressions. Lower attaining students do not have secure skills in factorising quadratic expressions; however, they have good recall of angle facts related to parallel lines, accompanying their calculations in allied questions with supporting reasons. Higher attaining students in Year 10 cope well with questions on direct and cubic proportion, although they are less secure with the concept of inverse proportion. The quality of investigative work and particularly GCSE coursework has improved this year due to a focused effort by teachers and this has resulted in the quality of students' coursework now being in line with their predicted GCSE grades.

131. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good overall. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and lesson organisation is sound. High expectations of students' work and behaviour are an overall strength of teaching. Work set is generally challenging and students learn well. In effective lessons tasks are well matched to the needs of the students. A good example of this is the Year 9 lesson where students compared the results of their probability experiments with the theoretical values. The higher attaining students in the class looked at the probability of throwing an even number on a die while lower attaining students examined the probabilities related to tossing a coin. All students were involved in their tasks, collaborated well in groups and learning was good. In less effective lessons work is not as well matched to need and a minority of students need extra input from the teacher before being able to access the task and sometimes do not have time to complete the task set.
132. Good relationships among students and between students and teachers are evident in most lessons. This, combined with effective student management, ensures that purposeful activity is the norm and that students feel secure about answering questions in whole-class sessions or asking for help when needed. This has a positive effect on learning. In a Year 10 lesson, for example, students worked hard in a challenging whole-class session on fractions, the range of students contributing, knowing that their suggestions would be valued and that they would be supported by their peers even if their answers were incorrect. In a minority of lessons where the teachers' management of the students is not totally secure, the pace is slow, the students' effort and concentration are reduced and the quality of learning is diminished.
133. Generally, students' written work is marked appropriately with helpful comments for the learner. While not unsatisfactory, high quality marking is not evident across the whole school. Homework supports learning well and teachers respond effectively to any problems that this reveals, providing appropriate support work for individual students or adjusting lesson plans as appropriate.
134. The National Numeracy Strategy has not yet been fully implemented and teachers do not plan effective mental arithmetic sessions in which students could enhance skills and build mental agility or rehearse techniques that would facilitate calculations needed in the main body of the lesson. Review sessions, where held, tend to be brief with very little student input.
135. The department is well led and managed. The head of department, who is new to the school, brings a wealth of experience in subject leadership and has already identified areas for further development and implemented improvements in some of them. The curriculum for Years 7 to 9 is now being updated to incorporate the National Numeracy Strategy. A further recent improvement in curriculum provision has had a significant

effect on the quality of coursework for GCSE. Consequently the standard of coursework is now more compatible with students' attainment in other areas of the subject. Overall the curriculum has been updated and maintained at the good standard reported at the time of the last inspection. However the support of learning by ICT is limited, although some individual students have made good use of ICT in their coursework. Good assessment procedures have been consolidated since the last inspection and are now being used effectively to monitor students' attainment and identify any underachievement. The use of assessment in forward planning is satisfactory but not yet used systematically to identify areas of learning that may require extra input across the school.

136. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and the department is now well placed to move forward with confidence.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Results in national tests and examinations are above average as a result of good teaching
- Lessons are well planned and the quality of relationships within the classroom is very good

Areas for improvement

- The presentation of students' work
- The quality of marking and feedback to students
- The provision and use of ICT equipment

137. Standards in science are above average. In the 2002 Year 9 national tests the proportion of students gaining a Level 5 or better, almost four out of every five, was above the national average, close to the average for similar schools and well below the average for schools where students' prior attainment was similar. The proportion gaining a Level 6 or better was ten per cent above the national average. Results, in terms of average points, have increased steadily since 2000 and are increasing faster than the national average. Over the years there has been no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls until, in 2002, boys' results were much better than those for girls.

138. In 2002 the proportion of students gaining a higher grade A* to C at GCSE was well above the national average, though slightly lower than the results for the previous year. Girls' results in 2002 were better than those for boys and both sets of results were significantly better than the respective national averages. The proportion of students gaining a grade A* to G was also above the national average with little difference in the performance of boys and girls. Until 2002 the percentage of students gaining grades A* to C had increased steadily since 1999. Although that proportion dropped in 2002, the average points scored per student remained the same as the previous year. Although a smaller proportion of students gained these grades, a larger number of them gained higher grades within the range, almost one quarter gaining the very highest grades A* or A. Girls' results were particularly good with almost one third of them being awarded these grades. Results in science were better than those for either English or mathematics, especially for the grades A* and A.

139. Standards in work seen during the inspection for students in Year 9 was above average. Students understand how waves such as light and sound can be reflected and refracted. They know the structure of different types of cell, such as typical plant, animal and viral cells and they understand how bacteria cause disease. Higher attaining students can write the formulae for simple chemical compounds in symbol form. By this age students can perform simple calculations, such as finding speed from the distance travelled in a certain time, or pressure, from the size of a force acting on a known area but most of the work is descriptive and there are few examples of graph work, particularly straight-line graphs. Across the whole age and attainment range, many students take pride in what they are doing and produce work to a high standard. However, a significant number, particularly in the younger years, make little effort to present their work neatly. Diagrams of apparatus, tables of results and underlining are often sketched and sometimes drawn in ink. In lessons, little evidence was found of teachers requesting a reasonable standard of presentation or giving guidance on how to work neatly.
140. Standards in work seen during the inspection for students in Year 11 are well above average. At this age, higher attaining students use a wide range of scientific formulae. They choose appropriate equations, substitute known values and calculate outcomes successfully. They understand atomic structure and the part played by the electron in electrostatic phenomena, know typical voltage v current graphs for ohmic and non-ohmic resistors and know how electric motors work. They can describe the structure of the earth and how sedimentary, metamorphic and igneous rocks are formed. They understand radioactive decay and can predict which element will be formed if a nuclide emits an alpha or beta particle. Lower attaining students are less adept at using scientific formulae, perform fewer numerical calculations and have a lower success rate when they do. Omissions and unfinished work are not uncommon.
141. Much of the students' work seen had been marked. However, there were instances when work had not been marked for unacceptably long periods of time. Where marking was done regularly, it was often mechanical and superficial so errors were missed or ignored. Most teachers' comments were supportive but gave little guidance to students on how they could improve the quality of their work. Where students had been instructed to complete work or write spellings several times the work was still incomplete or the spellings unwritten. Teachers need to ensure that learning is effective in the classroom by setting achievable aims, ensuring students attain those aims in the classroom and using effective homework to consolidate that learning. This is particularly true in the younger years.
142. Students' achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, and good in Years 10 and 11. The slower progress in Years 7 to 9 is partly accounted for by poor behaviour from a minority of students, an acceptance by teachers of low standards of work and a scheme of work, which is largely descriptive with little opportunities for numerical and graphical work.
143. Students with special educational needs make steady progress at the same rate as those in their classes, especially when they have the support of an additional adult in the classroom. The support assistants, when time permits, also help others who appear to need assistance. Where students were designated as having English as an additional language no evidence was found that they were having difficulty understanding what was happening in the classroom.
144. Overall teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. The best lessons were brisk. Students were involved in a range of activities, which

extended their previous knowledge and skills, maintained their interest and excited their imagination. In such lessons students enjoyed their science and learned well. Less successful lessons lacked pace so students became bored and indulged in off-task activities. In extreme cases behaviour became disruptive and affected the learning of the whole class. The acceptance, by teachers, of poor standards of presentation of work, particularly from younger students, means that although making steady progress they could do better and compared to students of similar attainment nationally they lose ground in the early years. In later years, with the challenge of GCSE coursework and examinations ahead, students' standard of presentation improves, motivation increases and they make better progress than their national peer group so that they make up for the progress lost earlier. Over their five years in school they make the same progress as students of their levels of attainment do nationally.

145. Relationships between students are good. They co-operate well when working in small groups and listen to each other's point of view when they have to make decisions, for instance when designing practical investigations. They respect their teachers and lessons are generally harmonious and productive as a result.
146. Accommodation and resources for teaching science are good. The faculty is housed on two floors with connecting lifts and there are adequate preparation areas. Teachers plan their lessons well and there is an efficient team of technicians who provide the necessary equipment so teaching is effective. There is little use of ICT. There is some data-logging equipment but students rarely have the opportunity to use it. Similarly, there are very few computers in the working areas, so there are almost no occasions when students can find further information on a topic, print out graphs of experimental results or watch difficult or expensive experiments being simulated.
147. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. More students are now gaining the higher grades in tests and examinations and the standard of teaching is much improved. New courses have been introduced to provide more interest for younger students and to give older ones a choice of traditional or a more practical approach to their studies. Leadership and management of the faculty are good. The large team of teachers is composed of a core of experienced teachers with a high proportion of relatively inexperienced, newly qualified, teachers. There is a very supportive atmosphere within which the work of all staff is well co-ordinated. The faculty records student progress very well as a result of regular tests.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good, and standards have risen significantly
- Teaching and learning are good, and students achieve well as a result
- The subject makes a very good contribution to students' personal development

Areas for improvement

- There is not enough use of ICT to support and extend students' work
- Opportunities to develop skills in three-dimensional work are not wide enough

148. Standards seen in the work of current Year 9 students are above average. Their achievement is good, and they make good gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding of the subject. Their colour work is strong, and they create bright and

bold compositions based on letterforms or cartoon characters. These show a growing confidence in manipulating shapes and colours, to produce harmonious effects. Their drawing shows confidence in using line and tone, and they accurately represent the effects of light and shade when drawing from still life groups, which include musical instruments. Their three-dimensional work in card is well made and richly decorated. However, there are too few opportunities to develop skills in a wider range of three-dimensional techniques, such as modelling in ceramics, or carving. In addition, there is not enough use of ICT to extend and support their work.

