

INSPECTION REPORT

KING SOLOMON HIGH SCHOOL

Barkingside, Ilford

LEA area: Redbridge

Unique reference number: 102861

Headteacher: Mr A Falk

Reporting inspector: Mr R Hancock
2715

Dates of inspection: 24th – 28th March 2003

Inspection number: 249557

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of students: 11 to 19 years

Gender of students: Mixed

School address: Forest Road
Barkingside
Ilford

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Fax number: 020 8559 9445

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs P Stanton

Date of previous inspection: April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2715	Mr R Hancock	Registered inspector	Citizenship	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?
10905	Dr A Brewerton	Team inspector	Mathematics	
23413	Mr R Allen	Team inspector	English	
31159	Mr C Simmonds	Team inspector	Science Educational inclusion, including race quality	
18032	Ms I Randall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
4757	Mr D Morris	Team inspector	Art and design	
8552	Mr W Hart	Team inspector	Design and technology	
30743	Mr N Cowell	Team inspector	Geography Special educational needs	
31329	Ms K Barratt	Team inspector	History	
12408	Mr A Frith	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
23323	Dr J Harvey	Team inspector	Music	
31821	Mr B McCann	Team inspector	Physical education	
19913	Mr R Garrett	Team inspector	English (sixth form) Drama (sixth form) Media studies (sixth form)	
17453	Mr C Edney	Team inspector	Mathematics (sixth form)	
8361	Mr M Burley	Team inspector	Biology (sixth form)	
15277	Mr C Vidler	Team inspector	Business education (sixth form)	
2652	Mr R Lomas	Team inspector	Psychology (sixth form)	

7636	Dr A Sinha	Team inspector	English as an additional language Ivrit (modern Hebrew)	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

A technology college since 1995, King Solomon High School is a voluntary aided secondary school for students in the 11 to 18 age range, serving the Jewish community in the outer London borough of Redbridge and further afield. The school opened in 1993 with 85 Year 7 students and now has 946 students on its roll, representing 70 per cent of the potential Jewish population in Redbridge. About 50 students are from other areas of London. Students are from a wide variety of social and economic backgrounds, but the proportion of students eligible for a free school meal is below average. Numbering 30, the proportion of students for whom English is an additional language is slightly above average, most of these students being bilingual speakers of Ivrit. The proportion of students identified as having special educational needs is above average, but for students with a statement of special educational need it is below average. The attainment of students on entry varies from year to year but is broadly average.

At the time of the inspection, the founding headteacher was about to leave the school. The governing body is currently considering the possibility of merging with the governing body of the primary school from which half of its students transfer, with a view to creating a campus for educating children in the 5-19 age range. The school is much more established than it was at the time of the last inspection and is now at the crossroads of another important phase in its development.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

King Solomon High School is a good school with some very good features. Standards are well above average by the end of Year 11 and the achievement of students is good. Most of them have positive attitudes and behave well. Students are well taught. The leadership and management of the school are very good and the school is well supported by its governing body. It gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is very well led and managed.
- Overall attainment is well above average and students achieve well throughout the school.
- The quality of education in art and design is especially distinctive.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good.
- Relationships are very good.
- Students are well cared for and strongly supported.

What could be improved

- Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory.
- The behaviour of a minority of students is unsatisfactory.
- Students do not have enough opportunities to work independently.
- A system for tracking and analysing students' achievement to help ensure that all make good progress has still to be developed.
- The curriculum does not fully meet the needs of all students.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. Its improvement since that time has been good because, although some of the key issues identified six years ago have still to be fully addressed, the quality of teaching has considerably improved and standards are higher. The sixth form is now much more firmly established.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A
A-levels/AS-levels		C		

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

Students' attainment in GCSE examinations is consistently well above average, both in relation to all schools and to similar ones. This is a good achievement. The overall standard of most current work is also well above average. GCSE results in English, mathematics and science are above average and in much current work the standard in each of these subjects is well above average. In the 2002 examinations, students' results were especially good in mathematics and physical education but were also good in art and design, science, for those studying for the double award, English literature, geography, history, home economics, ICT and Spanish. However, results at grade A* were not nearly as strong, an indication that there is scope for higher-attaining students to achieve more. The only subject where results were below average was French. The school sets ambitious targets for success in GCSE examinations. In 2002, it did not quite meet them, but the standard of current work indicates that the school is right to set a challenging target for 2003. The trend of improvement in GCSE examinations is in line with the national trend. Overall, standards in ICT are not high enough.

In 2002, National Curriculum test results in English, mathematics and science were above average and when students' prior attainment is taken into account results were well above average. This represents good achievement and provides a strong basis for success in GCSE examinations. Current standards in English, mathematics and science broadly reflect the test results. Students are also reaching standards which are above average in design and technology, history and Spanish. Standards are below average in ICT. The trend of improvement in test results is in line with the national trend.

Students read very well and writing standards are above average. Their speaking and listening skills are also very well developed. Standards of numeracy are good. Girls are not achieving as well as boys in mathematics and science. Gifted and talented students often achieve well in art and design but do not excel to the same degree in other subjects. Students with special educational needs progress as well as expected throughout the school and are making good progress in art and design and design and technology. Students for whom English is an additional language make very good progress. Most current work in the sixth form is above or well above average.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The majority of students display positive attitudes, are keen to learn and enjoy taking part in lessons and the wider life of the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The majority of students behave well. They concentrate in class and work hard. They move about the building sensibly and show concern for other users.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Students relate very well to one another and to their teachers. They take on responsibility well but are capable of being more independent.
Attendance	Very high. High attendance levels enable students to make the most of

	their schooling.
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Although the behaviour of some students is exemplary and that of the vast majority is good, the behaviour of a minority of students is a cause for some concern in some lessons in most years. There is a low level of exclusions. A strong underlying bond between members of the school community makes for very good relationships, a major factor in helping the school to create the ethos of a large caring family with shared values. Students are punctual.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Its main strengths are lesson planning, pace, subject knowledge, high expectations and knowledge of the different needs of students. On the whole, good use is made of homework. Teachers have a very good knowledge of course requirements and prepare students very well for tests and examinations. They establish good relationships with students and use questioning well to find out what students know and still need to know. Work is regularly and frequently marked but students do not always receive good feedback on how to improve. The teaching of ICT is a weakness because most teachers do not have enough expertise to help students to use it effectively. The school has still to implement fully the national strategies for numeracy and literacy which means that the teaching of these skills has limited impact. Teaching is very good in English, mathematics and science and in these subjects in particular higher-attaining students are effectively challenged to do well.

The quality of learning is mostly good and often very good. Students with special educational needs learn well because most work is tailored to their needs and those for whom English is an additional language learn very well because work is always tailored to their needs. Students who are gifted and talented have still to be identified by the school but do very well in art and design. Students make good use of their competences in reading and writing. They learn to work independently in science, but normally this is not a strength of their learning in other subjects. They develop their analytical and reasoning skills in science and mathematics, use research skills well in art and design to find out more about the artistic processes and are innovative in design and technology. Students recall prior learning, acquire new knowledge and organise themselves well for tests and examinations. They do not learn enough about ICT and its application in all subjects, largely because their teachers do not have enough knowledge to help them.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All National Curriculum subjects are taught for appropriate amounts of time but provision for vocational courses is limited and the use of ICT in subjects is a weakness.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Good. Teachers know students well, are aware of their needs and most plan their lessons well to take account of them.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Very good. Students' needs are carefully identified and met. Students are well taught, have access to good resources and make good progress.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Students have good opportunities to consider the moral aspects of life, to interact with one another and to appreciate the diversity of different cultures. The spiritual aspects of the curriculum are satisfactory, but opportunities are missed to exploit these in subjects at large.

How well the school cares for its students	Very well. There are very good support systems and students' personal development is carefully monitored, but their academic progress is not tracked as systematically.
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The school works well with parents. They receive good information and are kept in touch with what is happening in the school. They are especially well involved in the target-setting process. Because of the limited extent to which ICT is used in subjects in Years 7 to 9, the curriculum does not meet statutory requirements. Provision to ensure the development of students' independence ought to be stronger.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has a strong sense of vision and works strongly with other senior leaders to realise it. Teamwork is especially effective at senior management level. Good policies are in place and are regularly reviewed and updated. Subject departments are well run and the school's pastoral system functions very effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body provides good support through befriending teachers, assisting with key appointments, providing expertise and reviewing the school's overall performance, but has not ensured that provision for ICT meets statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Although the school does not as yet have a central tracking system to indicate in detail the progress that students are making, it analyses its overall performance rigorously and regularly.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school is well resourced. Departments have appropriate opportunities to ensure that they have enough books and equipment to underpin students' learning and to plan for future needs.

The strength of the leadership lies in its sustained vision and capacity to engender loyalty and shared commitment, both to school improvement and through realising its obligation to serve the Jewish community. Strong policies and effective procedures ensure that the school is very well run. The weakest feature is the management of ICT, where provision has not improved enough since the last inspection. Although staff turnover has been high during the past two years, and the school has not always been able to find effective replacements, it has recruited some very good teachers and has handled a difficult situation well. Support staff are skilled and dedicated. Accommodation is mostly good and teachers are able to make good use of sufficient books and equipment. The school is well aware of the principles of best value and compares its performance with that of similar schools, sets challenging targets for improvement and obtains good value for money from its purchases of books, equipment and services.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students enjoy attending school. • Students make good progress. • The school expects students to work hard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The behaviour of a minority of students. • The school's arrangements for homework. • The turnover of staff.

The inspection team found that most students enjoy attending school and that they make good progress. The school expects students to work hard. The inspection team also found that the school's arrangements for homework were satisfactory in that, for the most part, the work undertaken at home by students helps to reinforce their learning and makes a contribution to the raising of standards. The inspection team agrees with parents that a minority of students misbehave in some lessons and that this interferes with the learning of other students. The level of staff turnover is about the current average for similar schools. The school works hard to recruit staff, is flexible in its working practices and ensures that new teachers are well supported, but some students take advantage of teachers who are

inexperienced.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form is a firmly established feature of the school. There are currently 218 students on the roll, slightly more male students than female students. Students are from a wide variety of social and economic backgrounds. A high proportion of students from the school enter the sixth form and the retention rate is good. The school expects prospective students to have demonstrated that they are likely to cope with the academic demands of sixth-form study but also adopts a flexible approach to entry and is prepared to accept students into the sixth form if it is felt they will benefit from the experience. A strong feature of provision is the number and range of courses leading to a qualification in the A-level examination. Another distinctive feature is the school's provision for students with special educational needs. Although few in number, they are very well catered for and thrive in its strong supportive atmosphere.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form is effective. The quality of teaching is very good and, as a result, the majority of students make good progress. Although in 2001 the overall achievement in A-level examinations was only average, results improved in 2002 and the standard of much current work is well above average. Students have good opportunities to acquire new knowledge, to learn new skills and to deepen their understanding by studying a wide range of courses and taking part in other initiatives. The vocational aspects of the curriculum are more limited but there are plans to introduce new courses. There is no provision for key skills work in ICT or literacy and numeracy. The sixth form is very well led and managed. The curriculum is kept under review, students are well supported and have good opportunities to broaden their personal development. Because the teaching is so good and because the majority of students achieve well and expenditure on the sixth form is not excessive, it is proving to be cost effective.

Strengths

- The sixth form is very well led and managed.
- The teaching is of very good quality.
- Relationships are very good.
- The standard of much current work is well above average.
- Students are very well cared for and are effectively supported.

What could be improved

- Provision for students to develop their independence is not well developed.
- The vocational aspects of the curriculum are limited.
- The right balance between the social aspect of provision and the application to work has still to be achieved.

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	Very good. A-level results in 2001 were very high. Standards observed in lessons were well above average in both Years 12 and 13. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have high expectations and students

	respond well. Students' attitudes are very good. Academic support is a strength.
Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Biology	Very good. Students achieve very well because the quality of teaching is good and they have a positive attitude to learning. Teachers have a very good command of the subject and are committed to raising standards which are already well above average.
Product design	Very good. The provision is very good. Relationships are very good, especially in seminars. Effective new courses have been introduced. Teaching is very good. Students achieve well.
Business education	Very good. Excellent management and leadership have resulted in a significant improvement in the standard of work undertaken and in public examination results. Teaching is good. Standards are above average and students achieve well.
ICT	Good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, standards are above average and students achieve well.
Physical education	Very good. Teaching is very good, students are well motivated and examination results are above average.
Art and design	Very good. Standards on AS- and A-level courses are very high. Teaching is very good and students' achievement is very good.
Drama	Very good. Standards are high and students achieve very well as a result of their excellent attitudes, the very good teaching they receive and very effective leadership and management of the subject.
Media	Satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall and has good features that help students achieve in line with expectations. Standards are below average, in line with previous A-level results. Resources and facilities for media education are very good.
Geography	Satisfactory. Teaching and learning are very good. The standards of current work is above average and students are achieving well. Attainment at AS- and A-level needs to be improved. Recent technologies need to be used more to raise standards. Management is sound.
History	Good. Standards are in line with expectations. Strengths are good leadership and management, a good curriculum and good teaching.
Psychology	Good. Results at A-level are increasingly good and are above average. Teaching is excellent overall, the attitudes and behaviour of students are very good and the co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject.
English	Very good. Teaching is very good and students achieve well as a result. Standards are above average, in line with provisional AS-level results in 2002. Students have very positive attitudes. The leadership and management of a strong teaching team support students' learning very well.

In Year 12, standards of work in politics and sociology are above average and standards in Ivrit and Spanish are well above average. Standards are above average in physics and chemistry. Standards in music are also above average.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are	Very well. Students receive good guidance from their subject teachers

guided and supported	on what they have to do to improve further. They also receive good guidance on university entrance requirements. Broader careers advice is also effective.
Aspect	Comment
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Very good. Recruitment procedures are thorough and responsible. The retention rate for the sixth form is high. Good relationships exist between the students and staff. The curriculum is kept under regular review and steps taken to make sure it is up to date. Equality of opportunity is an especially good feature as students with special educational needs are sensitively catered for.

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 of the relationships. • The approachability of the teachers. • The suitability of courses. • The quality of information they receive about studying in the sixth form. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers advice. • The advice they receive on what they should study. • The degree to which the school responds to their views. • The range of worthwhile activities to join in.

As only a small number of sixth-form students returned a completed questionnaire, the inspection team supplemented the responses by talking extensively to many sixth-form students during the course of the inspection. The inspection team found that relationships are good, both between students and also between staff and students, and that teachers go out of their way to make themselves available to students. Whilst the inspection team found that many courses match the talents of students, they also found that course provision for those with a strong vocational interest is much more limited. Students receive good quality information about studying in the sixth form. Whilst it was common for students to recall very little about careers education, the school's provision over time is extensive and varied. The inspection team also found that the enrichment programme provides a good range of activities. The school council in particular provides an appropriate means for the school to respond to the considered views of students and has clearly done so in matters such as preferred dress codes. Whilst the inspection team was unable to see at first hand the quality of advice given to individual students, records indicate that this is done with care and understanding.

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. Students' attainment in GCSE examinations is consistently well above average for the proportion of students achieving five or more grades at A* - C and at A* - G. When the overall results are compared with those of similar schools, they are well above average. Given that the students' overall standards when they start the school are no more than average, this is a very good outcome. The overall standard of most current work is either average or well above average and the achievement of students in subjects taken as a whole is good and often very good, with ICT and French being the only major weaknesses. Achievement is particularly good in English, mathematics, science, art and design and history.
2. In the 2002 examinations, students' results in terms of performance at grades A* - C were especially good in mathematics and physical education, but were also good in art and design, science, for those studying for the double award, English literature, geography, history, home economics, ICT and Spanish. However, results at grade A* were not nearly as strong and only met or exceeded the national average in English language, mathematics and geography, an indication that there is scope for higher-attaining students to achieve more at the highest levels in a number of other subjects. Results were below average in French and need to be higher. The trend of improvement is in line with the national trend.
3. National Curriculum test results in English, mathematics and science are normally above average or well above average. In 2002, results were above average in each of the three subjects. When students' prior attainment is taken into account, results were well above average. The trend of improvement is in line with the national trend. Results represent good achievement and provide a strong platform for the future progress that students make before they take their GCSE examinations. Current standards in English, mathematics and science broadly reflect the test results. Students are also reaching standards which are above average in design and technology, history and Spanish. Standards are below average in ICT.
4. Standards of literacy are above average. Students read very well and writing standards are above average. Speaking and listening skills are also very well developed. Standards of numeracy are also above average. Students' competence in these basic skills is one of the major reasons for their academic success.
5. Higher-attaining students are achieving especially well in current work in English, mathematics and history. Girls are not achieving as well as boys in mathematics and science and this ought not to be the case. Despite not being formally identified by the school or by departments, gifted and talented students achieve well in art and design, where much of the work is outstanding, but are not obviously flourishing in their other subjects. Students with special educational needs progress as well as expected throughout the school and are making particularly good progress in art and design and design and technology. Students for whom English is an additional language make very good progress.
6. The school sets ambitious targets for success in GCSE examinations. Although it did not quite meet these in 2002, the standard of students' current work indicates that it is right to be ambitious. The school has set another challenging, but appropriate, target for further improvement in 2003.

