

INSPECTION REPORT

SEDGEHILL SCHOOL

Catford, London

LEA area: Lewisham

Unique reference number: 100743

Headteacher: Ms K Bastick-Styles

Reporting inspector: Mr T Feast
3650

Dates of inspection: 11th – 15th November 2002

Inspection number: 249561

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of students: 11 to 18 years

Gender of students: Mixed

School address: Sedgehill Road
Catford

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr A Jaques

Date of previous inspection: April 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3650	T Feast	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and students' achievements</p> <p>How well are students taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9799	S Smith	Lay inspector		<p>Students' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its students?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
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32362	K Warburton	Team inspector	Mathematics	
30746	J Woolley	Team inspector	Science	
32329	A Stafford	Team inspector	Art and design	
8503	A Allfree	Team inspector	Design and technology	
3648	C Parsons	Team inspector	Geography Business studies	
17732	D Martin	Team inspector	History	
10679	M Aston	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
31889	M Thomas	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
30072	J Skivington	Team inspector	Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
18888	J Boulton	Team inspector	Physical education Educational inclusion, including race equality	
10807	P Quest	Team inspector	Religious education Citizenship	
19056	G Leech	Team inspector	English (sixth form) Drama (sixth form)	

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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1249	J Edge	Team inspector	Special educational needs The hearing impaired unit	
10053	J Simms	Team inspector	English as an additional language	
3827	J Knight	Team inspector	Geography (sixth form)	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Sedgehill School is a mixed, community, comprehensive school for students aged 11 to 18 years. There are 1639 students on roll, including 121 in the sixth form. This is a bigger number on roll than is the case for secondary schools nationally. There are many more boys than girls in all years but, in Year 7, the gender difference has reduced. The attainment of students on entry to the school in Year 7 is below average. Three hundred and thirty-one students have been identified as having special educational needs, a figure broadly in line with the national average. Sixty-eight students have been provided with statements of special educational needs by local education authorities, including the students in the hearing impaired unit. This figure is above the national average. About 18 per cent of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being black-Caribbean students. This is much higher than most schools nationally. About 13 per cent of students have English as an additional language and, of these, about 30 per cent are provided with specific tuition or guidance, the remainder being proficient English speakers. Just over 31 per cent of students are eligible for free school meals, a figure above the national average. The number of students identified as refugees is very low. The school serves the Bellingham and Downham estates in Lewisham and, overall, the family circumstances on these estates are well below the average nationally. In the school year 2001 to 2002, the school received a small but significant group of students from a school in the local education authority which had closed. A new headteacher took up her duties in September 2002. The school has had difficulties recruiting staff in recent years and this has had an adverse impact on standards and achievement in some subjects. In January 2001, there was the death of a senior member of staff on the school site and the impact of his death is still being felt.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The standards the students attain overall are below those expected nationally, but in line with those of similar schools. In the majority of lessons, they make satisfactory progress. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory but have improved significantly since September 2002. The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory but it gives unsatisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The provision offered by the hearing impaired unit and the students' progress is very good.
- The achievement of, and provision for, students with special educational needs is good.
- Equality of access and opportunity are very good and relationships are good.
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is good.
- The provision for students' personal development is good.

What could be improved

- Standards in the GCSEs, which are well below the national average.
- The attendance of students, which is unsatisfactory.
- The provision for students for information and communication technology (ICT), which does not meet statutory requirements.
- The use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning, which is unsatisfactory.
- Leadership and management of the school, which are unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1996. The improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory overall. There has been a good improvement in extending the repertoire of teaching methods. There have been satisfactory improvements in the support and development of literacy, in the provision for the more able, in reporting the statutory teacher assessments in students' reports, in increasing the length of teaching time in the school week and in reducing the staff resistance to change. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory in raising attendance, in achieving consistently high standards in assessing, recording and reporting students' attainment, in the use of tutor time and in the strategic planning through the school development plan. Whilst there has been a satisfactory improvement in the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, the impact has been insufficient. The standards students attain and their level of attendance are below, and sometimes well below, the national average.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by students at the end of Year 11 and sixth-form students at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations. Average point scores are calculated by giving a numerical value to the examination grades of the students and dividing that total by the number of students taking the examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	E	E	E	B
A-levels/AS-levels	n/a	D	n/a	