149. GCSE examination results were well above average in 2002. Boys did especially well in relation to their national average. These results were an improvement on the previous year, and have shown significant improvement since the previous inspection, when they were below average. Students did better in their art and design than in most of their other subjects.
150. Standards of work in the current Year 11 students are well above average, and their achievement is good. They continue to build on their confidence in using colour, and produce vibrant compositions, using unusual colour combinations, which are striking in effect. These are informed by the work of the surrealists. Repeat patterns, in paint, also build on these skills, and are highly decorative. The sketchbooks of higher attaining students are rich and vigorous, and help them to develop their own ideas well. Boys particularly show high levels of interest when making constructions in wire and paper. These are lively and humorous, and are based on the study of natural forms, such as apples and seashells.
151. Students' attitudes to the subject are good, and the great majority enjoy their working in art and design, trying hard in lessons. Students with special educational needs achieve well, because lessons often feature clear demonstrations, and tasks are active. This means that they can see what they need to do to succeed, and can work directly with materials. As a result, they make good gains in their skills in painting and drawing.
152. Teaching and learning are good. In the best lessons, there is a high level of challenge, and methods and materials are exciting. For example, in a Year 9 lesson on drawing buildings, students listened with their eyes closed to an evocative reading, and tried to visualise an imaginary environment. They then worked on a very large scale, drawing on the floor, using charcoal very freely and vigorously. This produced very high levels of excitement and inspiration, and a confident, active learning atmosphere. As a result, learning was excellent. Teachers also have good subject knowledge, and are enthusiastic about art and design. These strengths are often seen in lesson introductions, and help to produce good learning in the great majority of lessons. However, in a small number of lessons, methods and materials are not exciting enough to produce higher levels of interest. Students then begin to chat among themselves, without concentrating fully on what they are doing. This means that the pace of the lesson slows, and learning is no better than satisfactory.
153. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good, and standards, and results at GCSE, have risen significantly. The quality of teaching and learning has improved, and is now good. The subject also makes a very good contribution to students' personal development, encouraging them to confront topical issues such as drug abuse, and express their views both verbally and in their painting. They also write poems, which help them reflect on themes such as loneliness.
154. Leadership and management are good, and the focus on raising standards since the previous inspection has been successful. However, the process of planning and

reviewing the curriculum is not shared widely enough among the teaching staff, and this reduces the effectiveness of some lessons.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- The introduction of citizenship as a National Curriculum subject has been soundly planned
- The subject makes a good contribution to students' personal development
- Students' listening skills are good, and the great majority consider the views of others carefully and respectfully

Areas for improvement

- Systems for monitoring the quality of provision are still in the early stages of development
- Assessment systems are not fully in place, and students are not sure how well they are doing, or how to improve
- There are missed opportunities for students to be more involved in running some meetings

155. Overall, students reach average standards in Years 9 and 11. The great majority show good levels of interest in their work, and their attitudes are good.

156. Achievement is satisfactory. Students make sound gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding of the subject. They learn to express their views on a range of topical issues, including the dangers of drug abuse and the effects of deforestation on the global environment. They make suggestions to improve their surroundings, for example, recognising a need for covered walkways in the school between buildings. The great majority of students listen well to the views of others, and consider them carefully and respectfully. When, for example, discussing issues such as how to improve the quality of life in the school, or deciding which charities the school should support. They are encouraged to see the world through the eyes of others, and learn to appreciate the diversity of other cultures, for example by studying a wide range of artwork, and by taking part in exchange visits with Japanese students. Their written work, however, is rather brief, and does not always reflect the complexity of the issues studied.

157. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching styles at present particularly promote discussion and debate, building on students' strengths in speaking and listening. In the best lessons, teachers have good levels of class control, and this ensures that all students have the opportunity to join in and have their say. Teachers also control the pace of the lesson well, moving them on to different tasks at well-judged intervals, and this maintains students' interest and engagement with the ideas being discussed. This results in good learning. However, in a small number of lessons, class discussions are less well managed, a small number of students call out, and only the loudest are heard. This means that less confident students do not join in as fully as they could, and learning is no better than satisfactory as a result. In addition, assessment systems are not fully in place, and students are not sure how well they are doing, or how to improve their attainment in the subject.

158. The citizenship curriculum has been soundly planned, with distinct modules in PSHE, and others in subjects such as art and design and geography. However, systems for monitoring the quality of the provision are not fully in place. The subject makes a good

contribution to students' personal development, by promoting a wide range of activities, which help students to mature responsibly. For example, students are encouraged to support charities, such as the 'Street Child Africa' initiative.

159. The school council is helping students to appreciate the value of achieving change by positive means, and they show a growing awareness of the need for rules and formal procedures. Students are also aware of the importance of representing the views of others, and are careful to do this, using written notes to remind them of the wishes of their classmates. In some meetings however, there are missed opportunities to involve students more, for example, by allowing them to chair meetings and take minutes.
160. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The introduction of this subject has been soundly planned, despite the long-term absence of the teacher in charge of the subject, and the school is clear on the areas for further development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Leadership is very good, supported by a committed and professional team
- Effective teaching strategies promote good learning
- Good relationships between the teachers and their students
- Very good technician support

Areas for improvement

- The use of National Curriculum levels to track progress and help with planning
- Address health and safety procedures in some workshop lessons
- Implement a workshop audit linked to an annual maintenance schedule
- Set procedures and policies in place to repair or replace faulty equipment

161. Overall GCSE results in 2002 were below average although standards in food and textile technology were good. Results were not as good as those of the previous three years, when there had been an improving trend, or those at the time of the last inspection.
162. Current standards are above average in Year 9 and Year 11. The majority of students make good progress. For example, in a Year 7 resistant material class students worked hard to attain a good quality finish on their acrylic shapes when using coping saws and abrofiles to attain an immaculate finish. Year 8 students analysed foreign games collaboratively during a product evaluation lesson. In a Year 9 food technology class students used technical language and understood the principles of fermentation when working on their bread module. In Years 10 and 11, students continue to develop their knowledge and skills in separate specialist areas. The majority can develop a specification and produce good quality outcomes. In most lessons students remained focused, sustained concentration and enjoy their work. Some designing skills and quality of analysis was unsatisfactory.
163. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, although it ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Where it is good the teachers have a very good knowledge of their specialist subjects, are totally committed, efficient, organised and set clear expectations. For example, high level questioning skills in a Year 8 food technology lesson challenged the students to think for themselves. In another Year 8 resistant material lesson, a brisk pace and good variety of teaching strategies enabled the

students to achieve their potential. Individual tuition and strict adherence to deadlines in some Year 11 lessons helped students improve their coursework. In all lessons seen, relationships between teachers and students were very positive. Students' poor punctuality at the start of some lessons cuts learning time considerably. Where teaching was less than satisfactory, the students were not given sufficient guidance or support and safe workshop practices were not carried out.

164. Leadership of the faculty is very good. The head of faculty has a clear vision for the future and the development of the subject. He has made significant changes in the reorganisation of the faculty, particularly the improvement of the rundown workshops. Half the team, including the head of faculty, have been in post for only just over a term. They are a supportive, committed and professional team who have written new schemes of work and constantly trial new ideas in order to stimulate students' interest and raise standards. There is very good support from two technicians. A central database for tracking students' performance has been set up. National Curriculum level assessments are not yet in place to track progress or help with curriculum planning. There are no set procedures or policies to repair or replace faulty equipment in the workshops and many sewing machines are out of action.
165. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The department was run down when the new head of faculty took over and since his arrival he has made significant improvement. Procedures to replace faulty and worn out equipment, as reported in the last report, have still not been addressed.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Students enjoy geography lessons and many take a pride in their work
- Achievement is good and students make good progress in lessons
- Students learn particularly well from extended homework, field studies and an integrated citizenship programme

Areas for improvement

- Develop more lesson materials to better match the needs of individual students
- Create more opportunities for observing and sharing good practice

166. Results in the 2002 GCSE examination were near to the national average. Most students who began the course were successful. A small proportion of students achieved above grade A whilst 17 boys who were expected to achieve a grade C were awarded a D grade. These results were disappointing given the students' prior attainment. Students were adversely affected by discontinuities in teaching provision, and coursework in particular was not of a high enough standard.
167. In work seen standards are above average in Year 9 and students achieve well, making good progress in their knowledge and understanding of geography. They demonstrate a range of skills in class, through their exercise books, group work discussion and classroom display. In Year 7, students use the atlas accurately to study location. In the autumn term, following an initial field study visit to Eastcote, their homework time was very effectively extended into a geographical enquiry of a high quality. This provided good opportunities for extended writing, number work and the use of ICT. By Year 9, higher attaining girls make very good progress through the planned use of computer

skills to investigate renewable resources of power. Students of average ability recognise how this can change people's lives.

168. In work seen in Year 11 standards were above average and students continue to achieve well. They locate the Sokoto Valley in Nigeria and understand how the farming is adapted to local conditions. Lower attaining students find it difficult to interpret the climatic graphs. Students with special educational needs read fluently from the textbook and describe the vegetation. However, their writing and recording of information is weaker than that of more competent students. Higher attaining students are challenged to compare this case study with one on the glasshouse cities of the Netherlands. There are good opportunities to extend their learning through an enrichment group in the lunch break.
169. Students enjoy geography lessons and take a pride in their work. They respond very well to field studies, research, independent study and group work. For example, Year 8 were well informed by a recent volcanic study visit to the Natural History Museum and GCSE students considered very competently the impact of tourism in the Lake District from geographical enquiry.
170. Overall teaching and learning are good in all years. Specialist teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and give good support to non-specialist teachers in Years 7 to 9. Lessons are well planned to enthuse students and to develop a range of skills and learning opportunities. Environmental issues are integrated to include many aspects of citizenship very well. In a Year 10 lesson, for example, students were drawn to an understanding of the impact on resources of population growth. Question and answer sessions are purposeful and teachers use this information well to inform their teaching. However, the work set does not always match the abilities of students sufficiently to help them progress well. Sometimes the planned lesson is not completed, resulting in a delay to the start of the following lesson. Students learn more slowly when teachers speak too rapidly. Homework is very well used. This has a positive impact on standards and students' progress.
171. The department is very well managed by the head of humanities, and improvement since the last inspection has been very good. GCSE coursework arrangements have been reviewed and examination results are expected to be above average in 2003. Departmental documentation now provides a clear educational direction for geography. Schemes of work have been re-written to comply with the National Curriculum in Years 7 to 9. There is a shortage of specialist teachers in the department. Resources are now good.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Energetic and imaginative teaching leads to strong student attitudes and responses
- Very good GCSE results and teacher assessments at the end of Year 9
- Promotion of high standards of literacy

Areas for improvement

- The promotion of numeracy
- Advice on how to improve following the assessment of students' work

172. Standards are well above the national average in both Year 9 and Year 11. This has been achieved by a rich blend of energetic and imaginative teaching and very positive student responses.
173. In Year 9, students have good historical instincts and can apply historical skills, in terms of investigating and interpreting evidence and in recognising cause and effect, as well as having a strong sense of empathy for the people and contexts which they are studying. They have well-developed literacy skills, both in the sense of the appropriate use of the technical language of history and also in extensive reflective and thoughtful prose where they explore the feelings and experiences of people in historical contexts in a variety of written assignments. They also use ICT effectively and with confidence. This judgement on attainment is confirmed by the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 which were significantly above national averages. Achievement through Years 7 to 9 is very good because the students generally have improved from very low levels of historical awareness on entry to well above average standards by Year 9. The achievements of boys and girls are broadly similar, and students with special educational needs and English as an additional language make equally good progress because of the active support available.
174. In Year 11, standards are also well above average in work seen. Written work is extensive and has good levels of literary expression. Evidence from GCSE coursework reveals that students are carrying out thorough and effective historical enquiries into the site and role of Dover Castle. Throughout Years 10 and 11, students are using primary evidence to draw conclusions and they were also seen asking searching questions from such contexts as Hitler's propaganda war within Germany. This capacity for historical enquiry explains why this school has continued to have GCSE results in history significantly above national averages. There is no variation in the performance of boys and girls. Very good progress is being maintained through Years 10 and 11 and students of all abilities are succeeding well. Most have well-developed literacy skills and are also using ICT very effectively.
175. Students' progress is significantly assisted by their good attitudes. Positive attitudes and responses are a significant factor in their achievement because their interest and enthusiasm demonstrably add to the momentum of lessons. Behaviour in lessons is generally good because students find teaching approaches exciting and challenging. A particular strength is the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural perspectives. A Year 8 lesson on the emergence of Puritanism, for example, gave very good opportunities for the exploration of values. On GCSE courses, the cultural perspectives of medical development are explored. The curriculum is also a vehicle for developing citizenship, such as the outbreak of World War One, when a focused analysis of the parallels with modern times was studied.