Sixth form

7. In 2001, overall AS- and A-level results were in line with national averages. Results were especially good in art and design, mathematics and physics where they were well above average. They were below average in computer studies, French and design and technology and were well below average in business studies, geography and Spanish. In 2002, overall results showed an improvement but it is not possible to compare the overall results in detail with results nationally because national comparative data is not yet available. Current standards in English, mathematics and biology are above average.
8. Students also had the opportunity to re-take their GCSE examinations in some nine subjects in 2001. For the most part, this amounted to a handful of candidates who met with varying degrees of success, but entries were larger for English and mathematics, where results were broadly in line with national averages for achievement at grades A* - C. The very small number of students on courses leading to qualification in GNVQ or AVCE achieved average results. Students with special educational needs achieve especially well in the sixth form and there are good individual instances of students overcoming considerable learning difficulties. The achievement of students in art and design is often striking and the work of individual students is prolific and intense.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Students have good attitudes to school and the behaviour of the majority is also good. Students' personal development and their relationships with one another and with their teachers are very good. Attendance is well above average. Since the last inspection, students' attitudes to the school have remained positive but their behaviour is not as consistently good.
10. In most lessons, students' constructive attitudes and their enthusiasm help to drive their learning forward. Students are well taught and they respond well. They try hard and are proud of their achievements. Many students particularly enjoy their mathematics and science lessons. Generally speaking, they are ready to talk about their work in all subjects and what they have accomplished, although they are not always clear about what they are going on to achieve or what they have to do to improve. Students are confident and ready to be challenged and usually involve themselves in activities well. They are bold and are not afraid to ask questions. They show a high level of curiosity and a willingness to listen. These positive attitudes are also reflected in their very good levels of attendance and punctuality. However, the amount of litter they leave on the playing field and the discarded chewing gum in the carpeted corridors reveal a lax attitude towards care of the environment.
11. Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is good. Students behave especially well in physical education. They respond to strong teaching in this subject, are eager to take part in activities, work constructively with one another and are always dressed appropriately. In the school at large there is a minority of students in every year group, particularly in Years 7 to 9, who are sometimes noisy and disruptive which has an adverse impact on learning. In Years 7 to 9, this amounted to about one lesson in ten and involved girls as well as boys, although misbehaviour is more prevalent amongst boys than girls. Even experienced and effective teachers had to work very hard to maintain discipline in some lessons. Newly qualified teachers find themselves vulnerable even when they have planned their lessons well. Some lessons in English were not as effective as they should have been because the behaviour of some students proved a distraction to the teacher. The school has a sound policy for the

management of students' behaviour and on the whole this works well because the school is an orderly community but it has not been completely successful in ensuring that the behaviour of all students is conducive to learning

12. The number of permanent student exclusions is negligible and the number of temporary exclusions is low. No major incidents of oppressive behaviour, such as bullying, sexism or racism, occurred during the inspection, although minor incidents that had happened previously were reported. Students have few anxieties about bullying and feel well supported by the school. Parents' concerns about behaviour were generally not related to bullying. When moving between lessons, or when outside buildings at break or lunchtimes, students behave sensibly with due regard for others. In the busy dining hall, students are patient and behave well.
13. Relationships are very good between students and between staff and students. During lessons, students unselfconsciously help others and work co-operatively. Students are approachable and willing to talk to visitors. Those with special educational needs share their disability with little or no embarrassment in front of others and the behaviour of students with physical or learning difficulties is no different from that of other students. They display the same interest and involvement in lessons as others. When working in the special educational needs rooms they display positive attitudes and behave very well. When joining in the lunchtime social and learning games they focus well on their chosen activity and relate very well to each other and to staff. Students receiving behaviour support are helped to modify their conduct and usually behave well. Attitudes in special educational needs areas are very good. All students know they can choose between various adult members of staff if they have a grievance or a worry. These very good relationships contribute to students' capacity for learning and form a key element in the family ethos of the school.
14. The positive picture is reflected in the students' very high attendance rate. Authorised absences are well below the national average and unauthorised absences are in line with the national average. There are always a few latecomers in the morning but this is frequently a result of students having to travel considerable distances in unpredictable traffic conditions.

Sixth form

15. Students have positive attitudes to the sixth form, especially in Year 12. This is reflected not only in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, where most agree that they enjoy being in the sixth form, but also in discussions with them. Students are particularly positive about the accessibility of teachers if they run into difficulties, and with the clarity of printed information about their courses. Students are most unhappy about the career advice they received and whether the advice was helpful. Students answering the questionnaire were also unhappy about the school not listening to their views and the range of worthwhile activities. However, when students were asked during the inspection their views were much more positive.
16. Students praise the high quality of teaching; they feel that they are challenged and encouraged to do their best. All students express a mature approach to discussion and the free exchange of ideas and beliefs. For example, during a session reflecting on a school visit to Poland to see the death camps, students spoke with self-assurance and awareness of the life-altering effect such an experience bestows.
17. Relationships between students and between staff and students are very good. Students have a high degree of respect for the head of the sixth form. In Year 12,

students are especially happy that staff treat them as adults. The vast majority of students have progressed from the main school and feel that the very good welfare and support they received there is maintained in the sixth form. They feel secure because they are confident that teachers track their progress closely and, when they feel overwhelmed, will give them the encouragement to succeed. However, nearly half of those replying to the questionnaire feel they could have been kept better informed about their academic progress.

18. Students pursue opportunities to help run the school enthusiastically. For example, lunchtime monitors take their duties seriously and perform a good and fair supervision. Year 12 students are happy to 'buddy' new Year 7 students. Attendance rates in the sixth form are very good with few unauthorised absences.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. In Years 7 to 11 the quality of teaching is good or better in eight out of every ten lessons. It is very good, and occasionally excellent, in one out of three. It is slightly better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. Of the 128 lessons observed in Years 7 to 11, three were excellent, all being in Years 10 and 11, and six were unsatisfactory or poor, most of these lessons being in Years 7 to 9. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good and often very good.
20. The overall quality of teaching in English and science is very good and in mathematics it is good. It is good in all other subjects in Years 7 to 9, apart from ICT. It is good in all subjects in Year 10 and 11 and is often very good in geography, physical education and music. In teaching generally, lessons are well planned and organised and proceed at a good pace. Teachers have good subject knowledge, high expectations, know their students well, and are adept at providing for their differing needs. In English, mathematics and science, higher-attaining students are particularly well challenged. Whilst students' work is regularly and frequently marked, the extent of guidance given to students on how to improve their work and so reach higher standards is limited.
21. The quality of teaching is consistently good in art and design where a strong feature is the careful assessment of students' work leading to high quality feedback on what the students have achieved and how they might improve further. Students who are gifted and talented, still to be identified by the school, respond to very good teaching in art and design and learn well. In all subjects, homework is set on a regular basis and helps to develop good habits of independent study. Excellent teaching was also observed in two lessons in mathematics and in one music lesson.
22. Teachers of all subjects have a very good knowledge of course requirements and prepare students very well for tests and examinations. They make good use of questioning to find out what students know, understand and can do and use a good range of skills to maximise the good relationships they have invariably established with students. The teaching of ICT is a weakness, except in design and technology and science. Teachers generally do not have enough expertise to help students to use it effectively to enhance their learning.
23. The school has still to implement fully the national strategies for numeracy and literacy. As a result, although there are good examples of individual teachers in different subjects addressing literacy and numeracy issues, there is no co-ordinated approach in the school as a whole which means that the overall impact of this good work is limited.

24. On the whole, students with special educational needs are taught well. They mostly learn well. Where small classes of students with learning difficulties are taught together, as in English in Year 7, they learn very well. Where work is well tailored to their needs, as it is in science, design and technology and mathematics, their learning is very good. Students often get good additional support during lessons and this improves their learning. Generally speaking, teachers have good awareness of the special needs of students and take these into account in the general preparation of work, but they are not always sure of how best to serve the needs of these students or how to work most effectively with learning support assistants. More teachers skilled in special educational needs are needed to enhance the sound instruction offered by learning support assistants. More skilful teaching is also needed in some departments to plan suitable work for students with special educational needs. The learning of some of these students is impeded by lack of availability and use of ICT in some subjects. Because of this, overall standards are lower than they need to be. Where computers are employed effectively, students are highly motivated, enjoy success and make very good progress, guided by skilful teaching. Students for whom English is an additional language are taught very well because work is carefully matched to their needs.
25. The quality of learning is mostly good and often very good. Because teachers of English are so knowledgeable and enthusiastic, students learn well, improving their writing skills, and enjoying reading books and talking about them. In science, most acquire new skills and knowledge at great speed and also learn how to work on their own, putting their high standards of literacy to good use. In art and design, they use research skills well to find out more about the artistic processes of other cultures and at other times. They learn to be innovative in design and technology. Good use is made of the Internet to further learning in science lessons.
26. On the whole, students show good powers of concentration. They listen well to their teachers, but do not have enough scope to develop independent study habits, although this is strong in some subjects such as science. When given the opportunity to work independently, for instance by analysing data in a geography lesson in Year 11, they showed good capability in their analysis of weather patterns in the United Kingdom. Students have learned how to recall earlier learning and how to consolidate new knowledge. Most have learned how to make best use of what they know and understand when taking tests and sitting examinations. Students do not learn enough about ICT or how to use it to further their learning.

Sixth form

27. The overall quality of teaching is very good. In the vast majority of lessons the quality of teaching is good or better and in over a half of lessons it is either very good or excellent. The main strengths of the teaching are teachers' subject knowledge, high levels of challenge, clear explanations and exposition, insistence on high standards, the knowledge of A-level course requirements and the thoroughness with which teachers prepare students for examinations. Teaching is excellent in psychology. It is very good in biology, design and technology, mathematics, theatre studies and art and design. Students with special educational needs are especially well taught. This is a distinctive feature of sixth-form teaching. The weakest feature of the teaching is the limited opportunity provided for students themselves to show what they know, understand and can do. They ought to be given more opportunities to show that they can learn independently of the teacher and be more eager to initiate and engage in debate and discussion, especially in biology and media studies. Sometimes, teachers do not set out to draw all students into discussion.

28. Teachers, especially in English, psychology, mathematics, biology and computing, often apply learning to practical applications, which helps students to understand how things work and connect, for instance how mechanics relates to other branches of mathematics. In a particularly impressive lesson in design and technology in Year 12, students, including those with special educational needs, were learning how best to design and make products of use to students in the neighbouring special school. Students learn to link new knowledge with their earlier learning. Good use is made of ICT in business education and biology to demonstrate ideas. Teachers build strongly on the well-developed literacy skills of students, who learn how to use specific vocabulary and terminology for different subjects, for instance 'infrastructure', and 'population pressure' in geography and 'assertion' and 'aggression' in physical education.

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

29. Overall, the breadth and balance of the curriculum are satisfactory. The school provides a curriculum that is in keeping with its aspiration to achieve high standards in all subjects and to meet the specific needs of its students. Consequently, all students follow courses in Jewish studies and Ivrit (modern Hebrew) in keeping with the Jewish foundation of the school. The school devotes far more teaching time to the curriculum than most schools to help ensure that learning is acquired and consolidated. In addition to the National Curriculum subjects, students receive weekly lessons in personal, social and health education [PSHE] with a growing emphasis on citizenship.
30. In Years 7 to 9, all National Curriculum subjects are taught for appropriate amounts of time which ensures satisfactory breadth and balance. However, the statutory curriculum is not fully taught as the requirements for teaching ICT are not fully met. The taught course in ICT covers the requirements as far as content is concerned, but students are not provided with sufficient opportunities to use and develop their ICT capabilities in other subjects. The school does not regularly monitor the use of ICT in order to know where ICT is used or to know the quality of its contribution to students' learning. Dance and drama are not features of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 which limits provision in the arts.
31. In Years 10 and 11, there is a satisfactory range of optional subjects, in addition to a common curriculum, but vocational courses are limited. Students are directed towards specific choices in accordance with their performance in Year 9. Higher-attaining students study three separate sciences and two modern foreign languages at GCSE examination level but the GNVQ ICT course is reserved for lower-attaining students. As a result, some students are unable to follow subjects if they are offered in different ability bands. All students continue to follow a PSHE course with a strong citizenship component, and Jewish studies, of which a major part is religious education. While students in Year 11 do not all have guaranteed access to lessons in ICT, this has been addressed in Year 10 through the provision of a compulsory short course leading to a qualification in key skills ICT. Large numbers of students are disapplied from studying a modern foreign language but the diverse needs of these students are not met by the current curriculum.
32. Students' literacy skills are good and literacy itself is satisfactorily promoted by individual teachers, particularly by emphasising the significance of specialist terminology, but weaknesses in basic skills are not systematically addressed in the curriculum as a whole. This reduces its impact for the minority of students whose literacy skills are weak. Many teachers encourage discussion and provide opportunities for students to undertake continuous writing. In marking, the correction of language errors is not

established as a helpful routine and this is a weakness. The school library promotes reading but the habit of reading for pleasure is not yet well established amongst the majority of students.

33. Students' numeracy skills are good and are used effectively to help them make good progress in subjects. In design and technology, for example, students make effective use of measuring, graphs and tables to collect and interpret data. In geography, students interpret climatic charts and use cardinal compass points to locate points on a map. In science, good use is made of numeracy in drawing lines of best fit when plotting graphs and in calculations such as Ohm's Law. The school has yet to implement an overall numeracy policy so that these skills can be developed in a systematic way in all subjects.
34. The school ensures that students with special educational needs have full access to all activities, opportunities and events. Students with statements of special educational needs receive appropriate specialist teaching to address their individual needs but there are too few specialist special educational needs teachers to offer support to students who do not have statements of special educational needs. Students with learning and physical disabilities are very well catered for. Students with physical disabilities have easy access to all areas of the school and the buildings are well serviced with lifts, ramps and specific toilets for disabled people. There is no specific provision for talented and gifted students. Those students for whom English is an additional language are well served because their needs are carefully identified and met.
35. Despite the length of the school day, there is an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities, including a choir, a Jewish folk ensemble and a keyboard club, a good range of sporting tournaments with teams competing against other schools, a range of clubs and societies connected to subjects taught at the school and the provision of 'catch-up' lessons to improve the standards of lower-attaining students. A very good programme of day and residential visits assist learning in school subjects and also develops international links. The school also makes a strong contribution to charities, with sixth-form students organising lower school fund-raising events for charities selected by students. The personal, social and health education programme, closely associated with Jewish studies, is now taking the form of citizenship and is beginning to focus on the key areas of participation, enquiry and governance. There is a good programme of careers guidance from Year 9 onwards, leading to a very effective provision for work experience in Year 10. The school offers a wide range of curricular and enrichment opportunities and regularly reviews both areas to ensure it matches the needs of all students. There are good links with the primary school that provides most of the students entering Year 7 and with institutes of higher education.
36. Overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is good. More whole-school planning could build upon current good practice for further development. Spiritual provision is satisfactory. The school enables students to be secure in their faith within an inclusive Jewish community and there has been good development of curricular opportunities since the last inspection. The exhibition of students' work in the art gallery shows a particularly affecting representation of family figures; science lessons include a good discussion by Year 11 students of the impact of Darwin's theory of evolution upon religious beliefs about the origin of life; and students are able to reflect upon the scale of human suffering through visits to Ypres and Warsaw. The school marks national events such as remembrance and the jubilee and celebrates aspects of the Jewish calendar, for example with a lively involvement in Purim. Other opportunities for spiritual provision are, however, not consistently taken as there is no developed programme of assemblies nor consistent use made of tutor time

to develop spiritual awareness.

37. Moral provision is good, particularly through the school's behaviour policy with its clear ethical dimension which is rooted in Jewish tradition. Students are instructed to understand the difference between right and wrong and charitable giving is a significant feature of school life. Lessons in the sixth form in geography and design and technology offer very good opportunities for students to develop ideas about the impact of family values on south-east Asian economies and the pressures of the fashion industry. In Year 8, students are encouraged to consider issues of intellectual copyright in music and in Year 9 history, students examine the moral issues surrounding the use of child labour in the nineteenth century. A minority of students are currently not fully supportive of the school's high moral standards as was clear from the disruptive behaviour in some lessons.
38. Social provision is good as students are inducted well into the school, relationships between teachers and students are mostly very good and students socialise well with each other. There is very little evidence of bullying and the school is thought by students to deal with it well. Students have good opportunities for residential experience. There are also good opportunities in many subjects for students to work collaboratively, for example in drama lessons in Year 10 and ensemble work in music in Years 10 and 11. However, not all students are able to adapt their socialising skills to the necessary discipline of the classroom and further opportunities for personal development ought to be made available through wider engagement with the school council.
39. Cultural provision is good. The school provides very good opportunities for students to be involved in all aspects of Jewish culture, both in Britain and abroad. Subjects offer a satisfactory range of experiences beyond the immediate knowledge of the students, for example in Years 7 to 9, students learn about a wide variety of musical traditions and in history in Years 10 and 11, students examine aspects of twentieth century American society. In sixth-form geography lessons, students examine the Japanese work ethic and in English lessons in Year 11 they study multicultural poetry. They also have visits from theatre workshops in Years 7 and 9.

Sixth form

40. The breadth and balance of the curriculum in the sixth form is satisfactory, with a very good range of A-level and AS-level courses to meet the high demand from parents and students, but only limited vocational courses. The school takes very seriously its duty to provide course choices that allow its students to follow their preferences while maintaining their Jewish education, with the result that the offer of a course is honoured even if only one student wishes to take it. At present, for the same reason, there is some flexibility over entry qualifications to GCE examination courses to allow as many as possible to study their preferred courses. The result is that some students follow courses with which they initially struggle, and there is a high rate of change in options in the first term of Year 12. This is also true of the technical computing courses for A+ and CISCO qualifications in which almost all students felt after a term that they were experiencing difficulties, and so dropped out of the courses.
41. There are few vocational courses, but the school has recognised the need to broaden its range and offers a much wider variety in the prospectus, currently offered to students entering Year 12. Therefore the school's response to the needs of its community is very good, but the match of the present curriculum to students' potential is satisfactory. Nonetheless, there has been an improvement in course provision since the last inspection. A strong feature is the provision for students with special educational needs

who thrive in the sixth form because of their use of technological equipment such as laptops and the positive attitudes of teachers and students which help ensure that all students are fully included in all aspects of the subject's provision.