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

The standards that the students achieved in the national tests at the age of 14 in Year 9 in 2002 showed a small improvement on the school's results in 2001. The increase was particularly noticeable in mathematics. In 2002, standards were below those attained nationally, although in line with those of similar schools. The trend since 1997 in the school's average point scores in these national tests has been above the national trend. The boys attained better results than the girls in mathematics and science, but the girls did better in English. Black-Caribbean boys and Turkish students did not perform as well as the school average overall. The results in the GCSE examinations in 2002 saw the average point score increase from 29.3 to 30.5 and the percentage of students attaining five or more grades at A*-C increased from 26 per cent to 30.1 per cent. These standards were well below the national average in respect of both these figures, but above those of similar schools. The girls attained higher standards than the boys, although their standards were further below national standards for their gender than the boys'. The trend since 1997 in the school's GCSE average point score per student is below the national trend. The average point score for Advanced Level (AL) and Advanced Supplementary Level (AS) in 2001 was 13.9, which was below the national average of 17.5. Girls' performance was higher than the boys'. In the unconfirmed results for 2002, the average point score was 12.5. The school did not achieve its targets in respect of the 2002 GCSE results. Students' achievement is satisfactory and that made by students with special educational needs is good overall.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Students' attitudes are satisfactory.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory overall. While much behaviour is good or very good, a significant minority of students do not behave well.
Personal development and relationships	Students' personal development and their relationships with each other and with staff are good.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

Students show a good interest and enthusiasm for activities and show good respect for the feelings of others.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection, both in the reduction of unsatisfactory teaching observed and a significant improvement in the teaching observed which was very good or excellent. Excellent teaching was seen in geography, careers, outdoor education, physical education and personal, social, health and citizenship education. Elsewhere, examples of very good teaching were seen in English, French, history, ICT, mathematics, religious education, science and special educational needs. Teaching in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is satisfactory in both Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 to 11. The teaching of literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory but the teaching for numeracy across the curriculum was evident in too few lessons and therefore was unsatisfactory overall. Relatively little unsatisfactory teaching was observed. A significant percentage of the unsatisfactory teaching was taken by supply teachers. Unsatisfactory teaching was observed in art and design, French, geography, ICT and mathematics. It was usually linked to a lack of classroom management which was hindered by inadequate planning.

Students' learning is satisfactory and reflects, in the main, the quality of teaching. The learning of students with special educational needs in Years 7 to 9 is good, as is the learning of students in the hearing impaired unit. Overall, teaching satisfactorily meets the needs of most students. There is a lack of higher grades in some subjects at GCSE and higher attaining students are not always challenged sufficiently. Exclusion figures for the school year 2001 to 2002 show that a significant group of minority ethnic boys, including black-Caribbean students, were excluded and, in a number of lessons observed during the inspection, these boys were not learning as well as others in the class.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall but the requirements in respect of ICT are not met. The range and quality of the extra-curricular provision are good.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Provision is good, resulting in good teaching and learning, especially in Years 7 to 9.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Provision is satisfactory. Their progress is satisfactory in relation to their targets for improving their English.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good overall, satisfactory for students' spiritual development and good for their moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its students	Satisfactory overall. The use of assessment information by teachers to guide their planning of lessons is unsatisfactory overall.

The provision to make sure that all students have equality of access and opportunity is very good. The community contributes well to students' learning. There is a satisfactory partnership with parents. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good, as are those for supporting students' personal development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management since the last inspection are unsatisfactory but there has been a big improvement since September 2002 in the impact that leadership and management, especially by the new headteacher and deputy headteacher, is having, for example on attendance, behaviour and the quality of teaching.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory overall. A number of statutory requirements are not met. Strategic planning has not had sufficient impact on securing improvements and the governing body does not hold the school sufficiently to account.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory, as the results of monitoring have not had sufficient impact on standards, attendance and behaviour. There are indications that the impact of procedures for evaluation has improved significantly since September 2002.
The strategic use of	Specific grants are used well, for example for the hearing

resources	impaired unit and for students with special educational needs.
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Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory but there is now a clear educational direction from senior managers. There is now a shared commitment to improvement and a good capacity to improve. The principles of best value are applied well. Staffing, resources and accommodation are satisfactory overall.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects their children to work hard. • The teaching is good. • Their children like school. • Their children are making good progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school working closely with parents. • The behaviour of students. • Their children getting the right amount of work. • The information that they receive about their children's progress.

The inspection team agrees that students like school and that in most lessons they are expected to work hard. Teaching is satisfactory overall and the students' progress is satisfactory. Whilst most of the students behave well, a significant minority behave badly. Behaviour is satisfactory overall, as is the setting and marking of homework. The school is trying to work closely with parents, for example in respect of the information the parents receive but the unsatisfactory attendance and punctuality of students indicate that parents should contribute more to the partnership.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

At the time of the inspection, there were 121 students on the roll of this large 11-18 comprehensive school. There were 39 boys and 25 girls in Year 12, and 33 boys and 24 girls in Year 13. These numbers represent a significant fall in the sixth-form roll over the previous year, and the trend since the last inspection is one of decline in numbers overall. Sedgehill is one of three schools acting as partners in a local sixth-form consortium. Some Sedgehill students study some subjects elsewhere and, similarly, students from other schools in the consortium carry out some of their studies at Sedgehill. A relatively low proportion of Sedgehill students stay on into the sixth form, and the numbers are falling. They follow a satisfactory range of AS-level, A-level and vocational courses, and there are also some GCSE re-sit classes, principally in mathematics. Students following AS- and A-level courses also do a general studies course. Key skills are taught partly through vocational courses. All sixth-form students follow a programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education. Attainment on entry into the sixth form is below the national average. Although most students remain on the courses they have chosen, the size of a number of teaching groups is very small.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