176. The positive attitudes themselves are a direct response to the quality of teaching which is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. It is universally characterised by the teachers' very good subject knowledge and understanding of historical skills, together with high expectations and careful management of student behaviour. Teaching methods, including the promotion of study skills and research appropriate for coursework, are very effective in Years 10 and 11. Literacy is strongly promoted but numeracy is under-emphasised. Teaching assistants are well-utilised and this enables all students to be fully integrated into lessons. The teaching programme is very carefully planned and it ensures that there is a clear learning pathway from Year 7 to Year 11 and beyond. There is constant checking of progress during lessons but advice on how to improve in terms of historical skill development at the end of assessed work is inconsistent and is, therefore, a weakness. Assessment records are thorough and enable the performance of all students to be tracked and monitored.
177. The leadership and management of history are good. The head of subject is relatively new and is now building on the already thoughtful and effective response to the critique offered at the last inspection. Improvement since then has been good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Standards are well above national averages
- Good teaching which supports students to make very good progress
- Very good leadership and management which has supported effective changes to the curriculum and teaching methods

Areas for improvement

- The results of assessments are not clearly communicated to students, nor are they used to ensure that the most competent students are set suitably challenging work
- The programme of training and investment has not yet had sufficient impact on standards in other subjects across the curriculum

178. Standards in ICT are well above average in Year 9 and Year 11. In the 2002 assessments at the end of Year 9, the proportion of students reaching the nationally expected standard was well above average. Results in units of GNVQ examinations, which Year 9 students entered two years early, confirm these standards. This represents very good achievement for students who come to the school with under-developed skills in ICT. Results have been improving and work seen during the inspection confirms that this improvement is continuing. Standards are now well above average, and represent very good achievement for both girls and boys.
179. Some very competent students produce work at the very highest levels. By the end of Year 9 one boy had designed a suite of publicity materials and stationery. These would give any small business a thoroughly professional image. In Year 10 another student has developed a sophisticated accounting system for a record store which displays warnings if stock levels get too low. The least competent students also make good progress. Literacy difficulties do not inhibit Year 7 students from astute criticism of their multi-media presentations about workplace safety.

180. This very good achievement is the result of good teaching within a very well designed curriculum. The great majority of students are very keen to learn. Some students in Years 10 and 11 are less enthusiastic. The recent shift to vocational courses means that they now find that they are still able to achieve success because of the way their lessons are organised. Indeed many of them have chosen to spend extra time studying ICT. This has reduced poor behaviour, and improved standards in other lessons.
181. The decision to let students in Year 8 work towards qualifications normally begun in Years 10 and 11 has also increased their enthusiasm. They see more relevance because ICT is studied against a background of the world of work. There is an increased urgency because students can see how they are progressing towards recognised qualifications. This vocational course has deflected attention from some aspects of the National Curriculum. Students spend less time than is usual studying how computers can be used to control processes in industry, commerce and the home.
182. Students spend a very high proportion of each lesson working productively because teachers have very good methods for managing behaviour. Students are enthusiastic because teachers plan very carefully to build their skills, and tempt them to experiment and to evaluate new techniques. Students with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress because the work offers the right amount of challenge. Three of the most competent students in one Year 11 class used English as an additional language.
183. Teachers mark class work and homework very carefully. However, students find the different ways of recording their achievement confusing. In the most effective lessons, teachers use their assessments to identify the most competent students. They then direct additional targets and tasks to these students, and ensure that they are challenged in every lesson. This is not yet common practice.
184. The improvement in the provision for ICT since the previous inspection has been very good. This is because the different teachers responsible for leading and managing the provision have worked together very effectively. Several members of the teaching team were not originally ICT specialists, but the subject leader has given very clear direction. Relevant training has complemented a detailed guide to good practice. As a result the team was able to cover for the loss of a full time member with only minimal interruption to students' progress.
185. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Existing provision has been evaluated and plans for the future put in place. Very good accommodation and teaching resources enable teachers to use up-to-date teaching methods. They are excellently maintained by support staff who also enable a large number of students to continue their learning outside lessons. ICT is beginning to enhance learning in other subjects across the curriculum – in geography and religious education for example. The decision to ensure that every student gains qualifications as well as skills in ICT has made it hard for other subject teachers to use the resources. The managers have recognised this. They now plan to use ICT to support teaching and learning for all students, across the full range of subjects. This very carefully costed plan identifies the training and software that will be needed, but has not yet been fully implemented to raise standards.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- The use of ICT supports and enhances students' learning
- Contacts with other countries motivate students
- Teachers' good planning and subject knowledge help students to make good progress

Areas for improvement

- GCSE results are lower than in other subjects
- Students do not use the foreign language enough for routine matters in class
- Too many students arrive late for lessons

186. GCSE results were above the national average in 2001 for students gaining A* to C grades. However, in 2002 performance dropped sharply to significantly below the national average. The poor performance of boys was the main cause of this decline. In French both girls' and boys' results were at the national average for their gender, but in German and Spanish girls performed poorly and boys very poorly. Results in Italian were much better than in the other languages. However, overall, candidates performed significantly worse in modern foreign languages than in their other subjects. This was due to some extent to problems of staff retention before and during their GCSE course. Some classes had had several different teachers, and disaffection and lack of motivation were a consequence of this instability, particularly among boys. Teaching and learning materials were inadequate for Spanish. Furthermore, some new teachers were inexperienced at preparing students for public examinations.
187. Over the last two years, teachers' assessments indicate a steady increase in the number of students attaining national expectations and beyond at the end of Year 9. In 2002, assessments showed Year 9 students to be attaining significantly above national expectations. Students currently in Year 9 have maintained this improved standard and are attaining above national expectations in all four main languages. They are achieving well. In Year 7 they make rapid progress. They enjoy their lessons, quickly learn a large repertoire of words and phrases, and can talk fluently about themselves, their families, their eating habits and other familiar topics. They take home short texts in the foreign language to read for pleasure, and give opinions on them.
188. By Year 9 the higher attaining students speak and write accurately about the past and the future. They write extended paragraphs about themselves. Others can write competent, short pieces about familiar topics, and are able to express likes and dislikes. Students' work on display in classrooms shows the pride that students take in their work. They regularly use ICT to support their learning and frequently produce beautifully presented work of high quality, using computers.
189. Students develop good listening and speaking skills because of their teachers' consistent use of the foreign language in class. However, in Year 9 some students are still reluctant to speak, and the disruptive behaviour of a small minority occasionally interferes with the learning of others. Punctuality is a problem. Too many lessons are affected by the late arrival of some students. Nevertheless, behaviour is generally good, and attitudes to language learning are much improved.
190. In Years 10 and 11, standards are close to the national average and achievement is now satisfactory. Students are beginning to benefit from the very good teaching they receive. Standards of work are much better than those suggested by the 2002 GCSE

examination results. The coursework produced by one Year 11 French class shows a high level of application. Students have researched their topics well and written substantial pieces in competent French. The most successful students have a good grasp of grammar, write accurately, and express their views articulately. In a different Year 11 French class students spoke confidently about the difficult topic of smoking and drugs. A Year 11 German class was less fluent orally, but showed a sound grasp of the use of past and future tenses, as did students studying Italian. Standards in Spanish are considerably improved, and students are making good progress in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Throughout the school, students with special educational needs progress well, with the help of learning support assistants, foreign language assistants and specially designed materials and tasks.

191. Overall, learning is good in Years 7 to 11. Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11, where some outstanding teaching was seen in French and Spanish. Teachers are expert linguists, several of them bilingual. In the most successful lessons, teachers use the foreign language constantly to create an authentic learning atmosphere. Their expert use of the language helps the students to develop good listening skills, pronunciation and fluency. They use their acting and miming skills to make meaning clear. Students with English as an additional language progress well in languages, where English is used less than in other subjects. However, few students use the foreign language as the means of communication for routine matters in the classroom, and the previous learning experience of some students in Year 11 has made them reluctant to speak the language.
192. Teachers plan lessons very well, following the distinctive style of the faculty. Lessons include a variety of activities to practise all the language skills, and are delivered at a fast pace. Pair work is used to give opportunities for independent learning and more individual speaking practice. Teachers use a range of techniques, including games and competitions, to ensure that new material is thoroughly practised and consolidated, without students becoming bored. Their enthusiasm for their subject is infectious. Homework is set and marked regularly and extends and consolidates the work done in school. Marking is detailed and helpful.
193. The faculty is recovering from a period of staffing problems and unsatisfactory leadership, which affected morale of teachers and students. There is now a stable team of teachers, many of whom are inexperienced, but who make up for their lack of experience by being expert linguists and dedicated professionals. Morale in the faculty is very good. Teachers work well as a team and have produced detailed new schemes of work co-operatively.
194. The faculty offers an exciting programme of languages both during and outside the normal school day. All students study two languages in Years 7 to 9 and four out of ten continue with at least two languages in Years 10 and 11. There is a vast range of enrichment activities: clubs; master classes for gifted linguists; and twilight GCSE classes, to mention but a few.
195. The leadership and management of the faculty are now good and give the faculty's work clear direction. Classroom teaching is monitored and evaluated routinely. Good practice is shared, as are the benefits of in-service training. Very good facilities, such as the language laboratory and the computer suite, enhance students' learning. The school's many contacts with other countries emphasise the relevance and importance of learning languages. Video conferences with a school in Italy are a good example of how students are motivated by these contacts. The faculty leadership acknowledges that GCSE results were unsatisfactory in 2002, has diagnosed the causes and

implemented a range of strategies, including in-service training, to address the problems. Provision for modern foreign languages has improved considerably in the last two years, and the team now has the capacity and commitment to improve further. Improvement overall since the last inspection has been good.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Results in examinations are above average
- The teachers' very good musicianship inspires enthusiasm and good achievement
- Music contributes very well to students' personal development
- The very good range of choirs and ensembles provides for many musical tastes