42. The school organises a good enrichment programme for the sixth form, with good opportunities for community or sport leadership certification and additional recreational sport. Students are encouraged to be involved in a 'buddy' scheme with younger students, or to organise charitable fund-raising events. The school has formed a close link with the social unit on its site, and sixth-form students are involved as voluntary helpers. This, in combination with the continuation of Jewish education including religious education and ethics, makes a good contribution to the personal and social development of the students. In addition, the school continues to offer a good range of residential visits, for example a visit to Poland to study the Holocaust, and geography visits to Devon and Iceland.
43. The organisation of the timetable has a negative impact on students' independent learning and working habits because students with considerable amounts of private study time can have almost a complete day without a timetabled lesson. Few seen in private study during the inspection were working throughout such time, even in the study room provided for them. The school does not monitor students' activities during these times, although they are not allowed to leave the premises except at the end of school sessions. This is a weakness.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

44. The support and care students receive is very good and continues to be a strong feature of the school. The management of this provision is firmly rooted in the structure of the school. Form tutors, heads of year and the director of student progress meet weekly and operate a very effective referral system which enables them to keep a very close track of students' personal development. This is vindicated by students' views. All who were asked had no hesitation in saying that they knew who to turn to in time of need and that they felt listened to and cared for. Students on report knew they had to fulfil their part of the contract.
45. Child protection procedures are satisfactory, and good use is made of the on-site counselling service. There are good links with the local education welfare officer who visits regularly. Good first-aid arrangements and training ensure that students are treated effectively and that their treatment is well monitored. The school's attention to health and safety matters is good overall and procedures are very good in the classrooms because lesson planning often includes specific health and safety risk assessment and provision. The fabric of the school is being effectively monitored and risk audits carried out. Careful records are kept and good procedures are in place to inform parents of any incidents or accidents.
46. The school offers very good welfare and support for all students. This is reflected in the students' positive attitudes to this aspect of the school. They feel safe and well supported. The school's behaviour policy is very clear about the programme the school operates and these procedures are carried out well. The anti-bullying policy is a very frank and useful document drawn up with the co-operation of students, staff, parents and governors. Staff are patient and listen well and, as a result, students are ready to talk to them if problems arise. Moreover, there are several different members of the senior staff that a student may turn to which means that students feel encouraged to initiate action to remedy a problem. Students are encouraged well to make extra effort in any area of school life through the Student of the Month Award and through the Jack

Petchey Award, the latter also promoting responsibility and community involvement through the opportunity to spend prize money for the benefit of fellow students.

47. The 'buddy' system, whereby sixth-form students help guide and ensure the safety and personal welfare of students in Year 7, is satisfactory. Sometimes it can work well and both Year 7 and Year 12 students benefit, but some students in Year 7 do not feel it had benefited them greatly.
48. Induction procedures are good as whole days are organised for prospective students to sample what life is going to be like at the school. Sixth-formers act as good role models by helping to monitor the dining hall everyday and senior prefects and the head boy and girl are also seen as ambassadors for the school, speaking at local events which helps generate a sense of belonging to a vibrant school community. A school council is well established but some students do not find it very effective in channelling their views or taking up individual suggestions for improvements.
49. The school operates a good system for monitoring attendance which includes a strict definition of authorised absence – holidays are always considered to be unauthorised. As few students are regularly absent or seriously late it is easy for the school to see patterns emerging for individual students. There is no formal promotion of attendance or punctuality but these are not problems affecting the school. The school considers that it is the duty of students to attend and the duty of parents to ensure that they do. It promotes this attitude as part of the wider Jewish ethics that underpin the philosophy of the school.
50. Procedures for monitoring students' personal development are very effective. Form tutors have a good knowledge and understanding of the individual personal circumstances of the students in their year groups. Heads of year are very aware of individual students' needs and circumstances as they remain with the same groups of students as they move up through the school. Regular weekly meetings are held between form tutors, heads of year and the director of student progress to discuss any student issues or individuals causing concern. Records are kept of these meetings. Consequently, staff are often able to give support and special attention to students when, for example, students are experiencing difficulties in non-academic areas.
51. Target review days offer students a very good opportunity for taking responsibility for their own learning. They are encouraged to complete questionnaires where they can form a detailed view of their strengths and weaknesses. The close involvement of parents in these sessions is also very effective in promoting students' desire to achieve. A school-wide definition of effort grades operates to help ensure a consistent interpretation of what is meant by good effort, behaviour or attitude, for example.
52. There is a good programme of career guidance initiated in Year 9. This leads to a very effective programme of work experience in Year 10. Students' comments on work experience are mostly very positive and there is also much positive feedback from employers. There is a wide range of experiences offered, often generated by students themselves in businesses operated by family members. Students are very well supported by the careers co-ordinator, who ensures that they have selected a programme that suits their needs and who takes quick and effective action if students feel they have made a wrong choice when they arrive in the work situation.
53. Procedures for assessing students' attainment and the monitoring and supporting of students' academic progress are satisfactory overall. These procedures are department led and consequently their effectiveness covers a broad range. For

example, they are very effective in science but are unsatisfactory in ICT. In the art and design department, very detailed monitoring and support is given to students on an individual basis. However, the school does not have a tracking programme in place, although computer software has been purchased for this. This means that the school does not have an effective means for detecting trends, or identifying potential weaknesses in students' performance. All students have target minimum grades which are monitored by heads of year and form tutors against ongoing assessment data from departments and from national tests taken in Year 9. All subjects produce data from topic or test results and derive National Curriculum levels from these. Throughout the school, intervention procedures are in place to provide additional support and to alert parents when any performance goes below what is predicted.

Sixth form

Assessment

54. The assessment of students' attainment and the monitoring of their progress are satisfactory. It is based on GCSE examination results and the grades they are predicted to achieve at AS- and A-level. Shortcomings in students' performance are identified according to a published time scale and targets are set with students and parents at student academic target setting days. Where weaknesses are identified, individual diagnosis with the form tutor is carried out to which parents are invited. This is followed up by a personal action plan, which teachers monitor closely. This is a good aspect of provision. Later in the two-year cycle, grades are predicted on modular tests, and options in Year 13 are discussed after the AS-level examinations, which is good follow up.

Advice, support and guidance

55. The advice, support and guidance received by sixth-form students are very good. Students benefit from the university and careers visits in the sixth form. Although students who responded to the questionnaire were not positive about the careers advice, the school tackles this well. At key points in the sixth form, students are given good guidance and support about opportunities in higher education, with a specific emphasis on university courses. The programme ensures that students are given good opportunities to develop interview and writing skills from the start of Year 12. Parents are invited to attend sessions for drafting UCAS forms. The quality of advice given is very good, particularly, for example, in English and drama. Specific advice is given to those students applying to Oxford or Cambridge. All students fill in destination sheets and thereafter receive good support in their choices, from form tutors and from the head of sixth form. The library is well stocked with careers brochures and prospectuses and students also avail themselves of the ready access to the Internet that the school provides.
56. All parents of Year 12 students, who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, stated that their daughters or sons were happy at the school. This reflects the effective way in which students are helped to settle in to the sixth form. The new sixth-form block reflects the investment the school has made in this area of its provision. Students are not given a special sixth-form briefing at the beginning of the day but are expected to register briefly in their form rooms as with the rest of the school. This reflects the positive approach the school makes in not allowing the students to become too isolated in their own block.
57. The school encourages sixth-formers to take responsibility for their actions by co-ordinating cleaning rotas and duties themselves and to take charge of their common

room. They run their own student council along similar lines. The role of prefect is open to all, but students have to write a letter explaining why they wish to be one and then be interviewed. This is good practice because it strengthens students' focus on their personal development. The head boy and head girl and their deputies are elected by the other prefects and are expected to play an important role as ambassadors for the school at local events, through making speeches or by visiting local primary schools. All are involved in charity fundraising.

58. Sixth-formers play a very significant role in monitoring the main school dining hall at lunchtimes which aids the smooth running of the school, and they are also expected to 'buddy' the new students in Year 7. The success of this is largely dependent on the students themselves, as the school relies on the Jewish interpretation of charity as a duty for each individual and not merely as a desire to help others. This requires students to take responsibility for the quality of their performance. As a result, some may be very devoted to the task whilst others provide little support. In the latter case, the school will urge a student to perform better but expect them to determine how.
59. The sixth form operates good monitoring of attendance. At the time of the inspection, a new electronic swipe-card system had just been introduced which has yet to work effectively and so the hand-written register is still in use. In period six, students are deemed to be off-site unless permission to remain at the school has been granted. As in the main school, good attendance and punctuality is expected as a duty. This is good preparation for their future careers because it means that self-motivation is the key principle. Study facilities are abundant enough to ensure that all students have equal access. Sixth-formers also benefit from the good procedures for health and safety that operate throughout the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. The quality of the school's partnership with parents is good. There was an average attendance at the parents' meeting prior to the inspection but the return rate for the questionnaires was low. Nonetheless, those parents who did respond demonstrated a wide variety of views about the school. Most of them were positive and so parents' views of the school are satisfactory. Most parents were pleased with the standards reached by the school but particularly valued its approachability, the service it provided for the Jewish community, the progress made by students and the fact that the school expected students to work hard. Major concerns centred around the behaviour of some students, homework arrangements and that the school found it difficult to recruit and retain teachers.
61. The school has good links with parents. The headteacher has established a tradition of an approachable school always being available to parents, and this is supported by positive responses from parents on this aspect. The school has good, well-established channels of communication between school and home. Access to form tutors is good and access to heads of year is very good. They have recently been allotted more time to contact to parents, especially by telephone. Heads of year either telephone or write to parents at any time of the year when a student has done well or made a specially good effort, as well as if a student needs reprimanding.
62. The induction of new parents is good, and the information in the prospectus is helpful. Special evenings are also arranged. There are well-developed procedures for ensuring that parents are well informed about what to expect and that they feel welcome. The regular newsletters are informative and give good, detailed information on imminent events in the forthcoming term. Additional letters are sent out to inform parents nearer

the time that the events are due to take place and when changes are made in the arrangements for extra-curricular activities. Curriculum information is very good for the year groups it covers – that is in Years 7, 10 and 11. Years 8 and 9 have little recorded information for reference, although the school is currently addressing this. Information is supported by a regular season of curricular workshops which inform parents what their children are learning. Annual reports to parents are satisfactory. They give information on what has been achieved as well as effort grades and some personal targets but are weaker in identifying what students need to do to raise their attainment in individual subjects. There is good provision for parents and students to contribute to the progress reports.

63. Parents are very involved in how they might aid their children's learning. Parents' consultation evenings and open days are very well attended. Parents welcome and support the school's target review system. Towards the end of the autumn term, initial targets grades and summary reports are sent out. Later in the spring term, well after the parents' evenings, a target review day is held. This is very well attended. The initiative requires parents to be active partners in their children's education and allows them to be very aware of the study involved. The summer term report acts then as a review of progress rather than a targeting document. This is a good system which works very well.
64. Because parents are very well involved with the students' progress they consequently have a very good impact on their children's learning at school and at home. Although parents had mixed views about the school's arrangements for homework, the inspection team found that homework is used effectively for younger students and very well for the older ones. The use of diaries is well established in most of the school and staff set aside regular periods to inspect and mark them. The school ensures that parents of sixth-formers are very well involved in their children's university applications.
65. Although the parent-teacher association has only recently been revived, and so is not a very active part of school life, parents and the wider family community are very active in giving large sums of money regularly to the school which has done much to ensure that the school is as successful as it is. For example, in addition to helping funding with building and resource projects, parents regularly subscribe to assist with the costs of site security. Parents regularly attend school celebrations and events, of which the annual prize day is a major local event. The school's strong links with parents have been maintained since the last inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

66. Leadership of the school is very good. The headteacher's initial vision a decade ago of a school to serve the Jewish community with good academic standards has come to fruition. In order to achieve this, the headteacher has been required to work effectively with many benefactors, teachers, support staff, the local education authority and other organisations. The teamwork engendered is still present in the school today. Many staff have served the school since its inception and express loyalty to the school and work hard to help it to function well. There is a shared vision in the school and a strong sense of teachers and other staff continuing to work together for the good of the school community. The high quality of leadership noted at the time of the last inspection has been maintained.
67. The school is very well managed. An attractive and informative prospectus clearly sets out the main aims of the school and these can be seen at work in practice. A well-produced staff handbook provides key information for staff about all significant aspects

of the school's day to day functioning. There is a good range of policies. Developmental planning is based on sound principles in that it identifies priorities, sets time scales and takes finance into account. Departments are mostly well led and managed. The management of ICT is unsatisfactory but there is now a good plan for its future development. Performance management is an established feature of the school and contributes to the monitoring processes to help ensure that teaching is of good quality and learning is effective. The school has not yet developed tracking systems to monitor closely the overall progress of all students. Heads of year show commitment and expertise. Newly qualified teachers are well supported. The school has further strengthened the quality of its management since the time of the last inspection.

68. The school is well supported by the governing body. There are good instances of governors befriending teachers. They also give of their expertise, especially in terms of finance. One governor, experienced in the field of engineering, helps in the design and technology department. The governing body is aware of the achievements of the school and has a broad knowledge of its strengths and where it needs to develop further. It also has a clear vision of the school's future. The governors' annual report to parents does not include statutory reference to provision for students with special educational needs, although the school prospectus does give good information on what the school provides. The school is not fulfilling statutory requirements for the teaching of ICT.
69. Special educational needs funds are used directly to target provision for students with statements of special educational needs. Accommodation for special educational needs is good and offers support in the heart of the school but on an upper floor. Disabled access is good throughout the building. There is insufficient accommodation for ICT to be extensively used by all subject teachers. Resources are good with a range of appropriate books and equipment to hand to stimulate students. The learning support team is a strength in enhancing students' learning and ensuring their welfare. There are too few teachers qualified and experienced in working with students with special educational needs and this limits the quality of provision. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages provision well. All staff are expected to take responsibility for special educational needs issues in their classes and this is good. The school operates a policy of full integration; this is a positive feature of the school.
70. The school's systems for allocating and tracking finance are good. Specific grants are channeled into the appropriate areas but the school has no effective mechanism for helping to ensure that it gets value for money from these investments. Departments are well resourced. Accommodation is good and, in the case of the gallery in art and design, is distinctive. The library is well used and promotes an interest in reading. Staff recruitment remains uncertain and the school does not always find it easy to recruit qualified and appropriately experienced staff, but it acts responsibly and manages the situation appropriately. There have been difficulties recruiting teachers in subjects such as mathematics, ICT and design and technology, but the current situation has improved somewhat. Expenditure per student is in the median range for London schools with sixth forms. The quality of teaching is very good and is the main factor in helping students to reach standards which are well above average. Students are very well cared for in a healthy and safe environment. When these strong positive features are set against the average expenditure, the school is giving good value for money.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

71. Leadership and management are very good. Good relationships exist between the

students and the director of sixth-form studies. The majority of students are positive about their experience of the sixth form. Recruitment procedures are thorough and retention rates on most courses are high. The majority of students make good progress on their courses. The curriculum is under constant review. Students' progress is closely monitored and they receive good advice. The school has done well to create an attractive area dedicated to the sixth form although the failure to staff the study centre means that the balance between socialising and working has been that much more difficult to maintain. Students are encouraged to look after the area but it is sometimes disfigured by litter and discarded chewing gum.

Resources

72. All courses are properly resourced. Innovative use is made of video conferencing to link students on the Jewish studies course with specialist thinking at Tel Aviv University. Good use is made of ICT and especially of the Internet. Students with literacy difficulties are helped to learn through the provision of laptops. Students also make good use of the library for study and research. The sixth form is cost effective because its expenditure is not excessive and the overall benefits that accrue to students are very positive.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

73. **In order to improve the school further, the headteacher, staff and governing body now need to:**

- (1) Ensure that provision for ICT is improved with particular reference to its use in learning in all subjects. [paragraphs: 22, 30, 68, 69, 103, 139, 140, 150]
- (2) Improve the behaviour of a minority of students so that it matches that of the rest. [paragraphs: 11, 37, 77, 85, 114, 154]
- (3) Provide more opportunities in lessons and in the wider life of the school for students to become independent learners. [paragraphs: 26, 38, 102, 130, 135, 141, 142, 143, 151]
- (4) Establish effective tracking systems so that the school knows whether all students are making appropriate progress. [paragraphs 53 and 67]
- (5) Broaden the curriculum so that the spiritual aspect is strengthened, vocational provision is expanded and appropriate provision is made for students who are gifted and talented.[paragraphs 31, 36, 128]

In addition, the following, less significant, issues should also be addressed:

- (6) Ensure that marking offers good guidance to students on how they might improve their work. [paragraphs: 106, 124, 138, 148]
- (7) The development of strategies at whole-school level for addressing weaknesses in the literacy and numerical skills of a minority of students. [paragraphs: 23, 26, 32, 33, 88, 97]
- (8) Ensure that, when possible, the school increases its complement of teachers with expertise in the area of special educational needs. [paragraphs 24 and 69]

Sixth form

In order to improve provision further, the headteacher, staff and governing body now need to:

- (9) Find ways to help students become more independent. [paragraphs 27, 43, 170, 182, 191, 220, 224, 227]

- (10) Expand provision for vocational courses. [paragraph 41]
- (11) Ensure that a better balance is struck between socialising and the application to work in the overall ethos.[paragraphs 43 and 71]

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

IVRIT (Modern Hebrew)

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

Strengths

- Ivrit makes a significant contribution to the cultural awareness of the school.
- Teachers are committed and competent. They work harmoniously and enjoy very good relationships with students.
- Innovative use of multi-media equipment makes an important beneficial impact on the language provision.
- Ivrit has benefited from senior management's consistent commitment and support.

Areas for improvement

- Raise further students' motivation through greater monitoring of their progress and more regular feedback to them on their progress.
- Increase independent language learning skills through more consistent homework, marking and feedback, and relevant software for self-study.

- 74. Results in Ivrit continue to be below the national average at GCSE examination level, although some candidates are advanced enough to be entered in Year 9. A-level results are well above average, although the school's A-level entries are statistically insignificant. Standards overall in Years 7 to 9 are in line with national expectations. In later years, however, there is a noticeable decline in students' attainment and their preparations for the GCSE examination. Years 12 and 13 students are competent Ivrit speakers and their standards meet the course requirements sufficiently. They also demonstrate a very firm grasp of the relevant literary, cultural and geographical issues.
- 75. All students in Years 7 to 9 can construct words and phrases in Ivrit. Many construct larger sentences and can take part in short, prepared dialogues with each other and with an adult. Students' pronunciation is developing well. Many pronounce words, phrases and sentences with considerable confidence and accuracy. Their written work shows growing competence in the script. Handwriting is good and the range of their written work appropriate. Almost all students in Years 7 to 9 can read words, phrases and sentences with some help from their teachers. The more able students, moreover, read larger sentences and short paragraphs. Most understand classroom instructions in Ivrit. They also understand and respond to simple phrases and sentences on familiar topics.
- 76. In one higher-attaining group in Year 7, students understood and responded to Ivrit spoken by their teacher, involving a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures. They also demonstrated their good writing skills through copious writing on a variety of topics. In Years 10 and 11, most students understand and respond to simple questions on a variety of topics required for their GCSE examination course, sometimes with assistance. Students in Years 10 and 11 have also gained the necessary confidence in their written skills. They demonstrate an ability to read and write texts containing a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Students studying Ivrit throughout the main school show sound awareness of the culture and the geography of Israel.

77. Teaching is generally good overall. Both teachers are native Ivrit speakers. They are professionally competent. They use a variety of activities, involving all four language skills. Their relationships with all students in Years 7 to 11 and with sixth-form students are good. Teachers make particularly effective use of the new interactive whiteboard and associated software. They manage their classes, both large and small, skilfully with interesting topics, tasks and learning resources. However, in one Year 7 lesson class management issues dissipated a good deal of the teacher's energy. This arose primarily from the teacher's insufficient planning of the lesson for the full range of abilities, including a significant number of students with behavioural problems.
78. Sometimes the pace of a lesson is too fast for some of the less able students. There is also often an imbalance between teacher input and students' learning activities, which makes lessons teacher-led at the cost of cultivating students' independent language learning skills. In some lessons, the enjoyment of language learning is not always fully exploited. Teaching methodology does not as yet exploit computers for students' self-study and homework.
79. Students' commitment to the subject is satisfactory. They are generally responsive to the tasks and activities set by their teachers. Many are also beginning to develop independent learning skills and a sense of curiosity for the culture and the geography of Israel. Also, their behaviour overall in both key stages is very good. These factors account for their overall satisfactory progress during lessons and over time. However, instances of disengagement, lack of concentration and distracting behaviour were observed in Years 7 to 11. Sixth-form students, on the other hand, demonstrate sustained commitment to Ivrit and take responsibility for their learning and progress.
80. The language provision for Ivrit is embedded in the wider context of Jewish Studies, which proves beneficial. The commitment of the senior leadership team and the Ivrit teachers has led to the improvements to the quality of Ivrit in the school. The provision for this language also benefits from native Ivrit speakers, who are recent arrivals from Israel. Teachers also actively encourage all students to establish contacts with schools and Ivrit speaking children in Israel.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	128
	Sixth form	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students		68

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	3	42	56	21	4	2	0
Percentage	2	33	44	16	3	2	0
Sixth form							
Number	4	26	25	3	0	0	0
Percentage	7	45	43	5	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for the sixth form as each lesson represents more than 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	728	218
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	50	9

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	13	0
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	114	2

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	30

Student mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	28

Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving
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24

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.5
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	72	82	154

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	50	62	59
	Girls	68	59	61
	Total	118	121	120
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	77 (80)	79 (80)	78 (72)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	41 (34)	57 (69)	37 (40)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	45	63	57
	Girls	61	62	62
	Total	106	125	119
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	69 (76)	81 (82)	77 (68)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	30 (26)	49 (62)	52 (36)
	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	70	77	147

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	48	67	69
	Girls	51	74	75
	Total	99	141	144
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	67 (76)	96 (99)	98 (99)
	National	50 (48)	91 (99)	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	49.1
	National	39.8

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those students who achieved all those they studied	School	0
	National	n/a

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

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	29	57	86
	Average point score per candidate	13.7	14.6	14.3
National	Average point score per candidate	n/a (16.9)	n/a (18.0)	n/a (17.5)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	27	55	8.2	2	2	4
	Average point score per candidate	14	14.7	14.5	9	12	10.5

National	Average point score per candidate	n/a (16.9)	n/a (17.9)	n/a (17.4)	n/a (9.8)	n/a (11.4)	n/a (10.6)
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	911	38	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	35	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to students of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of students excluded.

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	58.8
Number of students per qualified teacher	15.7

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

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

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	69.7
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	23.51
Key Stage 4	19.22

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	3,171,792
Total expenditure	3,050,226
Expenditure per student	3,197
Balance brought forward from previous year	160,694
Balance carried forward to next year	282,260

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	33.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	44

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	4
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	4
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	946
Number of questionnaires returned	120

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	38	48	11	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	30	55	8	4	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	8	38	37	15	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	39	23	14	2
The teaching is good.	13	53	23	8	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	49	22	6	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	29	53	13	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	35	56	9	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	18	43	24	9	6
The school is well led and managed.	19	45	19	13	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	22	47	21	3	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	14	46	16	7	18

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- The majority of students make very good progress and standards are well above average.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Leadership and management are very good and staff work very well together.

Areas for improvement

- The behaviour of a minority of disruptive students.
- The consistency of the marking so that all students know what they have to do to improve.
- The range of students' writing is limited.

81. Results in National Curriculum tests taken in Year 9 in 2002 were above average. In the 2002 GCSE examination, 66 per cent of students attained grades A* - C in English, and 73 per cent in English literature, both results also being above average. Since the last inspection, there has been a steady improvement in standards, and good levels of achievement and progress from year to year. This is principally because of good teaching and most students' high motivation. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was sound and often good; it is now good and often very good. In Year 9, girls did better than boys; this situation is now reversed. Higher-attainers were described as not being consistently challenged; this is no longer the case. Standards of presentation were uneven; this is still true and, while there is some very good presentation and handwriting, some is still very untidy. This situation improves to some extent as students move up the school. To sum up, the overall improvement since the last inspection is good.
82. Apart from a minority of students, mostly in Year 10, speaking and listening standards are high in all years. Because of the generally good relationships between students, and between students and teachers, listening is usually careful and respectful. In many cases, responses are well worded and constructed, thoughtful and analytical. In Years 7 to 9, responses are sometimes marred by students' eagerness and haste, but in Years 10 and 11, maturity and experience produce good control. This is particularly noticeable throughout the school when students are working in pairs. Group work is less strong and students are not well versed in this way of working. A besetting problem in all age groups is the excessive use of unnecessary colloquialisms, such as 'sort of', 'like', 'you know', even to the extent of outnumbering the words that carry the message, but, for the most part, in class discussions and in responses to teachers' questions throughout the school, there is evidence of well ordered and considered speaking.
83. In all years, students read very well. They respond to literature with interest and sensitivity, as was seen in Year 11 as they studied a selection of poems from other cultures and traditions. They showed a very mature awareness of the situations of the authors, of the messages they were trying to communicate, and of the methods they were using. In Year 9, students show fluency when reading aloud and are especially expressive when the subject is poetry. Students are acquiring good analytical skills, and can independently identify key elements which contribute to the overall effect of the

poems, using appropriate technical language. The majority of students enjoy reading, and the range of books they use is impressive, indicating a lively interest and mature understanding.

84. The writing of students in Years 9 and 11 was of an average standard on entry but it is now well above average. Students in Years 8 and 9 use language competently and flexibly. They have good knowledge of the technicalities of writing, and some of the subtleties of language use, for example in Year 8, they showed that they knew how puns work. In Year 9, higher-attainers write with considerable maturity and skill, for example imitating the style and the approach of tabloid newspapers, and producing very well-organised analyses of texts. This maturity in writing develops further, until by Year 11, well-balanced and very well argued writing indicates confidence, skill and even poise. This applies to the majority; they have mastered the basic skills and are mostly at ease producing extended passages of organised continuous prose. Much of this is writing which conveys a point of view, although there are some very lively narratives. Throughout the school, however, only a small amount of good poetry was seen and no drama scripts.
85. A rising trend of improvement is discernible as students move up the school, from average to well above average attainment. This owes a great deal to the very high quality of their learning, which comes from very good teaching, the school's ambitious ethos and from students' own commitment. Most behave well, are enthusiastic and keen to achieve. Their enjoyment of English and their very good relationships combine to make most lessons successful and effective, enhancing the quality of what they are doing and accelerating the speed of their learning. However, some serious concern emerges regarding the behaviour of a significant minority of students, both boys and girls. There is a tendency throughout the school for students to start packing up books and equipment before the end of lessons, and among some students to continue their own conversations while teachers are addressing them. More serious, however, was the situation in two Year 10 classes, where a number of students deliberately attempted to derail the lessons, by calling out to each other, by interrupting the teachers, and by refusing to start any kind of work without argument. This was not the fault of weak teaching. The lessons concerned had good content and were well planned, and the teachers deployed a very good and usually effective range of strategies which ultimately had a degree of success, but the effect of this conduct upon the quality of learning of the other students was damaging.
86. The teaching of English is very good overall: one lesson was satisfactory, and of the rest, half were good and half very good. The main strengths of teaching are good planning, pace and structure. Teachers know their students well, and provide well for their differing needs, so that all, including those for whom English is an additional language and those who have special educational needs, can take the best advantage of the opportunities provided and make similar progress. There is appropriate extension work for the gifted and talented. Teachers' approaches are supportive and collaborative, and they engage and hold their students' commitment. These accompany high expectations which are implicit in their skilled questioning techniques, which are well directed and differentiated from student to student. These are challenging, without giving easy answers and thus provoking thought and driving forward progress.
87. Students' work and progress are effectively assessed every half term. Marking is less consistent, however. Some is cursory, and comments are very bland. Some is much more detailed, particularly as students move up the school, but the helpful routine of giving advice and checking that it has been followed is not fully established.

88. English is very well led by a very experienced specialist, whose vision for the department and the school is of very high quality. This vision is well shared by a cohesive and effective team who are committed to developing positive attitudes amongst the students and who work to help them make good progress. There is good subject documentation, and the curriculum is well structured and comprehensive. The Key Stage 3 National Literacy Strategy is in the process of being introduced, and is likely to bear fruit in fostering students' progress, particularly if the sharing of detailed objectives and of evaluation becomes an established part of the routine. Accommodation is good, in a suite of four rooms with a subject office. However, there are five teachers, and where an additional room has to be found, it is unsatisfactory if a teacher has to go a large distance carrying resources for a lesson. Resources in terms of books and equipment for use in lessons are good, but the collections of books to promote reading for pleasure are very limited.

Literacy

89. Literacy is satisfactorily promoted in the school. Apart from the English department, where provision is strong, teaching in other subjects often provides support for the development of language skills. This is particularly effective in terms of technical language, where specialist vocabulary is given particular attention. In many subjects, teachers encourage class and group discussion, but there are few examples of individual talks and presentations. They also provide good guidance for continuous writing. In marking, the correction of language errors is not established as a routine. The school library is a welcoming and popular space. It is well equipped with computers which are well used. The book collection is satisfactory, and it is well kept and well ordered. The librarian does a great deal to promote reading, but the loan rate is not high, and this, combined with the absence of books for loan in English classrooms, leads to the conclusion that the promotion of literacy by systematically introducing students to opportunities of reading for pleasure is not strong.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Standards in GCSE examinations are well above average.
- The quality of teaching is good with some outstanding features.
- Teachers have very good knowledge of mathematics.

Areas for improvement

- The limited use of ICT.
- Provision of work which matches the abilities and aptitudes of all students.
- The use of assessment to guide curriculum planning.

90. In 2002, National Curriculum test results for students at the end of Year 9 were above average. When compared with all other schools results were above average for Level 5, and well above average for Level 6. In comparison with similar schools results at both Levels 5 and 6 were well above average. Boys' results were better than those for girls. Mathematics results were similar to those for English and science at Level 5 but were well above at Level 6. Teachers accurately assessed the attainment of students in Year 9. Since the last inspection, results have improved at a faster rate than results nationally. Students' achievement in relation to standards on entry to the school was very good.

91. GCSE examination results, including the number of students gaining A* and A grades, A* - C grades and A* - G grades, in 2002, were well above average. Results were better than those for English but not as good as those for science. They were well above average when compared with all other schools and also with similar schools. Boys' results were better than those which girls achieved. Whilst results have made steady improvement since the last inspection, they fell in 2002 because staffing difficulties had a negative impact upon standards. Students achieved very well in relation to their test results in Year 9.
92. The identification of appropriate and challenging learning objectives, coupled with good support for students' learning, enables students throughout the school, including those with special educational needs or for whom English is a second language, to make very good progress in improving their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts. Many students clearly enjoy mathematics and are eager to learn. Standards are well above average overall. For example, higher-attaining students in Year 9 are confident in their ability to solve simultaneous equations and can use trigonometric expressions in right-angled triangles. Lower-attaining students are less confident, but still solve linear equations. Higher-attaining students in Year 11 have a very good understanding of quadratic equations and confidently use the sine and cosine rules in trigonometry. Lower-attaining students are less secure in their understanding of trigonometry but are confident in applying Pythagoras' theorem to right-angled triangles. The overall standards of numeracy throughout the school are good with, for example, students in Year 9 being able to plot and interpret graphical information with a good degree of confidence. The lowest-attaining students, however, and in particular those in Years 7 and 8, have difficulty with basic number and times tables.
93. Teaching is good and students learn well as a result. Whilst in a very small proportion of lessons teaching was unsatisfactory, in many lessons teaching was good or very good and there were also a few excellent lessons. The strengths of teaching are the use of very good subject knowledge, high expectations of students, good, well-focused planning and, in many lessons, a range of methods which maintained interest and engendered learning. The level of challenge in many lessons was high. However, in a few lessons, students, particularly girls, could have been challenged more and, in some, there was insufficient opportunity for students to work independently. Homework, which either consolidated or extended classwork, was set regularly. Assessment is used well to monitor the progress of students, to identify underachievers and adjust teaching. However, the use of assessment as a guide to curriculum planning is yet to be fully developed. Day-to-day marking, whilst being satisfactory overall, does not always indicate how students could improve, neither does it provide any targets for future work.
94. The 'Key Stage 3 Strategy' has yet to be fully implemented. Direct links between the mathematics department and teachers in primary feeder schools have yet to be established and the provision for 'catch-up' for students with below average attainment on entry has yet to be fully developed. This is becoming increasingly important since there is evidence that students' attainment in mathematics on entry to the school in Year 7 is falling.
95. Leadership and management in the mathematics department are good with leadership being very good. The department is jointly led by two hard-working and dedicated teachers who are now supported by a satisfactory number of qualified teachers. Educational direction is clear and focused. As a result, there is evidence of new developments which are likely to lead to further improvements. Development planning is in line with school development planning and is effective and manageable. Monitoring of

the quality of teaching by lesson observations takes place and this is used to develop further good practice within the department. The difficulties with regard to staff shortages experienced in 2002 have been resolved. The number, qualifications and experience of teachers in the mathematics department currently matches the curriculum requirements. However, significant difficulties have been experienced in the recruitment of a suitably qualified and experienced teacher to replace one who will be leaving shortly. Teachers are effectively deployed. Resources, in terms of equipment such as computers and books, are good. Even though the school is well resourced in terms of computers, access by mathematics students is far from satisfactory because planning for the use of ICT is undeveloped. This has a negative impact upon the effectiveness of ICT as a teaching and learning tool. The number of specialist mathematics rooms in the department is good.

96. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection. Provided that the current high quality of teaching is maintained and there is an improvement in the planning for the use of ICT, the capacity for further improvement is very good.

Numeracy

97. Students' numeracy skills are good. They are able to use mental arithmetic with a high level of skill and a good degree of accuracy. They are very familiar with the use of calculators and only require them for complicated calculations or for checking purposes. For example, higher-attaining students in Year 7 can round numbers up or down and in Year 9 students are able to use directed numbers skilfully in mental arithmetic. Lower-attaining students throughout the school are, however, less secure in their numeracy skills, particularly in their familiarity with times tables. Numeracy skills are used effectively to help students make good progress in other subjects. In design and technology, for example, students make good use of measuring, graphs and tables to collect and interpret data. In geography, there is evidence of students interpreting climatic charts and of using cardinal compass points to locate points on a map. In science, good use is made of numeracy in drawing lines of best fit when plotting graphs and in calculations such as Ohm's Law. Although the National Numeracy Strategy is now in place, the school has yet to implement an overall numeracy policy, so these skills are not being developed in a systematic way in all subjects; provision is satisfactory.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Results in the GCSE examination are well above average at grades A* - C in the double science award.
- The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school.
- Leadership is good.
- The attitudes of most students are very positive.

Areas for improvement

- To increase the proportion of students achieving A* and A grades in GCSE examinations.
- There are not enough laboratories.
- ICT is not used enough in lessons.

98. Results in national tests in Year 9 in 2002 were above national average levels, and well

above average when compared with schools whose students joined with similar levels of attainment. Boys performed better than girls. The results were an improvement on the previous year and there has been a trend of improvement above the national trend over the last three years. The teachers' assessment of how the students would perform was very accurate in terms of Level 5 and above, but less accurate at Level 6 and above, showing an over-expectation of students' achievement. Results have improved since the previous inspection.

99. In 2002, most students were entered for the GCSE examinations in double science award. The remainder took either the single science award or the three separate sciences of biology, chemistry and physics. The percentage of students gaining A* - C grades in the double science award was well above the national average for both boys and girls. The percentage of students gaining A* - G grades was in line with the national average. It was above for boys and below for girls. The percentage of students gaining A* and A grades was below the national average. Standards in single science award in 2002 were above the national average point scores, with the students taking the foundation paper. The percentage of students gaining C – G grades was above the national average. Standards in biology were above the national average. Results in chemistry were in line with the national average and in physics were below average. In all three separate sciences, the percentage gaining the higher grades of A* and A was well below the national average.
100. Standards in Year 9 during the inspection were well above average. Students have very well developed literacy skills and read and write with confidence. They generally have very good listening skills, but too often their speaking skills are undermined by the incorrect use of grammar. They produce very good quality writing. Spelling and punctuation are good. Students in a Year 7 class showed enthusiasm when comparing series and parallel circuits, their interest helping them to learn well. A Year 8 class of students, whose prior attainment was no more than average, showed good understanding of the function of white blood cells in destroying bacteria and the involvement of platelets in clotting.
101. Standards in Year 11 during the inspection were well above average. As their knowledge increases and their practical skills improve, Year 11 students deal confidently with a range of activities. In a Year 10 class, higher-attainers, both boys and girls, showed a very good grasp of water relations in plants and planned an experiment to show the effect of different solutions on plant tissue.
102. By Year 11, students strongly consolidate their practical coursework. Planning and observation aspects are good, but analysis and evaluation less so. Experimental investigations are well presented with good spelling. Graphs are accurately drawn and results are neatly tabulated. The amount of investigative science the students do has improved since the previous inspection, but opportunities need to be increased to extend this further and develop their independent learning.
103. Most students make very good progress from Year 7 to Year 11. In a Year 7 class, students with special educational needs made very good progress in assembling the components of electrical circuits because of the clear explanations of the teacher, the support of the learning assistant and their own determination to succeed. However, higher attainers do not progress quite as well in that there is insufficient structure to extension work. In a Year 9 class, students of average prior attainment had a good understanding of how salts may be made and the general properties of acids and alkalis because the teacher assessed their knowledge with frequent questions.