Areas for improvement

- Planning in the medium and short term to identify clearly what students will learn
- Access to computers on a regular basis to develop students' capability in ICT

196. Standards in Year 9 are above average, consistent with teacher assessments in 2002. As a result of good teaching students achieve well. The Arts Alliance in Year 7 takes students all over the world in lessons, participating in dance, drama and music-making. When teachers know their students well and prepare musical parts to suit their ability they enjoy the exhilaration of teamwork through a class ensemble. However, in a few lessons, because teaching does not provide enough challenge for the more musically able these students do not realise their potential. Not enough attention is paid to the individual learning needs of students with special educational needs in order to help them make progress towards their targets. However, all students benefit from the effective support of learning assistants, especially when the support is linked with expert musical ability.
197. The number of students gaining A* to C at GCSE has been above the national average for several years, though too few students take the examination to make this a reliable comparison. In both 2001 and 2002 very few students did better in music than in their other subjects. For the first time in recent years the number of students in Year 10 is now similar to the average number nationally. The more able musicians do very well in composing and performing but this standard is not maintained uniformly in the listening paper. In work seen in the inspection more able students were not challenged to make the best of their ability in English to produce extended answers in order to gain the highest grades. All students, but particularly those of average and below average ability, are hampered in their composition by lack of access to computers. In many cases weak keyboard skills prevent them from hearing the full effect of some of their very inventive ideas. Nevertheless, in the majority of lessons, where teaching is very good, students achieve well.
198. Music makes a very good contribution to students' personal development. In class and group work students are eager to try out their ideas and to work independently. There is a musical rehearsal of some kind every day, catering for all tastes and abilities from unaccompanied mixed voice chamber choir to the Samba band.
199. Teaching overall is good, with some particularly strong features. Teachers are very good musicians with complementary skills, and this is central to students' enjoyment and progress in music. Because there are very good relationships between students and teachers, students feel comfortable both to answer questions and to offer opinions,

and to play in front of the class. Students experience a range of activities in most lessons, and this gives students a rounded experience and helps them to understand better. However, in a minority of lessons the main aim is not always clear and because it is not linked to careful assessment students do not know how to improve. Not enough attention is given to developing students' skills in ICT, literacy and numeracy.

200. Leadership and management are good. Music is held in high regard in the school and has a high profile through public performances. This is largely due to the energies of the head of department and faculty. The department is larger than in many schools and the systems for monitoring the work of the team are not rigorous enough to pick up inconsistencies in practice and to make sure the best features are shared across the whole department. The assessment policy has been well thought through with good links between the Haydon scale and National Curriculum levels. However, not enough regard is paid to students' prior attainment when planning work. Progress since the previous inspection is good because standards have risen and the quality of teaching has improved. There is still further work to be done to the scheme of work and an urgent need to build ICT into lessons throughout the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good; there are secure subject knowledge, high expectations, good intervention for progression and high level questioning skills
- Lessons have a good structure with clear learning objectives
- Students are fully incorporated into lessons, including those with special educational needs and non-participants
- Relationships between teachers and students are very good
- There is a very good extra-curricular programme of extension and enrichment activities.

Areas for improvement

- Improve the use of assessment data to modify curriculum planning
- Develop links with partner primary schools

201. GCSE results were in line with national average for physical education in 2002, student's achievement and progress were good and they attained better results than in their other subjects.

202. The standard of work by students currently studying physical education at GCSE are above average in both practical and theoretical aspects, and students achieve well. Year 10 students are developing a good depth of knowledge and are able to make good links between practical illustrations of performance and aspects of theory, such as the break down of functions of the nervous system on the ability to move different body parts. Students achieving the highest standards are able to use technical language consistently when writing, speaking and preparing presentations. Practical skills are well developed; students are able to investigate, evaluate and implement successfully strategies such as defence skills in basketball and can relate the theory of defence to other invasion games. There are good levels of motivation and students are able to work independently in both theory and practical sessions.

203. The standard of work in non-examination classes in Year 10 and 11 lessons is above average for the majority of students, and students' achievements are good. They are able to demonstrate refinement of skill from Year 9, applying strategies and tactics with

increasing thought and accuracy that contribute to good levels of achievement for most students. In football the boys show accuracy when passing and are able to use one and two touches effectively. In hockey students are able to control the ball, use reverse stick techniques effectively and players off the ball make good use of space to make themselves more readily available to receive the ball. Some Year 11 students are unable to sustain the motivation and momentum for the whole of a double lesson.

204. Standards of attainment in Year 9 are above average. Students develop independent warm-ups as observed in the Year 9 advanced gymnastics, Year 8 football and Year 7 dance and are able to evaluate their own and others' performance to give constructive feedback to improve performance. Students demonstrate high levels of skills and control during dribbling, passing, receiving and keeping possession in basketball and football, and are able to apply these skills well in small games. In dance and gymnastics students select appropriate movements and produce simple synchronised sequences as demonstrated in a Year 9 sports-acro unit and dances from other countries in Year 7. All students are able to work co-operatively in pairs and small groups and listen to each other with courtesy. All students wear the correct kit and sanctions for those without are applied consistently. Achievement between Years 7 and 9 is good.
205. Students, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons as observed in Year 9 football. A more consistent approach towards the use of information on special educational needs and the development of information for gifted and talented students would enable a better matching of activities to ability so as to challenge higher attaining students and support lower ability students to achieve further success.
206. The very good extra-curricular programme offers a wide range of curriculum extension activities, house competitions, residential opportunities both overseas and in this country and includes opportunities for recreational, competitive and sponsored activities. Activities are very well supported by students, reported in the physical education newsletter, and celebrated in school assemblies and stimulating displays around the school.
207. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, high expectations of behaviour and performance and the very good relationships between staff and students ensure motivation levels to participate are high, as seen particularly in the Year 9 football session, Year 11 basketball and the mixed dance lesson on the Caribbean. All teachers ensure that students know what they will be learning and learning objectives are shared and displayed. Teachers consistently question to ensure the recall of previous work and challenge for depth of understanding. Thorough planning ensures lively warm up sessions as seen in a Year 9 gymnastics lesson which was taught at a brisk pace with clear progression and students remaining on task throughout the lesson. Although planning is generally good, tasks are not planned to meet the needs of the least able students. Teachers intervene in students' work very well to evaluate how their performance could be improved. In a Year 9 lesson, the quality of football passing improved significantly when students were asked to consider which parts of the feet they should use for more accuracy. Most non-participating students are involved in observing and feedback including the completion of observation sheets on key areas covered in the lesson. Learning is consolidated effectively at the end of lessons. Support staff are effectively deployed to ensure students with special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons; as a result these students make good progress. Good use is made of ICT to support learning,

including the use of the SMART board, PowerPoint presentations, and video analysis of students' own work.

208. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Leadership and management are good. The newly appointed head of department has already highlighted some areas for further development, including the writing of Year 10 programmes of study and links with feeder primary schools. This is a newly formed department that has the potential to become a very good if not excellent team. They need to continue the support for each other and share identified areas of good practice.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Very good teaching which is raising attainment
- The use of assessment to improve learning
- The very good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- The opportunity for all students to gain a GCSE qualification

Areas for improvement

- Provision in the sixth form
- Ensuring that the most able have sufficient challenge
- Support for GCSE students at the critical grade boundaries

209. Overall, the standard of work seen at Year 9 is well above the expectations of the agreed syllabus. The 2002 results of the full GCSE course were well above national levels. The results for the much larger entry for the short course were significantly below national results and went against the rising trend in standards.

210. Achievement is very good. This is because teachers have high expectations and match the work to the differing abilities of students. The attention given to speaking and writing helps students improve their oral and written skills. Opportunities to develop ICT skills are very good. Year 10 students made confident PowerPoint presentations illustrating different forms of punishment. Students with special educational needs make good progress because lessons include paired and group discussions and they receive in class support. Suitable homework is regularly set and helps consolidate learning. The attention to examination techniques and a revision guide help examination students with their learning.

211. The policy that all students should follow the GCSE short course helps motivation and contributes to rising standards. However, the most competent students have insufficient challenge.

212. Students show a very good attitude to the subject. They are eager to learn and their interest, productivity and independence are very good. They are self-disciplined and show great respect for the efforts and views of others. They have a good understanding of their work, and know how it may be improved. The curriculum makes a very good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In a Year 10 lesson students considered the point at which life begins as they discussed the complex issue of abortion. The study of aspects of world religions helps students to understand the links between beliefs and practice and the significance of symbols, as in a Year 7 lesson on Judaism, which simulated the Seder meal.

213. Overall, teaching is very good. Lessons are carefully planned and have clear graded objectives that cater for all abilities. Teachers create a positive learning environment by having attractive well-displayed rooms where success can flourish. They raise students self-esteem with praise and rewards. Lessons have pace, include imaginative activities and a variety of teaching and learning styles. Assessment informs students of what they need to do to improve their work. Students on the A*/A and C/D GCSE boundaries need further help in order to raise their grades.
214. Leadership and management are very good. The school needs to clarify the responsibility for the subject in the sixth form. Leadership sets a clear direction for the subject. The full scheme of work for Years 7 to 11 now meets the requirements of the agreed syllabus. Detailed lesson plans and a file of exemplars supplement it and enable the department to share best practice. Performance management is well established. It includes regular monitoring of teaching and learning.
215. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. Teaching has improved, resources are now very good, and standards have risen.