104. Students acquire new skills and knowledge very rapidly and concentration, keenness and enthusiasm are strong features in the best learning. Students work very well together and respect each other's opinions. They are similarly confident when working on their own. The department is making a considerable contribution to literacy and most students are confident in reading and understanding the science textbooks used in class.
105. Teaching is very good throughout the school and is a major strength of the department, despite some instability in staffing since the previous inspection. The learning resources are adequate, but there is insufficient laboratory accommodation, with ten lessons being taught in classrooms. This prevents class practicals and effective demonstrations. This has a negative impact on students' learning by reducing opportunities for practical work. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of their subject. Their expectations of the students are very high and the good behaviour and very good attitude of the students to the subject are praised. The range of teaching strategies has improved since the previous inspection and only rarely does over-direction by the teacher hold back independent learning. Lesson objectives are shared with students as a matter of course and discussed at the end of lessons to see how well the students have learned.
106. Students respond very positively to challenge and persevere with difficult tasks because the teachers check their progress to ensure they do not fall behind. Teachers share good practice and this improves their teaching and allows them to develop new ideas which improve students' learning. Students learn best in lessons with a high level of challenge and pace. For example, Year 8 students did an experiment to see how fast a metal reacted with different strengths of acid. The teacher then challenged them to explain why the rates were different. This resulted in a very good discussion where students considered mass and surface area and were able to formulate scientific ideas. An analysis of students' work showed books were marked regularly with comments praising effort, but there was an inconsistency in comments actually informing the students how to improve.
107. The department is well led and managed and the relatively new head of department has welded together new and experienced teachers into a strong team who share good practice. The head of department has a clear and realistic view of what needs to be done to raise standards further and there is a good departmental improvement plan. All schemes of work have been redeveloped in the light of QCA (quality, curriculum and assessment) material and the National Science Strategy. These have provided the necessary stimuli to increase thinking skills. There are very good procedures for assessing and tracking students' progress throughout the school and there is effective use of target setting from Year 7, using a variety of predictors. The use of ICT has improved since the previous inspection, but there is insufficient data logging and use of spreadsheets. The Internet is used extensively for research, and word processing is a strength with students having very good keyboard skills. However, computers are not used enough in lessons to demonstrate techniques and to display and analyse results. The department is very well supported by three full-time technicians.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Teaching is of good quality.
- Standards are above average by the end of Year 11 and some work is distinguished.
- There are excellent displays of students' work in a first class gallery.

Areas for improvement

- The behaviour of some students needs to be better.
- The limited use of ICT restricts the range of work undertaken.

108. Standards of work in Years 7 to 9 are average which represents good achievement because standards are below average when students enter the school. In Years 10 and 11, standards are above average and often well above average, which is very good achievement.
109. Teachers' assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 in 2002, showed attainment overall to be below average, with boys doing less well than girls. This does not agree with the inspection findings which put attainment higher, and suggests a need for further consideration of the processes by which judgements about levels are made. GCSE examination results in 2002 were well above the national average. The work of some students is of an exceptionally high standard.
110. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 were average and often above average. Students have good knowledge and understanding of a number of art techniques, including drawing and painting in a variety of mediums, lino and screen printing, and ceramics. They apply their knowledge and skills to produce good work. They work effectively in two and three dimensions and make some limited use of ICT to scan images. Their knowledge of artists and styles is satisfactory.
111. In the work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 11 were above average and students make good progress from Year 9. Students develop and refine their drawings and paintings well, and their knowledge and understanding of mediums is good. They produce good quantities of work, and there is evidence of good independent learning and research. Many students produce work which is well above average and is consistent with the awards of high grades in the GCSE examination. Some work, especially in portraiture and the theme of relationships, is outstanding, powerfully imaginative, boldly conceived and dramatically executed.
112. The quality of teaching is good at all stages. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and art skills which they use confidently. Lessons are well planned over a period of time. For example, Year 9 students' work on Greek pots was developed very effectively over several lessons. Work which started with students' initial research, led to sketches and, ultimately, to the design and firing of clay pots. Students learned much about the properties of clay in the process. Finally, by decorating the pots in bright colours and featuring images derived from Greek mythology, they reinforced their knowledge of this aspect of classical culture.
113. Work is assessed carefully and great importance is attached to providing students with written comments which provide high quality advice to them about how to improve their work. As one teacher put it, 'If all you do is look at the mark I've wasted my time.' Expectations are high and students are always shown what good standards look like.

Homework is set on a regular basis and plays an important part in developing students' independent learning. These methods are effective in helping students to acquire their skills, knowledge and understanding well. They make good intellectual and creative efforts and there is good productivity.

114. Students are interested in art and recruitment to GCSE examination courses is good. Students with special educational needs are given appropriate support and make good progress. The school does not identify gifted and talented students, but a number of such students, who are clearly talented in art, are known to staff. Typically, their output is considerably greater than their peers and they make good progress. The management of students' behaviour, more especially by the less experienced members of staff, needs to be better so that all students are helped to focus strongly on their work. ICT, although used to some extent, is not a strong feature of the department's work.
115. The department is well led by an experienced head of department. Resources for the subject are very good, allowing, for example, all students the opportunity to work in oils, and on a large scale which are two vital elements for the full development of students' art skills. At the time of the last inspection, standards were above average, students made good progress, the teaching was good and assessment was a particular strength. This good picture has been further improved.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- The audit of the curriculum to identify existing elements of citizenship.
- The use of outside agencies to broaden students' experiences.
- The breadth of vision for further development.

Areas for improvement

- The further development of students' experience of enquiry.
- The strengthening of the existing elements of citizenship in the wider curriculum.
- The development of assessment

116. The school has identified the PSHE programme within Jewish studies as the most appropriate vehicle for developing citizenship within the school. This is a good first step as all students experience the programme and much of its content clearly relates to key areas of citizenship. The school has also taken good steps in identifying through an audit where elements of citizenship exist in the current curriculum, but has yet to ensure that the key elements are firmly embedded in subjects such as history, geography, science and English.
117. The initial stages of establishing citizenship in the wider curriculum have been more successful in some subjects than others. There is good practice where there are clear and obvious connections between citizenship and subject content, and where there is commitment on behalf of the staff. There are already instances of good practice in subjects which expose students to issues of citizenship so that their understanding is deepened. Such opportunities for learning are found in some history lessons where emphasis is placed on the development of group skills and the respectful and sensitive working with others. However, these group skills are not yet well established in the school and students found it difficult to work in this way in lessons in geography and English.

118. Some unplanned opportunities were also observed during the inspection but no explicit references to the teaching or learning of citizenship were observed in English, music or modern foreign languages. Because of timetabling arrangements it was only possible to see one lesson of citizenship. This was for students in Year 8 and was effectively led by a visiting theatre company. The students were helped to create a story about homelessness and its effect on self-esteem. They went on to explore the importance of self-respect as a key element in any positive view of the world around them. Students showed that they could listen intently to a story and work well in groups to explore different aspects of experience.
119. The school's well-established programme of Jewish studies provides a strong basis for its developing work on citizenship in the curriculum as a whole. Students are encouraged to take part in the wider life of the school and their participation in events and festivals is strong. They are also encouraged to take on roles of responsibility and many do so as prefects or members of the school council. The theme of enquiry is least well developed but its presence in the research element in some lessons in history and science is a point of growth for the future. The school's Kehillah, or community, programme also plans to extend the school's work with a number of organisations to provide more opportunities for students to work with disabled young people, to take part in leadership training and to visit other communities. In addition, the school plans to introduce a house system to increase the opportunities for students to take part in a wide range of activities, including scope for younger students to interact with older ones, and for their successful participation to be recognised. Assessment procedures have still to be developed.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Impressive environment and stimulating displays of students' work.
- Enthusiastic teachers with good specialist knowledge.
- Good access for students outside lesson time.

Areas for improvement

- Marking is not consistent.
- Monitoring of students' progress is not rigorous enough.

120. Standards of attainment in the GCSE examination in 2002 matched nationally expected levels. They were well above average in food studies, graphics and textiles but below average in resistant materials. Electronics results were just above the national average. There were too many grade D passes and too few of the highest grades, except in textiles. Assessments undertaken by teachers at the end of Year 9 indicate that standards are well above average. Standards have improved overall since the last inspection, but declined to a low level in 2001. They are now recovering.
121. Current standards are above average by the end of Year 9. Students have a good understanding of the designing and making process and they use tools, including computer-controlled sewing machines, to make successful and attractive products. However, too often they rely heavily on the plans produced for them and do not therefore think sufficiently about modifications to plans and methods, nor do they compare one source of information with another. Progress through the three years is good because the deficiencies in students' knowledge and understanding on entry are made good.

122. There are discrepancies between teachers' test results and current standards because some teachers give good marks more easily than others. The quality of the work seen in the books also varies too much between different teachers and units, especially in the amount of writing undertaken by students as a means of developing an understanding of the subject.
123. Standards by the end of Year 11 are above average. Students annotate plans well to show the changes they have made. They give good reasons why a chosen design is preferred. They also evaluate product quality against customers' needs and use ICT well to improve both research and presentation. Students' notebooks in Year 11 show that those with high previous attainment progress very well, especially in food and textiles. The work is very well marked. They are creative and capable and devise innovative products of quality, for example a baby walker that looks like a car and T-shirts with an appealing logo for three- to five-year-olds. Too rarely, however, are they planning alternative ways of proceeding. They do not compare and evaluate the sources of information they have used. Overall progress is good, but does vary. Students with special educational needs receive good support.
124. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. In one very good lesson in Year 7, the teacher demonstrated effectively how to solder components onto a printed circuit board. Resources were so well organised that all students made rapid progress in learning to solder, using quality checks with confidence to make their own work very good. In another lesson on jigsaw puzzles, the teacher effectively challenged students to use a range of techniques to create products by working thoughtfully and accurately with different techniques and materials. In Year 10, students in food studies showed good attention to health and safety aspects of their work. In a very good textiles lesson, the teacher accurately assessed how well students were progressing before setting appropriate tasks so that all had something of value to contribute at the end. In contrast, some lessons, about one in three, although satisfactory were less demanding. Good features were balanced by missed opportunities, for example to move the whole group along at the same pace or not to celebrate and share success at the end of the lesson. The work in students' books shows that all receive good guidance and respond well, but written instructions about what to do next to improve are not always precise enough to bring quick results and some comments were at times over generous.
125. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Although inconsistencies remain, new systems are already raising standards. The teachers are enthusiastic specialists with a good range of skills and knowledge, including the use of ICT. The leadership and management are good; the suite of rooms, as a consequence, is now very well organised to provide a stimulating and exciting environment for learning and improvement.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Standards are well above average in GCSE examinations.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- Learning is very good in Years 10 and 11.
- Fieldwork is very well used.

Areas for improvement

- Limited use of ICT.
- Breadth of teaching and learning strategies.

126. Standards in the GCSE examination in 2002 were well above average. The trend of improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Almost all students entered gain higher-grade results. Girls do better than boys and better in geography than in their other subjects.
127. On entry to the school, the students' skills and knowledge are average and their knowledge of place is weak. Students quickly develop sound map skills and begin to understand patterns of settlement and practise decision-making by justifying choices for village sites. By studying the earthquake at Izmit they began to understand the human consequences of tectonic activity. They develop numeracy skills well, investigating relationships between earthquake magnitude, fatalities and levels of economic development. Students respond well in lessons and are eager to answer questions, make comments and express opinions. Boys and girls, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, participate well and make sound progress in Years 7 to 9.
128. By Year 9 standards are average. This represents satisfactory achievement. Students know how statistical indicators show contrasting levels of development in different countries. They understand that there may be conflicting views on environmental conservation in national parks. They show satisfactory application to written tasks but do not always listen well enough to teachers and other students. In consequence, knowledge of some subject concepts and terminology are not as secure as they could be and progress with learning is slower than it should be. Lower-attaining students are well supported by writing aids to structure written assignments. Gifted and talented students are not identified in planning or sufficiently extended by very high expectations and additional challenging tasks. ICT experience meets statutory requirements but is under-used as a learning tool.
129. In Years 10 and 11, students preparing for GCSE examinations work hard and make very good progress in response to demanding teaching and a strong focus on examination requirements. Their achievement is good. A high proportion of work is graphical and statistical giving very good opportunities for explanation and analysis of data; this raises standards. Students know to support statements with accurate statistical and case study evidence. They recall previous learning very well and operate and extend their subject language at a very high level. Students are well practised in model examination answers that show very good knowledge of syllabus content and concepts, and very good organisation of writing and use of key vocabulary. Exercise books show attainment to be above average but the standards of students' answers in class are better than this. Fieldwork experience, studying urban re-development in London's Docklands and physical landscapes in Devon, is very good and is a major contributor to success.
130. Teaching overall is good and very good in the final GCSE examination year. Teachers have excellent knowledge and experience of the subject, particularly at examination level. They use questions skilfully to check and extend understanding, and give very clear explanations of new concepts. There is very good focus on examination requirements. Where teaching is not good, a minority of lessons, it is satisfactory but does not have a wide enough range of learning strategies to involve students in their work. Lessons are not always consolidated with completed tasks and explanatory writing, particularly in Year 9. Students are not required to participate enough in their

learning and more active styles are needed. Teachers do not make sufficient use of recent technologies, in part because of inadequate provision of equipment.

131. Relationships and behaviour are always at least satisfactory and usually good, improving as students get older. The needs of students with special educational needs, including those needing support with learning English, are successfully addressed and they learn well. Students have very good, moral, social and cultural experiences. Relevant homework is used effectively to extend learning. Insufficient use is made of ICT.
132. Assessment and monitoring of teaching and of students' work and progress is sound but with scope for further development. Analysis of examination achievement is very good and this is used well to plan future action. Good displays of students' work enliven teaching rooms, set sound standards and illustrate geographical techniques. More up-to-date levels of provision of audio visual and computer equipment are needed to sustain and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Management is good. Sound plans for development support whole-school aims. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Students are very well managed.
- Lessons are very well planned.
- Leadership and management are good.

Areas for improvement

- Limited use of ICT to develop students' independent learning.
- Improved use of assessment so that students know how to improve their work.

133. The GCSE examination results in 2002 showed an A* - C pass rate of 81 per cent which is well above the national average and an A* - G pass rate of 100 per cent which is above the national average. These results are in line with the results of the last three years. Teachers' assessments in 2002 for Year 9 show an above average standard overall and an increased percentage of students achieving above national average compared with the results for the previous two years.
134. Work seen during the inspection confirms that these standards are being maintained and so achievement by the end of Year 9 is good and by the end of Year 11 is very good. By Year 9, higher-attaining students are able to analyse rigorously the experience of the working classes in Hitler's Germany with reference to changing patterns of employment and the wages and conditions of industrial workers. Middle-attaining students show that they can use visual evidence to explore the impact of Hitler's policies for young people and lower-attaining students understand how propaganda may be used to promote an idea. By Year 11, students use their knowledge of world events to analyse successfully the American and Russian positions during the Cuban Missile Crisis and higher-attaining students offer reasoned opinions as to which country gained most from the event.
135. Teaching is good throughout the school, particularly in the planning of lessons which are well paced and build upon prior learning. A good example of this was in Year 7 when students made model castles based upon earlier study of design features and their

purpose. Learning is also good in Years 7 to 9 because students are given the opportunity to analyse the causes of events and to use stimulating evidence, as seen in Year 9 when students read the recollections of a Jewish boy in the 1930s. Learning is good in Years 10 and 11, an especially good feature being the use of question and answer techniques so that students have plenty of practice in writing explanations of events. Students persevere with tasks but there is little evidence of independent learning set by teachers or of initiative taken by students.

136. Leadership and management are good. The curriculum offers some in-depth studies, for example on Roman towns and the French Revolution and, overall, it makes a very good contribution to citizenship education through Year 9 analysis of the struggle for the vote in the nineteenth century, GCSE examination coursework on the role of women since 1945 and the study of the post-war superpower conflict.
137. The subject's contribution to students' spiritual development is good through the study of the Holocaust, Black Civil Rights in America and through the visit to Ypres. The main strength of the subject's contribution to students' literacy development is through the strong emphasis upon the definition of key words. Students' broader economic awareness is effectively promoted by the study of the impact of war upon American society. Recent developments in assessment arrangements include assignments specifically marked to National Curriculum levels of attainment and including opportunities for extended analysis by higher-attaining students.
138. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory as standards of achievement have been maintained and there has been good development in the area of assessment. This remains, however, an area for further development so that assessment more regularly informs students as to how they can improve their work. More use of ICT is needed so that students can develop more independent learning skills and be helped to evaluate critically sources of information as part of their citizenship education.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Strengths

- The achievement of lower-attaining students on the GNVQ course in Year 11.
- The quality of the school's planning for the development of ICT in the future.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in Years 7 to 11.
- The use of ICT in learning in other subjects.
- The monitoring of teaching, learning and the use of ICT.

139. In 2002, standards in the combined business studies and information technology GCSE examination were above average. This course has now been discontinued. Students currently in Year 11 following the GNVQ ICT course are working at nationally expected levels. This represents good achievement as they are all lower-attainers. All students in Year 10 following a key skills IT course are working below expected levels. This is because they are given little opportunity to demonstrate higher levels of understanding. If students in Year 11 do not follow the GNVQ course they do not have any ICT lessons, apart from some use in a few subjects such as design and technology and science.

140. In 2002, students' attainment at the end of Year 9, based on assessments made by teachers, was average. These results were based on information gathered from a range of sources over a considerable time and were not checked by specialist teachers of ICT, a process that is essential for validation. The standard of current work is below average. Throughout Years 7 to 9, with the exception of the use of ICT in problem-solving in design and technology, standards are not high enough because students do not have enough opportunities to make their own decisions about when and how to use computers to improve their work. Most students enter the school with low attainment in ICT and, except for their work in some aspects of design and technology, they make little progress during Years 7 to 9. They are required to use the Internet but do not evaluate its use, and their use of modelling is limited to simple spreadsheets, without good opportunities to work out independent solutions to their own problems. Their achievement by Year 9 is therefore unsatisfactory. Fewer girls than boys choose to study ICT as an option in Years 10 and 11, but the girls work more steadily in all lessons, with the result that their work is more accurate. Students who speak English as an additional language attain at the same level as others.
141. Teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9, but is good in Years 10 and 11. There is no specialist teaching in Years 7 to 9. Teachers who are expert in their own subjects often have unsatisfactory knowledge of the needs of the ICT curriculum. Where they are working in their areas of expertise, for example in Year 7 in design and technology, where teachers introduce students to computer-controlled movement, teaching is good and students learn well. Mathematics teachers also give good explanations of the mathematical principles underpinning the use of ICT, but these gains are made in isolation and there are many missed opportunities for students to learn about the use of ICT, for instance in presentations. In Year 9, students working with spreadsheets and with desktop publishing in the context of Spanish were held back by non-specialist teaching based on inaccurate perceptions of basic procedures.
142. Teachers in subjects make very little use of ICT, to the extent that overall statutory requirements are not met. This was the case at the time of the last inspection. Except in design and technology, and in science where all students have demonstrations of data logging and then analyse the resulting graphs, there is very little consistent use of computers by all students. Teaching throughout Years 7 to 11 concentrates on basic procedures at the expense of development of judgement, and students have too few opportunities to develop their capability by applying it independently to new situations.
143. The management of ICT in Years 7 to 11 is unsatisfactory. This is in part the result of lack of specialist teachers, so that in Years 7 to 9, students learn aspects of ICT in other subjects from teachers whose knowledge varies considerably. There is not enough monitoring of teaching to ensure that it is of sufficient quality to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. The assessment of students is too late in the year for mistakes to be rectified and omissions made good. There is little formal monitoring of the use of ICT in other areas of the curriculum. This is in part the result of lack of access to computer rooms. The head of department is making good progress in providing the necessary equipment for the development of ICT within the school, but at present there is not enough equipment or space in classrooms for cross-curricular use. The majority of teachers have still to complete training in the use of ICT, but the head of department has worked hard to remedy this. There is a good plan for the development of ICT that is attainable and towards which the head of department and senior management are working effectively. They have already made some improvements since the last inspection in that the whole of the National Curriculum for ICT as a separate subject is covered, if only at a low level, and the level of equipment has improved, but much work remains to be done. Improvement since the last inspection has not been satisfactory.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Leadership is very good.
- All teachers use the foreign language very well during lessons.
- Students achieve well.

Areas for improvement

- Increase students' understanding of how to improve so they become more independent.
- There is a need to improve French results in the GCSE examination.
- Extend the range of extra-curricular activities.

144. Standards by the end of Year 9 in Spanish are above average. Students taking the French beginners' course, started in Year 9 in 2002, are working at levels below the national average. However, the course is successful in enabling students to apply their knowledge of Spanish to their work in French and consequently progress is rapid.
145. Standards by the end of Year 11 are above average in Spanish and below average in French. GCSE examination results exceed the national average in Spanish by ten per cent and boys do especially well: their results are over 15 per cent above the national average for boys. Results are below the national average in French and the difference is similar for both boys and girls. The trend in Spanish since 2000 is rising and in French also, but here the rate is slower. Students entered for the GCSE examination in Spanish in 2002 achieved similar results in this subject as they did in the average for all their other subjects. Those entered for the GCSE examination in French in 2002 achieved worse results than they did in the average for all their other subjects.
146. Teaching is good in Spanish and French in Years 7 to 9. Teachers conduct all lessons in the foreign language and usually provide a variety of activities to engage students' interests. Students' attitudes towards the subject vary from student to student, but were good overall, with no difference between boys and girls: both are included in all lessons and feel equally well provided for. In the best lessons, students learned to express their own thoughts in Spanish without reading from a text, but this was exceptional. A good example occurred when students worked with the format of a popular television game, but, in another lesson, where students reviewed a listening comprehension exercise, the teacher missed an opportunity to demand more detailed answers.
147. Assessment procedures are good in Years 7 to 9. Teachers set regular tests, devised and moderated centrally within the department, and keep records of their students' progress. They have the potential to improve standards. When allocating marks to exercises in class, teachers regularly explain the corresponding National Curriculum level and students learn to assess their own progress. When asked which level they were on, most students answered accurately, but could not describe in any detail how they might improve.
148. Teaching is good in Spanish and French in Years 10 and 11. Teachers use the foreign language as the medium of instruction in most lessons and, in the best, they challenge students to produce language of their own without support. In one Year 11 lesson, the teacher generated a very positive atmosphere, explaining the lesson objectives and providing stimulating materials, all in Spanish, and students learned to use language relating to families and domestic incidents. The only weakness was that they did not

use the foreign language to express their own ideas or ask questions independently, preferring instead to use single words and short phrases. They can speak at greater length when reading from prepared scripts, but teachers usually fail to remove this scaffolding and students do not make as much progress as they could. Good assessment procedures are now in place but few students could describe how they might improve.

149. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. Teachers handle health-related and social issues within a clear moral framework: in one lesson in Year 10, students learned about the attitudes of young people in France towards smoking. The cultural similarities and differences between Britain and Europe are central and the presence of native speakers of European languages on the staff of the school brings many advantages. Few opportunities exist currently for extra-curricular activities; good examples include the work experience for sixth-formers in Spain and France, which are popular and improve results.
150. Students gain a sound understanding of grammar and know enough technical terms to manipulate language. In a Year 10 Spanish lesson, students revised the possessive adjective by practising making complaints about hotel accommodation and in a Year 9 Spanish lesson, revised tenses by describing their daily routine in both present and imperfect tenses. They used terminology correctly and students starting French in Year 9 were able to place their new language within this framework. All students make use of ICT in Year 9 modern language lessons, but expectations of students' achievement are low. In one lesson observed in the computer suite, students merely matched questions to answers in Spanish by inserting words into a table. In another, many students failed to exploit the computers sufficiently to help them with their Spanish. ICT is missing from language lessons in other years and provision is unsatisfactory.
151. The leadership and management of the modern languages department are very good. There is a clear vision for the future and the department has very good plans for assessment procedures, monitoring of teaching and sharing good practice. The teachers work very well as a team, ably led by the head of department, who has developed the department's procedures, engendered a very positive ethos for the team and provided very good support for newly qualified members of staff. The priorities chosen for the current development plan are well focussed and based on a careful analysis of the department's needs, but there is no reference to enabling students to become more independent. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, but students' speaking skills and independence have not improved.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- There is a strong focus on raising students' musical skills.
- The attitudes of students are especially enthusiastic in Years 10 and 11.
- There is a well-planned curriculum.
- There is good provision for Instrumental resources.

Areas for improvement

- Procedures for assessing students' work need further development.
- The small minority of disruptive students need to be better managed.
- To ensure that more students take part in extra-curricular activities.

152. Students in Year 7 have limited practical skills and many have poor concentration. Their work is well below the standard expected for their age. Progress from Year 7 to Year 9 is good. By the end of Year 9, most students have reached national expectation for their age. In ensemble work, some of them achieve above expectation because they concentrate well and work hard, although there is still a small proportion of students whose attainment falls well below expectation.
153. The number of students in GCSE examination groups is too small to compare with national figures but students usually obtain grades as good or better than those in other subjects they study. Students in Year 11 achieve well. Their composing is slightly above expectation for their age because they are offered a wide variety of musical stimuli to get them started in Year 10, and they are constantly encouraged to take responsibility for their work. Their ensemble playing is good, sometimes very good, because they get extensive practice of working in small groups. Solo performance and listening and appraising vary more widely and students make very little use of musical vocabulary to describe what they hear. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. In Years 7 to 9, students with special educational needs make progress in line with the majority of students, and the most able musicians make particularly good progress.
154. Students' attitudes to music vary widely, but overall they are good and sometimes very good. Some students in Year 9 have excellent concentration and enthusiasm which lead to very good learning but, in Year 7, poor behaviour hinders the learning of all. Relatively few students study music for GCSE examinations, but those that do respond well to the work offered and make good progress. Relationships between students and between students and teachers are often very good, and relationships between students and teachers become steadily stronger as students move up the school. Music makes a good contribution to students' personal development, particularly their moral, social and cultural education. However, take-up of instrumental tuition and of extra-curricular opportunities is low.
155. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. The strengths of teaching include good knowledge of both the subject and of students, which leads to good-quality support for individual students and rapid improvement of performance. There is a strong focus on raising students' musical skills through a well-planned curriculum of increasing challenge. Appropriate homework reinforces work done in class and students are involved in assessing their own work. Where teaching is less strong, it is because too much time is spent talking at students rather than checking their memories through questions or getting them to summarise what they have learned. Time is sometimes wasted by practising something which is already good enough, so the students, especially the more able, lose concentration. Teachers sometimes talk over the music students are trying to listen to, which hampers their listening.
156. Leadership and management are good. A clear focus on raising levels of musical skills is shared within the department. Although there is no formal monitoring of teaching within the department, professional development needs are identified and addressed.

157. Formal assessment systems are unsatisfactory. There is no formal evaluation of students' ability on entry or tracking to monitor the progress of different groups of students. Consistent reference to National Curriculum levels is not yet established in either curriculum planning or classroom practice and students' annual targets are not closely linked to musical skills or knowledge.
158. The department has a good stock of instruments and has made good use of the London Philharmonic Orchestra's schools' programme to support students' composing and performing. Teachers are well qualified but there is very little learning support for students with behavioural difficulties, which has a marked negative impact on the progress of students in Year 7. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and improvement has been satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- High quality teaching and learning.
- Excellent GCSE examination results.
- Very good leadership and management.
- Wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Very good facilities, both indoors and outdoors.

Areas for improvement

- Implement the plan to extend the use of ICT.
- Develop plans for promoting literacy and numeracy.

159. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 are average overall and remain similar to the picture described at the time of the previous inspection. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Individual students attain above average standards in gymnastics, badminton, football, basketball and athletics. The results in the most recent GCSE examination were excellent with 92 per cent of students gaining the higher A* - C grades. Since the examination course was first introduced in 1998, results have consistently been very high in comparison with the national average. Physical education is becoming an increasingly popular option choice. At present, more than 70 students are following the examination course in Years 10 and 11 with a high proportion of girls involved.
160. Lesson observations and the analysis of written work indicate that students in the present Year 11 are maintaining the previous high standards. Their practical skills, general coursework and quality of most of their personal exercise programmes are very good. Most have a very good understanding of the theoretical aspects of the syllabus. The attainment of students in Year 10 is also above average. Overall, the attainment of non-examination students is average as it was at the time of the last inspection.
161. The achievement of students in Years 7 to 9 is good. Students enter the school with an ability level that is below average and they quickly begin to make good progress. Girls in Years 7 and 8, for example, are achieving particularly well in gymnastics. Boys in Years 8 and 9 have made significant progress in badminton. The achievement of non-examination students in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. This is because they have only one period of physical education each week. This reduction in time both limits potential progress and restricts the range of activities available. Students with special educational needs, who are integrated fully into all lessons, progress as well as others. Several

such students are following the GCSE examination course. The level of commitment shown by the examination students, particularly in Year 11, is impressive. As a result, they make very good progress.

162. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and is often very good. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Students respond very well to the teaching they receive. Relationships between teachers and students are extremely positive and encourage learning. The willingness of students to work constructively with their teachers and with each other is apparent in all lessons. This has a very positive impact on the progress that they make. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of students who have particular physical difficulties. In some lessons they are set modified tasks. This gives them the confidence to take part and to make progress. A key strength in students' learning lies in the fact that they have been taught good habits through a very consistent and structured approach in lessons. Consequently, levels of participation are high throughout the school, students are always correctly dressed for physical activity and behaviour is always of a high standard.
163. The curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements, although it has not been possible to include swimming this year because of difficulties in booking the pool. All four members of the department contribute to a very good range of extra-curricular activities throughout the week. During the inspection these included badminton, table tennis, basketball, football, dance and trampolining. The activities offered are very well supported by the students. The inter-form competitions are particularly popular and attract large numbers of students each year. The school competes against other schools in several different sports. Teams have enjoyed recent successes in football and basketball. Students in Year 10 are given the opportunity to attend Glasbury Outdoor Pursuit Centre each year. Good use is also made of local facilities such as the Redbridge Sports Centre, Fairlop Waters and Abridge Golf Club.
164. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The teachers work extremely well together. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The most significant development has been the successful introduction of the GCSE examination course. Results in physical education are now among the highest in the school. The Junior Sports Leaders Award is available as an option in Year 11. Facilities, that include a new fitness suite, have also improved. A system for tracking students' attainment as they progress through the school is being introduced into Year 7. At present there is no formal policy for teaching literacy and numeracy within physical education. The head of department also identified the need to provide students with more opportunities to use ICT to support learning. One member of the department, who joined the school last September, has made a significant contribution to the provision of a wide range of topics that have recently become available through ICT. A new base for teaching theory work will be opened shortly. This will increase the opportunities for students to use technology much more effectively. It will also support the contribution that physical education can make towards the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Although there are no jumping pits for athletics, indoor and outdoor facilities are very good and contribute to the standards being achieved. However, the amount of litter on the playing fields, particularly after lunch, is an eyesore and is a constant and understandable irritant to the teaching staff.

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

In the inspection, thirteen 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	5	40	52	-	2	0.60	0.79

GCE A-level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	22	100	96	73	46	8.27	6.57
Biology	13	100	88	31	34	6.31	5.25
Business studies	24	71	92	8	32	2.75	5.50
Chemistry	12	75	90	42	43	5.17	5.90
Computer studies	8	100	86	-	23	3.50	4.62
Economics	2	100	89	100	36	9.00	5.52
English literature	20	95	95	35	37	5.70	5.91
French	6	100	89	-	38	4.33	5.59
Full design and technology	15	100	91	13	30	4.67	5.38
Geography	21	76	92	5	38	3.05	5.74
History	20	85	88	25	35	5.40	5.45
Mathematics	10	100	87	70	43	8.00	5.80
Other languages	3	100	93	100	56	9.33	6.84
Other social studies	5	85	87	26	34	4.71	5.30
Physics	7	100	88	43	40	6.00	5.67
Sociology	5	80	86	40	35	5.60	5.32
Spanish	12	75	89	8	39	3.00	5.70
Media, communication and production	4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	10.50	11.62

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The school offers science courses in biology, chemistry and physics leading to the A-level examination. In this inspection, the focus was on biology. In mathematics, there are currently two groups of students, both in Year 12 and Year 13, following a modular course leading to a qualification at A-level. All students follow the same curriculum. In Year 12 they study AS-level modules in pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics. Students continue with A-level modules in Year 13, studying a further two modules in pure mathematics, including a statistics module.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Excellent examination results.
- Teaching is of very good quality.
- Students are very motivated and effectively supported.

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT is limited.
- Additional modules need to be on offer to students.
- Opportunities to extend students' learning beyond the bounds of the syllabus.

165. At the end of Year 13 in 2001, A-level results were very high when compared with the national average. In 2002, the school's results were similar to those for 2001 although no national comparative data is yet available to enable national comparisons to be made. There was no significant difference between the performance of male and female students. These results were due to very good teaching and effective strategies for developing students' examination technique.

166. The standard of work in Year 13 is well above the national average. Students have very good algebraic skills and a strong grasp of calculus. They know different techniques to differentiate and integrate a wide variety of functions. They can solve differential equations. They are able to apply their knowledge and understanding of this work very effectively to solve problems. In lessons, they confidently discuss their work using mathematical terminology and notation correctly. They have developed very good examination techniques and are confident tackling A-level questions.

167. All students in Year 12 who sat the AS-level modular examinations in 2002 achieved a pass grade with 68 per cent achieving A or B grades. Data is not yet available to compare these results with national trends. All students taking these examinations progressed to the A-level course.

168. The standard of work in Year 12 is also above the national average. Although the majority of students have previously achieved A or A* grades in the GCSE examination they are introduced to sixth-form mathematics through a bridging course to develop algebraic skills. This enables them to cope with the demands of studying the subject at this level and attain very good standards. The achievement, including those with special educational needs, is very good in Years 12 and 13.

169. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and give clear explanations, linking work with previous learning. This enables students to have a good understanding of their work. Expectations are very high and students respond well to this. Very good use is made of homework to extend understanding. While teachers give early feedback on homework, detailed marking is restricted to formal assessments. In lessons, students are challenged to think and to explain their work. For example, in a very good lesson on statistics in Year 13, two students gave a presentation using an overhead projector on how they had tackled a homework question.
170. Although there is independent learning taking place, this is within the confines of the examination syllabus. At present there is little by way of well-chosen extra-curricular activities to maximise opportunities for the development of students' independence. There is some use of ICT but this has yet to be fully incorporated into teaching and learning. The provision of academic guidance in the sixth form is a strength. Teachers are available outside of lessons to give help. There is also effective peer support. All students are aware of their predicted grades and progress is constantly monitored against these by teachers. Students' attitudes are very good and sometimes exemplary.
171. Sixth-form provision is well organised and lessons are well resourced. A small group of teachers work well together under the very dynamic leadership of the teacher responsible for sixth-form mathematics. The curriculum offered is appropriate and meets students' needs. This, however, could be further improved by offering additional modules, giving students some choice in what they study. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved and attainment and achievement are significantly higher.

Biology

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

Strengths

- Students achieve well because teaching is good and they have positive attitudes to learning.
- Teachers have a good command of their subject and are committed to raising standards.
- Relationships are very good and teachers' enthusiasm is shared with all students.

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT to enhance learning.
- The use of a greater range of learning styles.