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

In the inspection, 16 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

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

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	3	67	52	0	2	0.67	0.79
Chemistry	1	100	43	0	5	1.0	0.7
Physics	1	100	52	0	4	3.0	0.9
Computer studies	1	0	74	0	13	0	1.75
Economics	1	100	73	0	22	1.0	1.94
Mathematics	7	43	62	0	15	0.86	1.5
Other social studies	2	50	74	50	11	2.5	1.5

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	25	100	87	60	43	7.0	5.8
Chemistry	20	100	90	55	43	6.5	5.9
Biology	25	100	88	56	34	7.1	5.2
Physics	15	93	88	40	40	6.4	5.7
Design and technology	6	100	91	33	30	5.3	5.4
Economics	43	95	89	63	36	7.5	5.5
Computer studies	18	89	86	28	23	5.3	4.6
Physical education	9	100	92	33	25	6.2	5.1
Art and design	29	97	96	48	46	7.2	6.6
Music	6	100	93	83	35	8.3	5.7
Theatre studies	13	92	n/a	31	n/a	5.1	n/a
Classical studies	7	100	95	57	49	6.8	6.5
Geography	22	95	92	45	38	6.6	5.0
History	8	100	88	75	35	8.5	5.4
Government and politics	15	100	n/a	53	n/a	7.1	n/a
Law	14	100	n/a	62	n/a	7.7	n/a

Sociology	21	100	86	57	35	6.7	5.3
Psychology	41	100	n/a	54	n/a	6.5	n/a
Philosophy	11	100	n/a	36	n/a	5.3	n/a
English language	34	100	91	26	30	6.3	5.3
English literature	22	95	95	59	37	6.7	5.9
French	8	75	89	75	38	7.0	5.6
German	3	100	91	0	40	4.0	5.8
Spanish	2	100	89	50	39	6.0	5.7

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The focus of the inspection was on mathematics and physics but biology and chemistry were also sampled. In biology and chemistry, teaching and learning were good. Year 12 students were engaged in a chemistry practical assessment and showed themselves to be careful and competent workers. Older chemistry students showed they understood the relationship between charge density and ionic radius and used complex nomenclature fluently. Year 12 biology students presented their researched findings on a selection of diseases to their fellow students while Year 13 were shown how to carry out titrations accurately in order to calculate the total amount of acid in a sample.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good and results are above average
- Staff have strong subject knowledge
- Students have a good capability for learning independently
- Effective leadership is providing a clear direction for future development

Areas for improvement

- Assessment procedures need further development to ensure consistency of practice
- The use of ICT to support learning
- Entry requirements for the A-level course

216. Students study AS- and A-level mathematics in pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics. High attaining students may also take further mathematics. Results over time have been consistently above average. In 2002, 47 per cent of the Year 13 students taking A-level gained a grade B or above. Although lower than in previous years, these results are above average. At the end of Year 12, students are entered for the AS-level. In 2002, 26 per cent of the students gained a grade A or B, although 33 per cent of the entry did not obtain any grade. On the basis of the students' results in Year 11, achievement at A-level is as expected. Twice as many boys as girls take A-level mathematics, which matches the national pattern. There is no significant difference in their performance. The school also runs a very successful GCSE course in the sixth form.

217. On the basis of the lessons observed and the work seen in some of the student files, standards are above average overall, and students' achievements are good. Students' general confidence with algebra is high. This is at least partly due to the emphasis placed on basic algebraic manipulation early in Year 12. Students who are weak in algebra, identified through a testing procedure, are given additional teaching to ensure that they attain the standards necessary for successful A-level work. As a result they are able to confidently cope with the algebra necessary in the development of a wide range of AS- and A-level work. Students in Year 13 were working confidently on manipulating equations of circles to identify the centre and radius in work on probability distributions in statistics, and in Year 12 on the manipulation of Newton's Laws in mechanics.

218. The number of modules on offer enables the students to select from a range of possible courses. Consequently, most students are able to work at a level which is appropriate and challenging. Teachers have high expectations and get good results from these students. A few students do less well, particularly at the AS-level work. The school is aware of this and is working on a range of strategies to ensure higher standards from these students.
219. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have a good command of the subject, give clear, concise explanations and promote confidence in the students. The nature of some of the classes, which contain a mix of Year 12 and Year 13 students, and a mix of students taking different modules, can prevent whole-class discussion of the subject material. This limits the teaching approach since the teacher may not be able to encourage the enriching and challenging approaches possible from whole-class interactions. However, on these occasions, the students continue to learn effectively, working and learning directly from the text but with expert guidance from the teacher. Overall, the combination of effective teaching and the encouragement of the development of independent learning skills results in good learning and progress. Students work with confidence and independence.
220. Although staff mark and correct students' work, the practice in the department is inconsistent. Students are regularly assessed through the use of module tests, although the overall departmental policy and procedure has still to be established. However this is mitigated to some extent by the opportunities that the students have to take part in tutorial type lessons so that students can receive personal tuition from time to time as necessary. The provision for literacy in the department is satisfactory, although the presentation and organisation of some of the students' folders is poor, providing little support for later revision. The provision of library material is satisfactory and students should be given more encouragement to read around the subject. The current use of ICT to support learning is unsatisfactory.
221. Leadership and management in the department are good. In recent years there has been a period of staffing disruption resulting in staff shortages at all levels. This has had an impact on standards and although gains were made since the last inspection, they have not been sustained throughout this time. Over time, improvement is satisfactory. The department now has permanent leadership, there is a clear vision for future development, and priorities have been identified. This improved stability and leadership should further raise standards.

Physics

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

Strengths

- Teachers' knowledge and subject expertise ensure confident teaching
- Good relationships in the classroom

Areas for improvement

- Feedback to Year 12 students on their progress and achievement
- Opportunities for enrichment and a wider perspective on the subject

222. Results in A-level examinations in physics vary from year to year and the relatively small number of candidates makes statistical analysis unreliable. Overall, the standard of results is above the national average or better, though in 2002 this was not the case. In that year almost one third of the students entered failed to gain a grade. In 2001, the

latest year for which validated national statistics are available, the overall standard was above national expectations, in 2000 was well above and in 1999 was close to the average. The number of girls studying physics is generally low and lower than the national average, except in 1999 when it was close to the average. In 2001, no girls were entered for A-level physics in the school. Over the years the relative performance of boys and girls has varied with no recognisable trend. A very small number of students are entered for the AS-level examination, one in 2001, four in 2000 and all but one gained a grade.

223. The standard of work seen during the inspection is above average, and students are achieving well. Students in Year 13 use a very wide range of scientific formulae competently. They manipulate equations, substitute numerical values and calculate results correctly. They show a good knowledge of early astronomical theories and can derive Kepler's Third Law from a consideration of Newton's theory of gravity and the equations describing circular motion. In a subsequent lesson, the teacher explained the evolution of Black Holes and Neutron stars and from an understanding of the stability of atomic nuclei a student was able to suggest that no heavier element than iron should be produced by nuclear fusion in a star's core.
224. Students in Year 12 have been unsettled by several factors. The introduction of a new course was less than effective because of problems with computers. Some lessons lack structure and students find they have conflicting tasks such as listening to the teacher or note taking, to perform. In class they take an active part in lessons. A lesson on the superposition of waves made good progress because students quickly understood radian measure of angles, how waves can be superposed, the resulting waveform constructed and how phase difference can be calculated.
225. Overall the quality of teaching is good. The best lessons are brisk, informative and well planned. Students make valuable contributions and are keen to be involved in the lesson. The use of interactive whiteboards adds interest and provides high quality and quick moving visual images. Teachers use questions well to allow students to recall previous knowledge, to apply it to new situations and draw logical conclusions. Teachers show expert knowledge of their subject and answer students' questions competently. Students learn well. They are very well motivated and interactions with teachers are relaxed, respectful and often humorous. Their notes are neat and well-organised and numerical work is set out logically. They are attentive and even when the pace of a lesson is very brisk and contains many facts Year 13 students assimilate information, check details in textbooks, make supplementary notes and apply their knowledge to new situations. Students have few opportunities to experience the wider scientific world. Visits to institutions or places of scientific interest are not undertaken and the breadth of students' knowledge is restricted. In Year 13, students' progress is well monitored and their capabilities well recorded.
226. Leadership and management are good. Overall the department is well equipped and the work of two teachers organised effectively. However, the impact of the new course in Year 12 has not been effectively monitored and students have little information on the level at which they are working and the progress they are making. In addition, students have very few opportunities to see how their subject is used in the outside world and what contributions it has made in the past, other than those instances which occur in their course of study. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

Design and technology

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

Strengths

- Very good and sometimes outstanding teaching is leading to improved standards
- The commitment and positive attitudes of students to their learning
- The quality of support from technicians
- The integration and use of ICT to support learning
- Excellent leadership of the subject is leading to improved provision

Areas for improvement

- Carry out an audit of machinery and electrical equipment to ensure adequate health and safety and that there is appropriate maintenance to ensure that machinery and equipment is in first class working condition
- Complete assessment proposals

227. The faculty offers two courses in product design at AS- and A-level. In 2001 results were broadly in line with the national average. Results in 2002 were similar.

228. Attainment in work seen was above average and the work reflects an interesting range of interests and topics. Students' understanding of the design process is good and a number have developed distinctive personal styles. Some students are highly innovative and they are able to present their work using a variety of graphical techniques. Evidence from folders indicates that students are making good progress both in terms of quality and quantity. There is a range of attainment but most students are achieving well. A number are exceeding expectations. Students work at a good pace and show interest in their assignments.

229. Students are well motivated and are enjoying their studies. Attitudes are positive, they work hard and they are enthusiastic about their achievement. Behaviour in workshops is very good and students observe codes of conduct and safe working practices.

230. The quality of teaching is very good. The teacher is experienced and knowledgeable and manages the learning with skill and humour. The teaching styles used are linked to student learning needs, work is well structured and designed to improve standards. In one Year 13 lesson observed the students were involved in a project to produce a prototype model of their main design scheme. Evidence from design folders indicated that good progress is being made and that distinctive personal styles are being developed. Students demonstrate a willingness to develop their ideas and produce work of high quality. They concentrate on their work and are willing to comment on their decision-making process. Relationships are very positive. The teacher was concerned with the process of evaluation and this was introduced very effectively using a PowerPoint presentation. Students responded enthusiastically and were clearly involved in learning. Resources are well-organised and educational support materials well produced. Unfortunately, one teacher is away on long-term sick leave and this is having an effect on curriculum continuity.

231. Leadership is excellent and much has been achieved since the head of faculty's appointment last September. He is sensibly planning to introduce change over a period of time and has detailed a three-phase approach. Much has already been achieved in updating syllabuses and revising assessment procedures. Replacement equipment is

in place and further revision remains to be done. The teaching team has responded admirably and there have been considerable improvements to the management of programmes and the quality of the specialist rooms and learning resources. Two experienced and competent technicians have made a major contribution to the work of the faculty. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

BUSINESS

Business Studies

Overall, the quality of provision in business studies is **good**.

Strengths

- Classes are very well planned to include a range of activities
- Teachers share a wide range of industrial and commercial experience which ensures that vocational aspects of the course are clearly addressed
- Year 13 students complete thoughtful and well researched assignments
- Assessments are effective and good support is offered to students
- Data is used effectively to monitor student performance

Areas for improvement

- Weaker students are not performing to their target grades
- Assignments can be too long and lack variety
- Lesson observations do not focus adequately on learning and the evaluation of the links between teaching and learning

232. Although vocational courses have been established for over six years, examination entries have been small, with examination results being close to national expectations. In 2002 results were good; four of the ten students taking the new AVCE examination achieved A or B grades and the overall pass rate was 90 per cent. Male and female students achieve similar standards.
233. Evidence from work seen in lessons and in students' files during the inspection presents a mixed picture. Overall standards are average and students achieve satisfactorily. Year 13 students have completed excellent assignments based on a sound understanding and application of business concepts. They have benefited from close collaboration with British Airways to ensure that the vocational aspects of their work are up to date. Some students in Year 12 use role-play and ICT confidently to demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of targeting in marketing. Some classes make slower progress, and the combination of the teachers' low expectations and the poor behaviour of a minority of students leads to poor progress for some students. Their responses to the challenges of the subject tend to be superficial and their written skills are not well developed.
234. The quality of teaching is good. All lessons are well planned to include a range of different activities. Teachers make excellent use of their recent commercial experience to help ensure that references to business practice are up to date, and they try to ensure that students play a full part in their own learning. In the best lessons students are encouraged to use ICT to build up their confidence and to learn important business skills. Teachers show skill and originality by building on their students' prior learning in business and in some classes they are able to create a very positive attitude to learning in which the more able students support the efforts of those who find learning in business more difficult. Some assignments are too long as students are encouraged to include underpinning theory and concepts rather than being encouraged to apply this

understanding to real business contexts. Although good use is made of community links there is little variety in the tasks which students are required to undertake.

235. Support offered to students is always good. Teachers are approachable and helpful, and students spoken to during inspection commented favourably on the help that they were offered. Assessments are thorough and have been complimented by the awarding body's standards moderator. The performance of individual students is very closely tracked and regular comparisons are made between target minimum grades and actual performance. This data confirms that a minority of students in Year 12 of this course are under-performing.
236. Business courses are well managed. A newly promoted assistant headteacher provides good leadership. He has introduced a programme of class observations, and offers excellent support to new appointees and those teachers on the graduate training programme. Teaching is closely analysed but the link between teaching and effective learning is not always drawn. All members of the department work extremely hard to update and refine their skills. Their teamwork is very good and they all show considerable potential in contributing to the school's drive to improve the contribution of the vocational curriculum.
237. Although they are increasingly popular, business courses do not recruit from the full ability range of those entering the sixth form. Although efforts have been made to run the double award, the equivalent of two A-levels, the school provides only the single award course.

Economics

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

Strengths

- Results over the last three years are well above national standards
- Teachers are enthusiastic and have high expectations, resulting in excellent responses from students
- Students are keen and respond very positively to the intellectual challenges of economics
- Lessons include a wide variety of different activities to engage and motivate students
- Teachers are very approachable and sensitive to the needs of students

Areas for improvement

- Students need to be thoroughly prepared to meet the challenges of the synoptic module
- Learning objectives for some lessons are not always appropriately and clearly defined

238. A-level results since the last inspection have always been well above average with an average pass rate of 97 per cent over the last five years. The pass rate was 100 per cent in 2002. With the exception of last year, the proportions gaining top grades has been very impressive and in 2001, 63 per cent gained A and B grades. In 2002 performance in the final module reduced the numbers of students gaining top grades. Provisional AS-level results from 2002 indicate that these very high standards are likely to show continued improvement.
239. Standards of work from students in both Years 12 and 13 are well above average, and students are achieving very well. Those in the second year of their course show great persistence in ensuring that they have a sound understanding of the difference between public and merit goods. They also work hard to analyse developments in economic and political union in Europe. Their written work is detailed and they are given extensive

practice in developing examination skills. They are able to apply theory to a wide range of contexts and show a sophisticated grasp of contemporary economic and political issues. Students show good recall of concepts learned for the AS part of their course. Responses to teachers' questions are thoughtful and reflective, and students work very well together. Students' files are well ordered and extremely comprehensive. The use of ICT is extensive and students are able to produce highly effective and entertaining PowerPoint presentations to justify government provision to remedy market failure.

240. Teaching is very good and at all times enthusiastic. The best lessons are intellectually challenging, and students are put under considerable pressure to demonstrate their understanding of economic concepts. In the face of penetrating questions, students retain their self-confidence and willingness to contribute to class discussions, indicating an excellent rapport between teachers and students. Subject expertise is very good which means that explanations of complex theory are clear and supported by examples drawn from contemporary economic events. Lessons incorporate a range of challenging activities which ensure that good pace is maintained in almost all lessons. In some classes there is an over-reliance on teacher-led discussion, and the expected outcomes of various activities are not always clear. Tests are regularly set and work is marked with helpful suggestions where improvements can be made. Good use is made of foreign study tours to introduce the module on Europe.
241. Leadership and management of economics are good. The head of subject is well supported by a recently appointed member of the senior management team whose earlier hard work has made a significant contribution to the success of this subject. Data is used to set targets which are used to monitor both the performance of individual students and class groups. Teamwork and collaboration within the department are good. Classroom observation is used to develop good teaching, but insufficient attention is paid to assessing the extent of students' learning. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Information and communication technology

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

Strengths:

- The broad range of opportunities to study ICT
- Good teaching in both AVCE information technology and computing
- Good learning by students in both courses
- Assessment informing teachers and students about the way forward

Areas for improvement:

- Sharing expertise between the two curriculum areas
- Improve the performance of girls to the level of the boys

242. Standards in A-level computing are above average, and have been over the past three years. The AVCE course was examined for the first time last year, and standards were also above average. Both courses are more popular with boys, who perform better than girls. Students' achievement is good in relation to their GCSE grades in both subjects.
243. Students' work seen during the inspection confirms that standards are still above expected levels. In the AVCE course, students developing their ability to design a

website were working at a good standard in relation to the stage in the course. The highest attainers had researched the target audience well, and could justify their decisions with reference to their research. The majority of students could point to some design issues that they had considered, although they still tend to make some of their judgements on the basis of personal preference. Only a few students, mainly girls, did not support their views with reference to the requirement of the design. At this stage only a few of the higher attainers systematically evaluate their own work and act on their findings. Computing students can program accurately in order to meet the demands of the course. The majority are less sure about the rationale for their work. Higher attainers, however, can explain the issues involved in programming and in computing. Once the teacher had prepared the ground, all students could apply their prior knowledge to the principles and practical application of two-dimensional arrays that they were learning.

244. This good achievement is the result of consistently good teaching by staff with very good knowledge of both subjects. Teachers plan well to meet objectives that they make clear to students, with the result that students develop their knowledge and understanding well. Teachers expect students to work hard at all times, and monitor their work-rate closely at all times. They take prompt action to remedy any problems, keeping parents in touch with their concerns. They inform students clearly about their strengths and weaknesses, while encouraging self-criticism. This action, coupled with well-paced and motivating approaches to teaching, encourages hard work. Teaching methods are varied, but always involve students in working out the links between prior and present learning. Teachers make good use of resources, especially of the examples contained in the students' own work. The two courses meet the needs of the students well in that they have separate appeal to academic and practical preferences, giving students opportunities to work in their preferred manner. Both provide appropriate challenge for learners, and the majority of students meet it well. In both, the nature of demands on students is such that those who speak English as an additional language learn as well as others. In the AVCE lesson seen, the teacher encouraged students to evaluate the work of others and to justify their own designs, but held back from demanding that students support their arguments in full. Students in both courses are encouraged to work independently with consequent lively exchange of ideas in class. Relationships between staff and students are good, producing a positive atmosphere in which students enjoy their learning.
245. The two departments are both very well managed under the leadership of an assistant headteacher. One teacher is responsible for the computing course. The AVCE course is well co-ordinated by the head of department who makes sure that those teaching it work together closely to share expertise, unit preparation and assessment of standards. As it is a new course the staff have been appropriately trained and have shared what they have learned. However, there is no sharing of expertise between computing and AVCE staff, both of whom have much to offer the other. Both courses are taught in well-designed computer rooms with good access to computers and to separate working space, and both have good resources that help students to learn.
246. There has therefore been very good improvement since the last inspection, in that standards, the range of opportunities, the staffing, accommodation and resources have all improved.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical Education

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

Strengths

- Very good teaching is leading to well above average standards
- Very good use of ICT to support learning
- Students show a good degree of independence in their learning
- The commitment of the students to helping in younger students' lessons and clubs.

Areas for improvement

- Support for non-specialist and new teachers
- Setting targets based on prior attainment in GCSE physical education

247. A-level and AS-level results of the small number of students were well above national average in 2001. There has been an increase in the number of students studying at both AS- and A-level due to the increasing interest and take up of the new GCSE syllabus. In work seen standards were well above average. The achievement of students currently following the course is very good. All students passed GCSE physical education and as a result they have a good background knowledge required for the course and continue to build a deep understanding of the theoretical components. A particular strength of students is their ability to analyse information and draw conclusions and to link physical performance with theoretical aspects. They are able to independently research topics, interpret information, and all students are confident in making comprehensive contributions to class discussions.

248. Another positive feature is the students' commitment to the help and support in younger students' lessons and clubs. The department is currently exploring the introduction of accredited courses to develop the leadership skills of sixth form students further.

249. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is very good; some is outstanding. Planning is thorough, enabling all students to understand the objectives of lessons. The pace of learning is brisk but appropriate time is given to enable students to complete their own notes. Students' understanding is checked both during and at the end of lessons. The teachers' very good subject knowledge is reflected in their ability to present ideas in an interesting way. Students were fascinated by the discussion of the lung capacities of current British athletes. Because the ideas were relevant students were able grasp the concepts more easily. Technical vocabulary is used confidently by both teachers and students, and questions are skilfully posed to provoke discussion and understanding, as observed in a lesson on the analysis of trends in global sport. Lessons are characterised by very good relationships, encouraging students to take risks in giving their explanations and being challenged in their thinking. ICT is confidently used to prepare presentations. Assignments are constructively marked, and teachers have high expectations for the presentation of the work. However, teachers sometimes have different expectations of the extent to which students analyse and evaluate their work.

250. Leadership and management of the subject are good. However the level of support for new and non-specialist teachers does not assure consistency in the teaching of both AS- and A-level courses. Assessment and the newly introduced mentoring procedures for students are effective but target grades are not based on the students' prior attainment in physical education. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

Leisure and Recreation; Travel and Tourism

Overall, the quality of provision in Leisure and Recreation and Travel and Tourism courses is **very good**.

Strengths

- Very good teaching which involves all students
- Clearly planned and focused learning activities lead to challenging and well paced lessons
- Excellent use of vocational contexts helps students confirm career plans
- The development of skills needed for independent learning is excellent

Areas for improvement

- Joint teaching of Leisure and Recreation and Travel and Tourism places an unfair burden on staff and limits vocationally specific learning.