172. The GCSE A-level examination results for 2002 were higher than the last confirmed national average results for 2001. All candidates passed, achieving results which were much higher than those predicted by their prior attainment. These results were a little better than those of the previous year but results have been above the national average for the past three years. Most of the candidates were female. The performance of students in the 2002 AS-level examination was well above the national average and was much higher than that predicted by their previous attainment. All students were graded and three-quarters were awarded the higher grades.
173. Inspection evidence shows that, in Year 13, standards are well above average and students are achieving very well. Written work on genetics, for example, is comprehensive and well presented. In one lesson, students were developing a good understanding of the process of genetic engineering in bacteria. Another group

demonstrated that they could accurately interpret graphs and other data related to the growth and decline of populations.

174. Students in Year 12 performed well in the modules which they have already studied. Written work indicates, for example, that they have a good understanding of the core principles related to bio molecules and cell structure. In both groups, students show that they have good recall of the terminology related to modes of nutrition. Students' files contain copious detailed notes. The quality of presentation is, in general, very good. Much of the material consists of dictated or copied notes but teachers ensure that they are correct and appropriately organised. Good use is made of past examination papers and duplicated questions. These are marked, often in an informative way, allowing students to monitor their own progress.
175. The syllabus does not make many demands on students' numerical skills. In Year 13, students recently attended a four-day field course, so enhancing their skills of investigation. Written work from the course shows that many are very competent in the use of statistics. The Internet is used well for research but, in the classroom, the use of ICT is limited due to the lack of access to suitable hardware. This inhibits progress.
176. The quality of teaching is very good overall and students make good gains in their knowledge as a result of the teachers' enthusiasm to share their knowledge with them. Teachers have an excellent command of their subject and their relationship with students is very good. Humour is often used to good effect. Lessons are carefully prepared with clear objectives. Teachers' expectations of students' achievement are high. Students in both years have a positive attitude to learning. They work hard and have a desire to succeed, sharing with teachers an enthusiasm for the subject. Most have the confidence to answer questions when asked but many are unwilling to initiate discussion or challenge concepts. They prefer to listen and take notes and teachers, therefore, do not use a very wide variety of teaching strategies. The amount of practical work is limited and none was seen during the inspection. There is written evidence, however, to show that students, earlier in the course, carried out investigations into the factors that influence the activity of enzymes. Some students produced comprehensive accounts but others failed to give sufficient attention to evaluation.
177. In Year 12, students made good progress in a carefully planned lesson in which they discussed different modes of nutrition. Their recall of previous work was very good. They went on to examine the jaws of several herbivores and carnivores. Most were easily able to identify important differences in the dentition and most were able link this to the lifestyle of the animal. After suggesting further differences in the digestive systems, the teacher concluded the lesson with students answering some examination questions. Another group was engaged in a similar topic examining food chains and food webs. Their recall was again very good. Through constant challenge and encouragement by the teacher, they were skilful in writing, in their own words, accurate definitions of much of the technical vocabulary they had used. In a well planned and executed lesson on genetic engineering in Year 13, students learned not only about genetic modification of organisms but were encouraged to consider the moral and social implications of the procedure.
178. The subject is well managed by the head of science who shares with two other teachers the teaching in both years. Teachers work well together and are committed to raising standards. Homework is regularly set and marks for this and class tests allow teachers to monitor students' progress. The department has responded positively to the general comments about sixth-form provision in the last inspection report and has made good progress. The uptake for biology is now good and attainment is well above

average.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

In 2001, the school ran a full design and technology course at A-level. Currently, there are courses in product design, electronics and textiles. In this inspection, the focus was on product design.

Product design

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

Strengths

- The quality of the relationships between teachers and students, especially in seminars, is good.
- The introduction of new courses has broadened the appeal of the subject.
- There is a good range of project choice in product design.
- Stimulating and exciting displays of work create a positive ethos.

Areas for improvement

- Students' self-assessment needs further development.
- Working with metal, especially in CAD/CAM, needs to be strengthened.
- The tutorial system needs to be made more effective.

179. For the past three years, low numbers of students have been entered for A-level product design. However, during this period the results have improved well. At A-level in 2002, technology was one of the top three school subjects. In the AS-level examination, 20 out of 21 students gained grades A or B. Attendance is good. Retention rates are now high. The number of students taking courses is increasing because of better recruitment to product design and additional students on the new electronics and textiles courses. These improvements have coincided with the appointments of new specialist teachers, including a new head of the department, who also have commercial experience. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

180. The evidence of current work is that standards are rising. Standards in Year 13 are above average. Students have above average designing skills because they create a good range of designs and modify them to meet the needs of the consumer. The quality, for example, of decorative bracelets and garments is high. Last year's case studies show that students had a very good understanding of a range of issues involved in designing buildings, for instance the legal and moral aspects in relation to providing good access for all, including wheelchair users. Students use ICT well to enhance the quality of their coursework. However, they are less confident when making products. They do not work sufficiently with metal and are not confident when calculating values, for example to allow for the diameter of the cutting tool on a computerised machine. In general, they respond well to the teachers' requirements but only a minority know what to do next to improve without asking.

181. Attainment in Year 12 is well above average because the students' designing and creativity capabilities lead to a wider range of useful and attractive products, especially in textiles and electronics. Students make very good use of ICT in designing and presenting their work and good use when controlling machines for milling and sewing. Also they confidently engage in debates with teachers about such issues as the social and moral implications of mass production and the 'throw away' society. They are able to discuss the decisions and modifications they have made and they are keen to

improve. Whilst they were seen to respond very well to suggestions for improvement made by their teachers they sometimes do not highlight in their work the important decisions they have made.

182. Male and female students both make good progress. One of the most confident students had become used to benefiting both from a hearing aid and a laptop computer and therefore made very good contributions in discussion. Students are very considerate and discussed very thoughtfully and well the designing and making of electronic training equipment, for example to strengthen muscles in the hand to facilitate the precise control of a wheelchair. Over the two years, some time is lost because individuals wait for assistance and it is mainly the teachers who determine the pace for the majority of the students because the students are not used to assessing their own work. Attitudes in lessons are very good.
183. The teaching is very good. In an excellent lesson, timetabled after the end of the school day, the motivation and progress were exceptional because of the continual probing and levels of challenge demonstrated by a good humoured teacher. All this resulted in intense concentration and good thinking, for example to calculate mentally and electronically the values for the components in an electronic timing circuit.
184. One very good lesson took the form of a seminar in which the teacher's very good knowledge of legal and safety requirements, as well as those of the examination board, enabled the students to focus their learning on the examination requirements. Very good relationships encourage the free exchange of ideas in all lessons. Good progress was apparent, especially in practical work involving both hand and power tools and computers, but additional individual help was needed because the students did not systematically check upon their own progress. Tutorials often took place without preparation from the students and were not then effective. Progress on the next steps forward was not then as strong as in lessons.
185. Improvement since the last inspection has been good because, despite staffing changes and a period of declining standards, current standards are higher and the department is now well led. The environment and displays are very good, stimulating and exciting and the teaching team is eager to re-build and to improve. All are fully committed to improvement and new systems and new courses are beginning to be effective.

Business education

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

Strengths

- Excellent leadership and management have raised standards significantly.
- Thorough planning has resulted in much improved examination preparation.
- Sensitive and business-like approaches to teaching have raised the status of the subject.
- Coursework is used imaginatively to consolidate and secure learning of business concepts.

Areas for improvement

- Provision for meeting the needs of all potential business students is not adequate.
- Students have only limited access to the wider world of business.
- Development of independence.

186. In 2002, business AS- and A-level students achieved a 100 per cent pass rate and, for the first time, top grades were achieved by a small number of students. This improvement is in sharp contrast to three years of poor results which were below average and those achieved in other AS- and A-level subjects in the school. Although smaller numbers of female students took the subject, results of male and female students were similar.
187. Standards of work are very good. Notes are very thorough, and students' files contain much evidence of work on case studies and practice papers. All make very good progress in developing an understanding of business concepts tested in examinations. Second year students complete excellent coursework which helps them understand and apply business concepts learned during the AS-level part of the course. Students tend to focus their research on businesses in which parents and relatives are involved. When interviewed, students said that they considered this stage in their course vital in helping them realise how business concepts could be applied to real business problems. Parents were also surprised at the depth and relevance of the understanding shown by their sons and daughters.
188. Students show good numerical skills and are able to tackle difficult concepts, such as critical path analysis, with confidence. Aside from coursework, there is less evidence of the use of ICT and more extended research which would result in the development of skills of independent learning necessary for further study and learning. Students are quick to contribute to lessons, although most of the discussions consisted of responses to teachers' questions rather than more complex discussions between students. Students work hard, both in class and at home, and are very prepared to help each other. They achieve very well.
189. Teaching is always good and, at times, very good. Course planning and that for individual lessons is very thorough. Teachers have relevant and up-to-date subject expertise and work very hard to ensure that all students make good progress. Examination preparation is thorough and is well supported by a mixture of notes and test questions. Teachers work very hard to ensure that students are fully involved in all lessons by using a range of activities to involve students in producing sound notes and developing examination techniques. Students reported that they regarded this aspect of teaching to be very important in ensuring that their understanding of business concepts was secure.
190. Teaching is brisk and both members of staff show considerable skill in ensuring that they have high expectations, yet at the same time are very supportive, especially where individual students find work difficult. Lessons are not only business-like but are also enjoyable. There was, however, little evidence of the exposure of students to a wider range of business influences. Few educational visits have taken place, the use of outside speakers is underdeveloped and efforts to encourage involvement in Young Enterprise have met with limited success.
191. The recent significant improvement in standards in business education is a direct result of the recent appointment of a dynamic and energetic head of department who has provided excellent leadership, reversed a high turnover of staff, replaced teachers who lacked effectiveness and done much to raise the profile and status of business

education. She is keen to do well, responded very positively to the inspection process, and is anxious to build and expand the contribution that business courses can make to the sixth-form curriculum. There are still issues which require attention. Relatively few female students elect to take business courses, provision for lower-attaining students has yet to be developed, and students do not take enough responsibility for their own learning. However, given the dramatic improvement in standards already achieved, the business department is set to respond well to these challenges.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The majority of students studying ICT in the sixth form follow an AS- and A-level ICT course. A few follow the A+ course on computer technology. The CISCO course on computer networking is also available but at present is followed by only three students who have returned to study after Year 13.

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

Strengths

- Teachers' knowledge of their subject and of the requirements of the course are good.
- The achievement of students on the A-level course is good.
- Relationships between students and teachers are good.

Areas for improvement

- The low proportion of students remaining on the A+ and CISCO courses.

192. Standards in the 2001 A-level examination were below average, with a small number of students taking the examination. The standard of current work, however, is above average on the Year 13 A-level course, as a result of careful attention to course requirements. Students enjoy the subject and take good care to prove the level of their thinking. They have all used real situations in their personal studies, with good quality research and appropriate implementation techniques. This represents good achievement as their attainment on entry to the course was below average for A-level courses. Although the majority of higher attainers are male students, the most consistently able students are female. Students with special educational needs learn well as the result of good attention to their particular needs. The five students, all male, following the A+ course, work at expected levels, but 15 dropped out of the course earlier in the year as they found it difficult to keep up. Those remaining are confident in building and repairing computer systems, and, with support, do so around the school. As with the A+ course, there are now no Years 12 or 13 students still taking the CISCO networking course, but it is being run for former students who are employed part-time as network technicians within the school and are succeeding in the work.

193. Teachers have good knowledge of the courses that they teach, and so they give good guidance to students. They set clear deadlines for the completion of sections of coursework, with good explanations of the requirements. Lessons are well planned. Students receive high quality individual support, both orally in lessons and also in writing to help them to improve their work. Their work is regularly marked with comments to guide students seeking to improve its quality. Teachers lead discussion in ways that challenge students to work out answers for themselves. They give due attention to the principles that underpin areas of the course so that students feel confident when making decisions. In the practical A+ course, the teacher requires students to work out by themselves the quality of their solutions, so that they successfully reinforce their learning. Relationships between teachers and students are therefore very good, with the result that almost all students work very hard.

194. Students not following the available ICT courses have little opportunity to develop their ICT capability as there is no key skills course in the sixth form, and few other subjects have good access to computers for teaching purposes. Students can use computers independently in their study area and in the school library to help their learning.
195. The sixth-form courses are well managed, with satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The head of department has worked hard to improve the provision for the students. There is now a wider range of courses in a department that is well equipped to teach them, with good resources in good accommodation. The department has considered the issues around the teaching of IT in the sixth form, and has acted to prevent a recurrence of the high rate of students who found the practical course too difficult in 2002-3.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical education

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Students are very well motivated.
- Examination results are above average.

Areas for improvement

- Provide opportunities for all students to take part in recreational activities.

196. There are currently six students in Year 13 continuing with the A-level course and ten students in Year 12 following the AS-level course. In 2002, all five students entered for A-level obtained a pass grade with three achieving A-B grades. This proportion is above the national average for 2001. Five of the six students entered for AS-level obtained pass grades.
197. Overall standards of attainment in Year 13 are above average. Folders are well organised and show clearly that the requirements of the syllabus are being met. Although it was not possible to observe any practical lessons during the inspection, teachers' records show that students' practical ability is of a good standard, particularly in rugby and golf. In a theory lesson, students were able to comment sensibly on aspects such as social facilitation and they can apply this concept to different situations. They can distinguish accurately between terms such as 'aggression' and 'assertion'. Most are very confident in making oral contributions and they are often encouraged to do so.
198. In Year 12, students are producing work that is consistent with the standard required at this level. They understand the term 'cardiac output' and the majority have a good grasp of factors relating to the respiratory system. The overall standard of their practical work is good with some students achieving above average standards in netball, trampolining, tennis and dance. The quality of dance observed during the inspection was very impressive. A particular strength of the subject is also to be found in students' coursework. High standards of presentation and evaluation serve to underline their knowledge of different sports, as seen in their personal performance portfolios. Starting from a good base that includes success at GCSE examination level, students in both year groups are achieving well.

199. The quality of teaching at AS- and A-level is very good and has a significant impact on students' learning. Expectations are high and lessons are structured carefully, with the result that students make good progress. Planning is thorough, lesson objectives are made clear and teachers' subject expertise is very good. Relationships between students and teachers are good humoured but purposeful. Teachers use questions very effectively to assess students' level of understanding and to promote discussion. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace that helps to sustain interest and motivation. Teachers use a variety of different approaches to develop the students' knowledge and understanding. They provide helpful advice on how students can improve and the students value the support that they receive. They are very positive and motivated in their approach to the subject. The majority work hard although some are still dependent on their teachers for detailed guidance. However, they are beginning to make good use of ICT to improve their learning. This includes word processing, video feedbacks and use of the Internet. Opportunities to access ICT will improve significantly in the very near future when the new physical education classroom becomes available. The provision of an inter-active whiteboard would be of great benefit, both to teachers and to students when making presentations.

200. Leadership and management are very good. The examination courses have been introduced since the last inspection. Staff development is good. Three members of the department attended a residential in-service training course focusing specifically on the delivery of the A-level syllabus. Additional resources, including new textbooks, have been purchased recently. A number of students help in the main school by running teams and involving themselves in various activities. This is good practice. However, a significant number of students in Years 12 and 13 no longer have the opportunity of taking part in recreational activities because of timetable difficulties which is a weaker feature of provision.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Students have good scope to pursue a wide variety of courses in the arts, including music. The inspection focused on art, drama and media studies.

Art

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

Strengths

- The high standards achieved by students.
- Students have very well developed art skills and productivity is high.
- The quality of teaching is very good, helping students to build up their knowledge of art and to develop their skills to a high level.

Areas for improvement

- The extent of written work.
- Improve resources for ICT.

201. The GCE A-level results over the past three years have been above average. AS-level results have also been above average. A-level results for 2001 showed 16 out of 22 students obtained A or B passes. AS-level results in 2002 showed eight out of 11 students obtained A or B passes.

202. The standards of work of current students are above average. In Year 13, students have progressed from their A grades in GCSE examinations to A grades at AS-level last year and are predicted to obtain A grades at A-level. Their achievement is very good. Sketchbooks are crammed with high quality drawings and paintings, and the finished work of these students, to be seen in the school's excellent gallery, and in their portfolios, is of a very high standard indeed. Written work is less abundant.
203. Students in Year 12 in the second term of their course are achieving very well. The challenges of the transition from GCSE expectations to AS-level are considerable, but they have risen to them very well and produced work of maturity.
204. Teaching is very good and students learn well as a result. The quality of the advice they get is unusually fine, for example about composition, about the creation of definition without the need for lines, about proportion in portraits and figures, especially in the large-scale pictures these students create. Very good teaching is evident, too, in the environment provided for students to work in, and in the rich range of mediums available to them, including oil paints.
205. Students learn very well and are prepared to spend hours of their time on their artwork. They go to endless trouble to get details right and respond well to the very good teaching they experience. Many attend life classes which have been extremely beneficial in developing drawing and painting skills. Students spoke about their work on display and their insights about the work were mature, well expressed and impressive.
206. The very good teaching and learning come about because of work in the subject being well led and managed. Over some years there has been stability in the department provided by the head of department, although assistants have come and gone. Steady improvements to the facilities have gradually been made, although there is still a shortage of equipment for ICT. here has been and continues to be a very strong commitment to building on what has been achieved and to improving standards. Progress since the last inspection has been good.

Drama

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

Strengths

- Very effective leadership and management.
- Very good quality teaching.
- Students' attitudes are excellent.

Areas for improvement

- None.

207. Provisional results for A-level students in 2002 were above the national average for 2001. All eight candidates obtained at least grade D or higher, and three obtained grades A or B. Current Year 13 students obtained well above average provisional results at AS-level in 2002, and did better in drama than in their other subjects. These results indicate very good achievement by students whose previous experience of drama is often very limited.
208. Standards of the nine Year 13 students are well above average overall. Students' achievement is very good. They are able to refer widely to plays and drama theory and write well about them, showing understanding of technical terms, the social and

historical context, the influence of other dramatists and how drama communicates to its audience. Written work is very well researched and academically thorough. A strong feature of attainment is students' ability to evaluate their own work extensively and honestly. In performance they are prepared to try out new and adventurous ideas. They work very well together, showing sensitivity and understanding, especially in paired roles. In one lesson, two students performed a dialogue between mother and daughter to a high standard, reflecting very well the mother's tormented past, the daughter's affectionate impatience and the interaction between them. Students are also very aware of the significance of the 'trappings' of drama in establishing a character's identity and the context and atmosphere of a scene.