251. AVCE Leisure and Recreation and Travel and Tourism were both introduced recently and to date results for the small number of candidates have been average. GNVQ Intermediate Leisure and Tourism awards taken in 2001 were above average with all ten students passing the course, with five merits and one distinction.
252. Standards seen during the inspection were above average and students are achieving very well. They make excellent progress to become mature and independent learners. Those in Year 13 have just completed a series of feasibility studies as to the viability of different social events. They presented the results of their very thorough research to other members of the teaching group who then decided which of the events to actually organise. The group will now be responsible for organising and running their chosen event. This kind of activity provides an excellent context for students to develop a wide range of skills and contributes greatly to their self-confidence and maturity. Those taking the intermediate course can use PowerPoint to make presentations about good and bad customer service. First year students show confidence and expertise in undertaking research into London's tourist attractions for use in role-plays used to assess their understanding of customer service. They support each other's learning and contribute well to the evaluation of the effectiveness of individual role-plays. Leisure and recreation students plan to organise a football competition for other members of the sixth form.
253. Student assignments are well prepared and contain evidence of independent research, including details of different careers in the leisure and tourist industries. This is helpful in informing career decisions. Students on the Intermediate course were sensitive to the needs of each other especially those who found tasks most difficult.
254. Teaching in all lessons was very good. Both Intermediate and Advanced courses are very well planned and students are provided with a wide range of different tasks, all of which have a very clear vocational context. All teachers share high expectations of students' attainment. Classroom and homework activities are clearly focused to achieve clear outcomes. These are made explicit to students, and their response is wholehearted and enthusiastic. The pace of lessons is good. Close and quick questioning of students is used to clarify understanding and there are good links between different learning activities.
255. The range and variety of activities used to teach leisure courses create very positive student responses. The careful structuring and planning of activities to take account of the particular learning needs of individual students encourage all to make progress in developing appropriate study skills. Relationships between staff and students are excellent and this contributes further to the development of confident and mature learners.

256. Leisure and Recreation, and Travel and Tourism courses provide a clear vocational option for students on advanced courses. They can be combined with the full range of other advanced courses and thus contribute to the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum. However, the joint teaching of both travel and tourism and leisure and recreation is not good practice. Although the courses include common elements there are significant differences in both content and assessment. Considerable pressure is placed on the teachers and the range of learning activities available to both groups is more limited. Currently the school provides the single award course, whereas the double award, the equivalent of two A-levels, might be more appropriate in meeting the needs of the kind of learners who benefit most from vocational courses.
257. Although the post of vocational course manager is vacant, leadership of these courses is good. Advanced courses are overseen by one of the assistant headteachers who tackles these additional responsibilities with infectious enthusiasm. The long-term contribution of vocational courses such as this would be strengthened by the appointment of a suitably qualified and experienced head of department.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Music was inspected in detail, but performance arts and art and design were sampled. In performance arts, students are very committed and achievement is the same as the very good achievement in music. In art and design, results at both A-level and AS-level were above average in 2001. In 2002, results improved in both examinations. Retention rates are good. Two lessons were sampled. In one, difficult moral issues, such as the atrocities of war, were discussed with passion, and clear links were made to the work of Picasso and Andy Goldsworthy. Students responded very well, the atmosphere was lively and focused, and very good learning was the result. In the other, the teacher gave good individual advice, and set clear targets for students to meet. However, the atmosphere was rather comfortable, students worked without a sense of urgency, and learning was no better than satisfactory as a result.

Music

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

Strengths

- Teaching is very good and promotes high standards
- Students are mature and responsible musicians, taking a leading part in the musical life of the school

Areas for improvement

- Access to more computers

258. Results at AS- and A-level in 2001, and over recent years were well above average. Standards were similar in 2002 but there are no national figures with which to compare them at the time of the inspection. In the present Year 13 there are some very able and ambitious musicians who are working at a level which suggests the trend will continue. They have a solid understanding of the development of classical music over four centuries and express their ideas in debate and in well-argued essays. Most have a well-developed sense of style in their own compositions which is matched by high standards of performance. In the last two years most AS students have stayed on into the second year to complete the A-level course. There is a large group of students in Year 12 who cover a wider range of ability than their Year 13 colleagues. Their

achievement across the different parts of the course varies, with different students having strengths in different aspects. Despite this most can negotiate their way round an orchestral score in order to detect similarities and differences in their set works. Those students who find composition a challenge could be helped by using computers so that they have instant play-back and can concentrate on using their critical faculties to improve their work. Achievement throughout the sixth form is good.

259. Younger students benefit from the way sixth form students take a full part in school life. As well as helping out in lessons as part of their community service they both take part in and conduct ensembles as well as taking leading roles in the forthcoming production of 'Guys and Dolls'. Students enjoy the sixth form and value these opportunities to develop their musicianship.
260. Teaching is very good. Very good musicianship and knowledge are at the heart of all lessons. One of the strengths is the sharing of classes between teachers so that students experience the full range of teachers' expertise. Students are stimulated and encouraged by very good role models and this is one of the reasons for the above average standards. The methods used encourage students to be independent and they eagerly grasp chances to express their views and share their ideas with each other and with their teachers.
261. Leadership and management are good, as they are in the main school. Music has a high profile in the school and this is due to the leadership of the head of the department and the commitment of sixth formers both to music and to the school. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

HUMANITIES

History, geography, government and politics and sociology were inspected, but psychology and law were also sampled. Psychology is a very popular subject in the school and results have been consistently well above average. Very good teaching and high levels of challenge in the lessons observed ensured that the students were making very good gains in their understanding. In the law lesson observed students made very good progress as a result of strong teaching which was characterised by clear guidance, humour and excellent rapport with the students.

Geography

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

Strengths

- Standards on the AS- and A-level courses are above average; girls achieve a very high proportion of the higher grades in both courses
- Students make very good progress because the teaching they receive is often very good
- Both the good resources for learning and the classroom use of the interactive whiteboard support independent learning very well

Areas for improvement

- Lower attaining students need further support in understanding the terminology

262. Standards of attainment are above average, and students achieve a high proportion of A or B grades in AS- and A-level. In 2001, A-level examination results were above average. In 2002, all students were successful and ten of the 16 students achieved A or B grades. These results are due to the high ability of many students and the very good teaching they receive.
263. Work seen during the inspection confirms that the standards by both year groups are well above average. These standards represent very good achievement, considering students' earlier results in GCSE. In Year 13, students address complex issues such as health care on a global scale. Assignments of above average students show an excellent knowledge and understanding of human geography. Extended writing, statistical representation and the use of ICT are of a high standard. Students compare the National Health Service in Britain, USA and France with the methods used to deliver an effective service in Tanzania and India. Coursework of below average students lacks the depth of knowledge and understanding of how best to combine their learning from lessons with their own research and current events. Some have only a limited understanding of specialist terminology.
264. Students make very good progress because the teaching they receive is often very good. They work very hard and are keen to succeed in geography. They are challenged by the depth of independent study, paired and group work. Year 13 students enjoyed a short residential fieldwork in South Wales although the adverse weather impeded their data collection.
265. Teaching is very good and on occasions excellent. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of their subject. Very effective lesson planning includes the efficient use of the interactive whiteboard, video, tape recordings and other up to date resources. Brisk question and answer sessions arouse the interest of students and engage them in academic discussion. In Year 13, for example, interesting and challenging questions focus on the analysis of data and the interpretation of issues. These range from migration in Afghanistan to the exploitation of forests in Borneo. In a Year 12 lesson students explain clearly the effects of hydrological cycle on the Rhine and flash flooding in Lynmouth and Lynton. Students are skilfully drawn into discussion and the work is very well related to an examination question to test their breadth and depth of understanding. Lessons promote independent learning often very well. Where teaching is excellent students make outstanding academic progress and achieve much within a short period of time.
266. The department is very well led and managed by the head of humanities who is ably supported by a geographer. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

The issues raised in the previous report have been addressed despite difficulties in recruiting specialist teachers.

History

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

Strengths

- Teaching which promotes engagement with advanced skills of historical study
- Results at A-level have been consistently high
- Students are interested and committed to their work
- The quality of essay writing is high

Areas for improvement

- Research into effective teaching methods to enable greater consistency of provision

267. Standards of work seen were well above the national average, with many students demonstrating well-developed historical skills which enable them to process ideas quickly and to offer constructive historical analyses easily. Students achieve very well during the course.

268. At A-level in 2001 all students passed the examination and higher grades were very high in relation to the national average. Standards in 2002 were not quite as high but maintained the subject's consistent record of good results at this level. Written work and classroom observations indicate that that standard of attainment in Year 13 is being maintained, or exceeded, and that many students are achieving standards well above the national average. They research historical evidence and arguments very thoroughly and reach elaborate and logical conclusions in, for example, their analysis of the religious climate in Elizabeth I's England and the developing role of the Puritans. Very high quality essays are regularly produced. Observation of lessons and a scrutiny of students' work in Year 12 confirm that they too are already confident historians who energetically analyse and debate historical contexts such as the political background of late nineteenth-century Germany. They understand how to research and how to exercise empathy to test hypotheses, and they relish the opportunity to debate their ideas in seminar-style lessons. This performance reflects the capability that many of them demonstrated in their high levels of GCSE attainment in 2002.

269. The students' personal responses revealed that they had been attracted to the sixth-form course as result of the historical education that they had received earlier, at this school and elsewhere. Several indicated that they intended to continue with historical studies into higher education. They felt that they were well supported as individuals by the teachers in their studies, although they did emphasise their preference for participative learning.

270. The quality of teaching is very good and sometimes excellent. It is based on high levels of subject knowledge and understanding and on careful planning that presents objectives which both challenge students and ensure a strong pace to learning. Further research into teaching strategies would enable good practice to be shared and greater consistency of provision to be developed across the various teaching groups. The curriculum has particular strengths in the way that it is taught because its style strongly develops students' spiritual and moral awareness since exploration of values is a regular feature of discursive lessons. Assessments are thorough, informed and accurate and they give students a very clear insight into how they might secure further improvement.

271. Leadership and management are good. Teaching and learning are being managed and carefully reviewed with the intention of securing further development and there is good evidence of teamwork which adds to the constructive atmosphere present within the department. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

Government and politics

Overall, the quality of provision in government and politics is **very good**.

Strengths

- Consistently very high standards have been maintained
- High levels of achievement by all students as a result of excellent teaching and independent learning
- Very good leadership and management especially of resources for learning and assessment

Areas for improvement

- Access to and use of ICT to support learning
- The accommodation is barely satisfactory.

272. Standards are well above average. In 2002, 80 per cent of A-level passes were at grades A or B. All students achieve very well. Some students who struggled for A-level standards attained success at E grade or above, and also gained in maturity and self-confidence. Over six years at least 50 per cent of the entry have gained higher grades.

273. Students' work is constantly assessed. Students themselves are involved in grading their own strengths and weaknesses and in careful joint planning to improve their standards. In a Year 12 lesson on party funding students started from their own understanding shared in discussion, were shown examples of 'sleaze' in groups and presented case studies to the whole class. Incomplete work on party policies was handed back individually with encouragement to add further details and guidance on how to do so. Students are encouraged to repeat AS and A-Level modules to improve their grades.

274. The quality of teaching is excellent. In a Year 13 class on the powers and limitations of the US presidency, students sorted events from presidencies dating back to F D Roosevelt, evaluated their impact in group presentations on the long term variation of presidential power, and contributed to the graph created on the whiteboard. The choice of material and techniques led to rapid learning ready for the planning of an essay on the topic.