209. In Year 12, the standards of students' work are already above average, reflecting their very good achievement since embarking on the course, given their limited prior attainment. In one lesson standards of performance were rising noticeably during rehearsal of a scene from Wilde's 'The Importance of Being Earnest': students used eyes, tone of voice, gesture and movement well to convey character and relationships, and were beginning to get a grip on the sophisticated wit of Wilde's writing.
210. Teaching is very good and students learn very well as a result. Whether operating as a 'facilitator' or teaching directly, the teacher promotes very good learning and students make considerable progress in lessons. Thorough preparation ensures that not a moment in lessons is wasted. The teacher is a very good model for students to learn from, as she showed when demonstrating how to present Gwendoline's reactions to the news of Cicely's engagement in Wilde's play. Her perceptive explanations about performing in a comedy of manners ('The humour comes from watching people acting under the restraint of Manners – the angrier you get the more polite you get') helped students to improve their own performance. In another lesson her suggestions about raising tension and the use of properties again benefited students' performance. A particularly strong feature of teaching is the stringent evaluation of students' work – students have learned that this is a process in which they all share so that all can benefit. The effects were apparent in one lesson where students interested in directing contributed their own suggestions and recommendations alongside the teacher: a learning partnership was taking place.
211. The views of students themselves confirm the very good relationships apparent between teacher and students. They are very appreciative of the opportunities provided to widen their experience of drama. The work their teacher has done to help them make progress is universally acknowledged, but was especially important for two Year 12 students who made a late start to the course and have now caught up. Leadership and management of the subject, under the discreet guidance of the head of English, are very effective. Drama now appears as a GCSE examination option in Year 10, the department is about to move to new facilities, and the A-level drama course is successfully established to the great benefit of its students.

Media studies

Overall, the quality of provision in media studies is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching shows strong subject knowledge and is delivered with enthusiasm, commitment and practical expertise so that students can learn much from the knowledge and experience offered.
- Resources are very good and support the teaching and learning well.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities to involve all students in discussion are often missed.
- The pace of teaching is sometimes too rapid and students have difficulty in keeping up or consolidating their knowledge and understanding.
- The management of the subject places a large burden on one teacher which inhibits the further development of media in the main school.

212. Based on average point scores, results were above average in 2000 but below average in 2001 and, provisionally, in 2002. Numbers have been relatively small, however, and comparisons with national averages should be treated with caution. Most students have succeeded in obtaining at least a pass grade over the last three years and have achieved at least in line with expectations. The current AVCE course is very demanding and its successful completion provides the equivalent of two A-levels.
213. There are ten students in Year 13. Their standards of attainment in work seen in this inspection were below average overall, but all students are on course to reach the standard required to pass. Since students began the course with little or no media education and below average GCSE examination results, their achievement is at least satisfactory. They are provided with clear outlines of course units that show the standard required for different grades. Other background and critical material is intellectually demanding and students are not benefiting from some complex and sophisticated material, since their knowledge of the historical and institutional context in which media texts are created is limited by their lack of experience. In the classroom not all students can recall or use the subject's technical vocabulary and these limitations affect the standards they can reach. Nevertheless, most can take notes competently and a few are able to refer to a wide range of films. Some students have above average practical and research skills as shown in their coursework 'productions'.
214. The 15 students in Year 12 have similar limited background experience in media education, and, although their standards are also below average overall, they too are achieving satisfactorily. Most understand how film can be classified into styles or genres. They can identify different camera shots, and a few students are perceptive in identifying significant sound or stylistic effects which colour the meaning for an audience. However, not all were clear about 'genres grounded in history', and several found it difficult to recall material from film trailers. Nevertheless, they are able to work co-operatively and productively together. Most have positive views about the course, making remarks such as: 'There's a lot to learn, but it's interesting and useful.'
215. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. High levels of expertise, enthusiasm and commitment are significant features of the best teaching, enabling students to learn a great deal in a short time. These qualities were evident in a Year 12 lesson on film 'trailers' where the teacher's knowledge was backed by careful explanation of 'split-screen' techniques. In the subsequent activity, mixed groups produced some creative ideas and worked productively on 'parallel story lines'. In a Year 13 lesson the teacher chose very good illustrations of effective film editing and taught with pace and a sense of urgency. As a result, students' knowledge of editing was reinforced and extended. However, on several occasions the teacher allowed the focus of a lesson to slip by going too fast or digressing into another area, so that students were confused. Sometimes, too, lessons were over-dominated by the contributions of a few (particularly male) students and the teacher did not ensure that all were listened to or equally involved. Sometimes, a viewing activity was over-prolonged so that the pace of learning slowed, or the teacher missed an opportunity for consolidating learning by requiring students to make notes or write up what they had seen. These flaws in teaching prevented learning being better than satisfactory overall.

216. Resources and facilities for media education are now very good; the course continues to attract students and they are able to achieve results in line with their potential. Nevertheless, leadership and management are only satisfactory because teaching quality is inconsistent and because the conduct of the course places a heavy load on one person, to the detriment of development of the subject in the main school.

HUMANITIES

The inspection focused on three subjects: geography; history and psychology. Geography caters for 24 students following AS-level courses. A further 13 students are currently preparing for the A-level examination in 2003. Many more females choose to study geography, most students having attained high grades at GCSE. Around 20 students have completed the A-level course in each of the last two years.

Geography

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- Relationships are good.
- Opportunities for fieldwork and for investigation are good.

Areas for improvement

- Results in examinations at both AS- and A-level need to be higher.
- Students need to be less passive.
- Recent technologies need to play a more prominent part in learning.

217. In 2001, when comparisons can be made with attainment nationally, students' results were in the bottom quarter of all schools. However, standards reached in 2000 were broadly in line with national averages and the most recent 2002 results are similar to these. Analysis by the school shows that, although a third of students attained the higher grades at A-level in 2002, a further third failed to achieve their predicted grades. Students attain higher marks in the study of physical systems, processes and patterns than in human geography. Standards at A-level do not show the trend of steady improvement found nationally but students now perform slightly better at A-level in geography than in their other subjects. Their overall achievement is satisfactory.

218. Analysis by the school of attainment at AS-level shows, in 2002, a third of students gained the higher grades and almost all achieved a graded result. Students continuing in their second A-level year have raised their AS-level grades by choosing to resit AS-level examinations while studying the A2-level course. Entry numbers are too small to allow comparisons of attainment by gender.

219. The observation of students in lessons and an analysis of their work shows that standards are above average. Since they started on the course with above average levels of GCSE examination attainment, these standards represent satisfactory progress. Students learn very well both in physical and human geography. Study skills enable them to select and extract data from source materials and organise this well in a format which supports structured extended writing for examination answers. Students have a good understanding of ways of analysing examination questions and planning their responses. They exemplify their answers very well with case study detail or

reference to theoretical models such as Gersmehl's model for the nutrient cycle. There is strong focus on advanced subject vocabulary and terms like, 'population pressure', 'biomass' and 'infra-structure' are employed appropriately; this is much better than at the time of the last inspection.

220. Teaching is very good. Lessons have a clear structure. Students are very well supported in preparing for examination by provision of sample questions and answers, and a range of revision activities. Annotated scripts showing students how additional marks can be gained are a good feature. There is little exploitation of new technologies during lessons and this limits learning. All teachers show very good subject knowledge, check understanding well and give effective support to students experiencing difficulties. Assessment tasks are carefully marked and students are given good verbal guidance, which they value. Students have a clear appreciation of their progress towards examination targets and have high aspirations but some do not apply themselves well outside lessons. This, together with absence, and over-dependence on teachers, has been a factor in students' underachievement.
221. Development of moral, cultural and social awareness is very good as in the Year 13 study of newly industrialised countries in the 'tiger economies' of Malaysia and South Korea. Students, male and female, of all backgrounds, display positive attitudes and conduct, learn well in class and usually relate well to other students and teachers. Opportunities for fieldwork are very good. The study in Iceland reinforces physical and human elements of geothermal energy, glaciation and settlement. There is good growth in geographical maturity, particularly during the second A-level year.
222. Work in the subject is soundly led and managed. Teachers are well qualified and eager to help students achieve good results. Resources are sound but not enough use is made of new technologies to enhance teaching and learning. There has not been sufficient improvement in standards since the previous inspection but there is satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

History

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

Strengths

- Good leadership and management.
- A broad and well-balanced curriculum.
- Teaching is of good quality.

Areas for improvement

- ICT is not used enough to support learning.
- Students are not encouraged to show enough independence.

223. Results at A-level in 2001 were in line with national averages as the pass rate at A - E grades was 85 per cent and 25 per cent at grades A - B. Results at A-level in 2002 show that all students passed at grades A - D and 58 per cent passed at grades A - B. At AS-level in 2002, all students passed at grades A - D and 45 per cent passed at grades A - B. Work seen shows that current students are maintaining this standard and that they are achieving in line with their prior attainment and their target grades.
224. Achievement is good. Year 12 students are able to analyse and discuss the different methods used by Nazis to take control of a German town in the 1930s. Higher-attaining students can confidently evaluate the relative importance of Nazi infiltration of social

groups such as choirs and sports teams, work schemes to reduce unemployment and control of the town council. Year 13 students can analyse the relationship between trades unions and the American government in the early twentieth century with particular reference to the use of the law, the attitude of business and the impact of violence in industrial disputes. Higher-attaining students understand the different aims and methods of reformers and radicals within the union movement. Work seen shows that students organise their files well and their attitude in lessons seen was very good, but there is little evidence of independent research by students or of the use of ICT to support their learning.

225. Teaching is good and it promotes good learning by students. Teachers use stimulating historical sources to engage students in topics, for example a list of arrests made by the Nazis in 1941, which lead to discussion about the range and type of resistance to Nazi rule in Germany, and a good selection of cartoons about American unionism which students could relate to their prior knowledge of American politics. Teaching includes extensive use of question and answer written work and a satisfactory number of extended essays, which help to prepare examination candidates to offer extended explanation of events studied. Year 13 students additionally note that they are helped to learn by revision of the key issues identified in each unit of work, stimulus from extracts of video film, collaborative learning in class and explicit use of the examination board's mark scheme.
226. Leadership and management are good. The curriculum offers good opportunities to develop broader cultural and citizenship education, for example in Year 13, students' detailed analysis of the arts which flourished during the German Weimar Republic and Year 12 students' understanding of the importance of controlling a town council in 1930s Germany. Assessment is good as teachers provide helpful written feedback to students on their essays and to their answers in 'mock' mock examinations. In Year 13, students observe that they are well prepared for the change from GCSE examination level work to AS-level and again to A-level and that they enjoy the responsibility and challenge of the research for their individual assignments.
227. Improvement since the last inspection has been good as the curriculum offers a rich educational experience and there is a rising point score of achievement by students in relation to their other subjects over the last three years. Areas for development are the need to use ICT to support students' learning and the development of strategies to help students to become more independent learners.

Psychology

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

Strengths

- Results at A-level are increasingly good.
- Teaching is excellent overall.
- The attitudes and behaviour of students are excellent overall.
- The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject.

Areas for improvement

- The position of this increasingly popular subject in the school – both the tier of management to which the co-ordinator reports, and the subject's position within the humanities department.
- Opportunities for the use of ICT in lessons.
- Opportunities for students to carry out psychology experiments.

228. Psychology is an increasingly popular subject in the school. A-level grades have risen consistently since 2000 and are above average. Students' results are now better in psychology than in their subject performance generally.
229. Lesson observation and analysis of students' work indicates that achievement is good, a situation that has been brought about by the appointment of a new psychology co-ordinator since September 2002. This is due primarily both to the teaching of the subject, and to the attitudes of the students and their behaviour in lessons. All of these are excellent overall, and never less than very good.
230. A key feature in the well-planned teaching is excellent use of challenging questions, as a result of which students learn to argue their case on the basis of evidence rather than opinion. This has a significant impact on raising standards in psychology. The excellent relationships created by the teaching style leads to a participatory learning environment, where students increasingly take responsibility for their learning, and act as a learning resource to each other, in a subject which they see as very relevant to them. The concerns of students which arise from exposure to the psychology subject matter are sensitively and appropriately addressed. This has the effect, both of further engaging the students' interest and commitment and, significantly, re-assuring them. In ways like this the teaching makes an important contribution to students' personal development.
231. The students respond very well to the teaching. Their attitudes and behaviour are excellent overall. There is vigorous and passionate debate, for example on the ethics of research on humans, such as Little Albert, which supports students' moral development. As a result of these developments, students almost always make excellent progress. They attribute this in part to the greater opportunities now offered to them to take responsibility for their own learning, and higher expectations of their performance. They are able to bring in to classroom discussion evidence from research they have read previously, and make very good conceptual links between different psychological models.
232. The psychology scheme of work follows the exam board syllabus, which offers in most ways a broad and balanced exposure to the subject. Learning is enhanced through visits, for example, to see 'Twelve Good Men' at the local drama centre. The subject co-ordinator is aware that the recommended marking scheme is too general to assist students, particularly lower attainers, to understand exactly what they must do to improve, and has taken steps to revise it, including the use of rigorous marking to help students know what they have achieved and what they have to do to get better. Students' interest, and competence as psychologists, could be further enhanced through being given more opportunities for practical psychology experiments than are required in the exam syllabus.
233. The psychology subject co-ordinator has a very good vision of the importance of the subject in the curriculum and how it might be developed. However, she is line-managed by a second-tier subject co-ordinator, in the humanities department. This negatively affects the development of the subject. It undervalues an increasingly popular subject, which is a scientific discipline in its own right. There is no dedicated psychology development plan; the humanities development plan being inappropriate to the subject matter of psychology. Very good links are made with teachers of the subject through contacts with psychology teachers in other schools and through attendance at examination board training events. These activities are vital as there is only one teacher of the subject in the school.

234. Although no computers are available in the psychology classroom, the use of ICT, currently limited, is increasing. When access to computers is possible, students make good use of the Internet as a valuable resource to visit websites covering topics which are being studied, such as compliance in human behaviour; they make presentations, for example on abnormal behaviour, using new technology; and many use word processing to write their essays.
235. Although psychology was not specifically reported on in the last inspection report, observation and analysis during this inspection clearly indicates that there has been good improvement in standards and teaching. There is good potential for further development.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus of this inspection was on the AS- and A2-level English literature courses followed by students in Years 12 and 13. Provision is also made for students to study modern foreign languages, including Ivrit (modern Hebrew).

English

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Very good relationships are established between students and teachers, which helps students to achieve very well.
- The subject is very well led and managed. Teachers are effectively deployed and students' progress is carefully checked.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers do not always draw all students into discussion.

236. Results in English literature have fluctuated in previous years, having been above average in 1998, well above average in 2000 and in line with average in 1999 and 2001. Provisional results for 2002 indicate below average performance. Most students have obtained at least a pass grade over the period and have achieved at least as well as should be expected given their prior attainment, and usually better.
237. Currently, there are six students in Year 13 whose standards of attainment are above average overall, in line with provisional AS-level results in 2002. Although students began the course with above average GCSE results, maintaining these standards at A-level represents very good achievement, especially as English was not usually a subject of 'first choice'. Their work folders are well organised and contain substantial amounts of supporting background and critical material about a wide range of interesting and demanding texts. Their writing shows that good use is made of this material in knowledgeable, well-structured accounts that often show good use of quotation and attention to how language is used. An interested and positive response is clearly apparent when students are writing about Milton's 'Paradise Lost'. Students' work also benefits from the thorough and informative marking that teachers provide. It shows clearly the standard students are reaching; the degree to which content matches examination criteria indicates to students what they have to do to improve. Their progress is also very carefully checked by a comprehensive system of assessment and reporting. As a result, students' written work improves well over time.

238. In the classroom, students gain in knowledge and understanding of texts and confidence in critical analysis. For instance, students studying Tennessee Williams' play 'A Streetcar Named Desire' understood the changing sympathies an audience feels when watching the scene between Mitch and Blanche. They were able to identify how the imagery reflects Blanche's descent into disillusion and madness and how the action prepares us for Stan's subsequent brutality.
239. The 24 students in Year 12 are also knowledgeable and confident and have above average analytical skills. In a lesson on one of Alan Bennett's monologues, students successfully showed that they understood the writer's ironic method of undermining the narrator: one student explained the point very succinctly by saying 'The character is impressed by what is meant to be a sarcastic remark.' In another lesson, students were confident enough to ask questions about Chaucer's 'General Prologue' and understood the moral hypocrisy which underlies the behaviour of many of the pilgrims. Already the potential for reaching above average standards of attainment by the end of Year 13 is present.
240. Teaching and learning are very good overall and students achieve very well. Teaching is marked by subject expertise, high quality advice and instruction, a substantial degree of involvement of students in their learning and strong relationships. These qualities were evident in one teacher's lesson with Year 13 on Williams' 'A Streetcar Named Desire'. His expert review of previous learning set the tone of demanding inquiry, and subsequent searching questioning of students' prepared sections ensured that they learned to be accurate and specific about the detail of the text when providing evidence. The teacher kept a light touch, however, and very good relationships ensured that there was laughter as well as serious discussion. As a result, students developed their understanding and analytical skills very well through discussion, largely led by students themselves, and through the teacher's guiding commentary. In another Year 13 lesson the teacher's clarity of explanation and careful 'breaking down' of the components of an essay successfully helped students to refresh, rehearse and reinforce their knowledge of Milton's 'Paradise Lost' in preparation for their examination. The evident enjoyment of most students in talking about this text was a tribute to the teacher's work. In other lessons the quality of teaching is typically shown by teachers' subject knowledge, careful preparation, helpful and stimulating supporting material and activities that encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning.
241. On occasion, even in very good lessons, teachers rely too much on the voluntary contributions of a few students so that not all are taking sufficient responsibility for their share of the learning. This is a minor flaw in a picture of very good teaching, which ensures that students learn well and achieve their potential.
242. The previous report made few references to A-level provision directly, but there has been good improvement since that time. Standards of attainment and achievement are higher, teaching is now very good, students enjoy the course and appreciate the intellectual challenge it brings, the skills they develop, the very good relationships with teachers and the helpful support they receive from teachers. These improvements are all a consequence of the very effective leadership and management of the department.