275. Leadership and management of learning are very good. Students have access to high quality books, excellent teaching materials and opportunities to ask questions, they meet other students in conferences, and hear local and national political speakers. The skills of communication, numeracy and ICT are incorporated into all lessons, although access to ICT within the classroom is very limited in the barely satisfactory accommodation. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

Sociology

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

Strengths

- Standards at AS- and A-level are well above average
- Achievement is good overall with most students making significant gains in their learning
- Collaborative teaching leads to high standards of work by most students

Areas for improvement

- Employ wider range of teaching strategies to attract boys to study alongside girls, and to develop oracy in classes
- Promote the study of sociology and independent learning by using the school community as research environment in surveys and interviews.

276. Results at AS- and A-level are well above average. In 2002 over 50 per cent of students gained an A or B grade, with all students gaining at least a pass grade.
277. Standards of work seen are well above average and reflect care and diligence. Notes are carefully managed by the majority of students and assessed work is carefully marked against appropriate criteria. Students work to raise their standard above the target minimum grades with overall success. Higher attaining students in Year 13 can apply theory to new situations, as in a lesson on religion. Lower attaining students receive guidance and frequent testing of knowledge to support their progress. Many students, however, seem inarticulate and shy to venture their own opinions, even on topics where they have either general or specific knowledge such as religion or education.
278. Achievement is good. The very few boys and students from ethnic minority groups make it impossible to compare achievement by gender or ethnicity. One half of students in the current Year 13 group have three years of sociology behind them, having taken in Year 11 the popular and successful GCSE Sociology, which gives useful background knowledge. Students transferring at age 16 from other local schools achieve as highly as their peers from Haydon.
279. The quality of teaching is good but in lessons, teacher led approaches predominate. Effective collaboration between the two staff ensures coverage of different facets of each module without overlap. Teaching is confident but does not always encourage the students themselves to develop their idea and their thinking through discussion. The teaching strategies adopted are quite narrow. Students are well grounded in theory but are not capable of arguing the merits of different approaches.
280. Leadership and management of the subject are very good, and there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus of the inspection was on English, French and Spanish, but German was also sampled. Teaching and learning in lessons seen in German were very good.

English

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

Strengths

- Students achieve above average standards
- Good teaching is leading to good progress
- Students have very positive attitudes towards English
- Good leadership and management of a successful department

Areas for improvement

- Teachers should work at involving a minority of students more actively in lessons so as to better develop their independent learning skills.

281. Standards are above average. The standards achieved by students in the 2002 AS- and A-level examinations were well above the national average, continuing a very positive trend. The current standards of students in Year 13 are above national expectations, and this represents good achievement for students in relation to their prior attainment. Standards are higher in English Literature than in Language. Standards of those on the AS courses in Year 12 are also above expectations for this stage of a one-year course. Students of all levels of competence, including those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented, share in this good achievement.
282. Students studying English Language make good progress in learning to appreciate and use that language in various ways, for example in analysing model commentaries. Students studying English Literature make good progress in developing the skills of critical analysis and evaluation as they study a range of texts. They communicate their knowledge and understanding effectively both in discussion and in writing. Students are skilled at comparing different texts in a particular genre such as detective fiction. They are also confident in discussing writers' use of structure and language. More competent students also display an impressive understanding of the context of texts such as William Blake's poetry. Whilst many students are confident in discussion, a minority is more reluctant to engage in class debate.
283. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, with some very good features. One of the strongest characteristics is the very effective use which teachers make of assessment and feedback. The marking of students' work is very detailed and constructive, and as with the feedback given in lessons, is very successful in conveying to students how they can improve their work. This was very evident in a lesson on detective fiction in which the teacher gave an effective evaluation of the qualities of students' analysis of novels such as Chandler's *The Big Sleep*. Teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve, and students have very positive attitudes towards English, rising to the challenge and working productively. Teachers also have very good subject knowledge, which they convey to students often through effective questioning, as when Year 12 students were discussing the feminist context of the play *Top Girls*. Resources are used effectively to make students learn actively, for example when Year 13 students were considering the different qualities of editorial writing. Whilst the teaching overall is good, in a minority of lessons teachers are less

effective in engaging students in active debate, with the result that the lesson becomes quite teacher controlled and the students become passive learners.

284. Leadership and management in English are good. The department has successfully come to terms with the demands of relatively new syllabuses, and teachers engage in effective joint planning. There are good opportunities for professional development.

285. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, and standards are higher now than in 1997.

French

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

Strengths

- Opportunities for work placements and study visits boost students' learning
- Teachers are expert linguists and their planning is very good so that by Year 13 students achieve very well

Areas for improvement

- Independent study skills are not well developed in Year 12, especially the use of dictionaries and wordprocessing
- Year 12 students lack oral fluency

286. In recent years results at A-level in French have been above the national average, and students have achieved well, although in 2002 results fell short of the school's targets. Numbers entered for AS-level were much higher in 2002. Results were in line with the 2001 average and also fell short of the school's targets.

287. Currently in the two Year 12 classes there are 19 students. Standards of attainment are average overall, and students' achievements are satisfactory. Students have studied all the main grammatical structures required for the AS-level course, and are beginning to use their knowledge to produce more sophisticated language, but are not yet accurate enough. They have written letters and short essays on the media, relationships and education, and use a range of specialist topic vocabulary appropriately. Their writing skills vary from above average to weak, but even the least competent students have made satisfactory progress in the quality of ideas they express. Only a small minority of students uses wordprocessing to draft written work. Those who do so produce better results; one student composed an outstanding essay on the subject of the Internet.

288. Dictionary skills are underdeveloped. Students do not routinely use dictionaries for their class-work. They respond well when their teacher uses French as the sole medium of communication. Although they are not fluent, they do their best to follow the example of their teacher. In one lesson they thoroughly enjoyed a debate on the benefits and dangers of wine. They had prepared well and learned a wide range of specialist vocabulary and debating language. However, in another Year 12 class, students were more reluctant to speak French and were not always required to do so. The tasks were less challenging. The pace of the lesson was slower and consequently students were less productive. Nevertheless, students work hard on homework tasks, prepare well for lessons and regularly give presentations on a chosen topic.

289. Standards are well above average in Year 13. The eight students are achieving very well. They have developed a sound grasp of grammar and structures. The highest attaining students make few errors, most of them minor. Even the least competent

write well and any mistakes do not impede communication. Their progress is most evident in their examination coursework, which covers topics ranging from politics and history to language, music and dance. One student wrote enthusiastically and expertly on the influence of French football in England, and another wrote an essay of outstanding quality on anti-Semitism in France. Other recent examples of very good written work include a comprehensive report on a class debate on the legalisation of drugs, which is evidence of students' research, independent thought and personal development.

290. The oral skills of students in Year 13 are very good; several of the students have excellent levels of fluency. They have acquired an exceptional range of specialist vocabulary. Their teacher speaks at native speed, but they have no problems in understanding her explanations and respond very well to her questions and prompting.
291. Teaching and learning are good in Year 12, and Year 13 students benefit from outstanding teaching. Their learning is excellent. Their teacher sets an extremely challenging pace, uses the language expertly to explain and present new material. She sets high standards, insisting on accuracy and demanding more complex language and ideas. Students respond very well and have developed independent study skills, such as the use of ICT and reference books. Teachers' planning is very good. They use a variety of activities to maintain focus. Their relationships with students are excellent. They know their students' strengths and weaknesses well and anticipate possible problems in their learning. They have very good subject knowledge and are able to inspire and enthuse their students. They use homework well to extend classroom learning.
292. Half the students in Year 13 intend to continue their studies at university. All have been on a study visit to France and most have profited from a work placement there, arranged by the school. Year 12 students would like a similar experience, although only half will continue their French course in Year 13.
293. Course leadership and management are very good. Schemes of work are now well developed and long-term planning is sound. There is a strong team of committed teachers. Improvement in provision has been good over the last two years and the team has the capacity to improve it further.

Spanish

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

Strengths

- Teachers are expert linguists and good role models: they develop students' listening and speaking skills well
- Students learn to work independently and think for themselves; their personal development is good

Areas for improvement

- Further development of the use of ICT to support students' learning
- Strategies to increase the numbers studying Spanish in the sixth form

294. Numbers of students studying Spanish in the sixth form in recent years have been small, three or four per year normally. Results have been average, and were similar in 2002, when all six candidates achieved pass grades. The two AS-level candidates gained grades A and B.

295. The eight students in the current Year 12 are progressing well. Standards of work are above average overall, and students' achievement is good. Their oral skills are good, although one or two of them are reticent and contribute little in discussion. All are able to give interesting presentations on their chosen topics, which they have researched personally. One student, who is a fluent speaker, gave an excellent and detailed talk on the sport of pelota, without the use of notes. Students discuss complex topics, using sophisticated specialist vocabulary to express their own opinions and knowledge.
296. Year 12 students are used to hearing their teacher speaking Spanish and have developed good listening skills. They understand Spanish spoken at native speed in authentic recordings used for listening practice. Their reading skills are sufficiently well developed to understand and manipulate the challenging texts used in their class-work. However, they have as yet done little extended reading. They make rapid progress in writing skills. Higher attaining students write fluently. Students' knowledge of grammar is sound, although there are still basic gaps in the knowledge of the least competent.
297. In Year 13, numbers are at present very small. Standards of work are well above average. Students make very good progress and achieve very well. They compose accurate, articulate essays. Their examination course-work expresses mature and well thought out ideas on historical, political and social issues. They have a sound grasp of grammatical theory and its application, and are comfortable using a full range of structures. They take full advantage of the individual attention they receive from their teachers and of opportunities for one-to-one conversations. One student is particularly fluent and is able to hold long and animated discussions in Spanish with her teacher.
298. Teaching and learning are very good. The teachers are skilled linguists. Both of them are bilingual, and they are well equipped to anticipate problems commonly experienced by English students learning Spanish. They show great expertise in coaxing more and more complex responses from their students, using skilful questioning techniques. Expert personal knowledge of the topics studied and of life in Spain enlivens lessons. Students are keen to succeed and appreciate their teachers' hard work and the first class facilities provided for language learning. Teachers are good role models for the students, both as linguists and in the way they handle the discussion of sensitive topics and moral issues. They inspire students to think for themselves and to work independently. However the use of ICT to support students' learning is limited.
299. Teachers' planning is very good, and the materials used are authentic and challenging. Where appropriate, individual students are provided with different materials and set different tasks, according to their needs. Students are required to work hard, both in lessons and on regular homework tasks. They enjoy their language studies and most of them wish to continue them at university. Work experience placements in Spain are offered to Year 12 classes, but only two students have taken up the offer.
300. The Spanish courses are very well managed and directed by the new leadership. Recently drawn up, detailed schemes of work are now in place and are being added to constantly. The strength of Spanish in the sixth form is its teachers. Provision has improved over the last year or two and the team has the commitment and the capacity to improve still further.