This is an unsatisfactory sixth form. It does not provide satisfactory value for money and its cost effectiveness is markedly deteriorating. Although the provision for individual students in small teaching groups is often satisfactory or good for those students, in so far as they receive intensive teaching in particular lessons, attainment over time is below national expectations, as seen in the examination results in most subjects in 2001 and the unconfirmed results for 2002. The results of many students show no value added, this being the case in 52 per cent of the most recent individual results analysed. Students with special educational needs make good progress towards meeting the targets in their individual education plans. Despite good teaching in some individual lessons, students make insufficient gains in knowledge, understanding and practical skills over time. Their progress is hampered by poor attendance, poor accommodation which restricts opportunities for independent learning, and by limited personal development. The curriculum needs of the consortium impose restrictions on the timetable; the lengthy blocks of teaching time have a detrimental effect on provision in some subjects such as physical education and art. Many students have negative attitudes towards the level of advice and support which they receive. Statutory requirements are not met because although moral and ethical issues are discussed in general studies, religious education is not taught in the sixth form and there is no daily act of collective worship. Leadership and management of the sixth form are unsatisfactory. Although sixth-form staff and managers are personally committed to the welfare of students, there is insufficient rigour in the tracking and monitoring of students' academic progress and using this information to help students improve. Whilst there is a shared vision between the schools for the development of the consortium, there is a lack of clarity in Sedgehill of its place within the overall structure and a lack of strategic planning over time to reverse the failings of the provision for Sedgehill students.

Strengths

- Standards in drama and vocational business are in line with national standards.
- Relationships between students are good.

What could be improved

- Overall, the standards and achievement by students, which are below those expected nationally.
- Sixth-form accommodation, which is poor, including poor facilities for independent learning.
- Attendance. Whilst attendance is monitored, the procedures for improving attendance are not effective in their impact and students' attendance is poor.
- The negative attitudes of a significant number of students. Some students are unpunctual, do not attend school as regularly as they should and have negative attitudes towards some aspects of sixth-form life. Many have limited involvement outside the sixth form.
- The monitoring of academic progress, which is unsatisfactory in having a positive impact on improving students' performance.
- Leadership and management. The school has not translated its care for students into a broader vision of how Sedgehill's sixth form can be made a more vibrant and successful part of the school and consortium.
- Religious education. The lack of sufficient provision in the sixth form is a statutory breach.

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 inspection team is of the opinion that the school has an inadequate sixth form because it has significant weaknesses in one or more of its activities for students over compulsory school age. The reasons for this opinion are unsatisfactory leadership and management and the poor attendance of students.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
English	Provision is unsatisfactory. Attainment is below national expectations, although teaching and learning were good in the lessons observed and achievement of these students is satisfactory.
Mathematics	Provision is unsatisfactory. A-level results show a negative value added and re-sit GCSE results are unsatisfactory. Leadership and management are currently unsatisfactory, although a vision for the future is emerging.
Drama	Provision is good. Standards are in line with the national average and achievement is good. Teaching and learning are good and the subject is well led and managed.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Art and design	Provision is unsatisfactory. Although standards observed in lessons were satisfactory, examination results are below national averages. The teaching seen was satisfactory. However, student attendance is below expectations, achievement is unsatisfactory and assessment and target setting are uneven in quality.
Geography	Provision is satisfactory. Students achieved well and teaching and learning were good in the lessons observed. Standards have been in line with the national average.
Sports studies	Overall provision is unsatisfactory. Attainment of the majority of students is below average and achievement is unsatisfactory, as reflected in A-level results, although the teaching and learning observed during the inspection were satisfactory.
Business studies	Overall provision is satisfactory. Standards in both A-level and vocational courses are in line with national expectations for those students who complete the course and, for these students, achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning were good in the lessons observed.
History	Overall provision is unsatisfactory. Standards are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory, although teaching and learning in the lessons seen were satisfactory.
Information and communication technology	Provision is unsatisfactory. Standards are below expectations in both A-level and vocational courses. In the lessons seen, teaching and learning were unsatisfactory and achievement is below that expected. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

The following subject was also sampled in the sixth form:

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Design and technology	In the one lesson observed, standards were satisfactory and students achieved well in response to good teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Unsatisfactory. Students receive extensive personal care and support, and aspects such as attendance are monitored. However, many students are dissatisfied with the advice they receive on option and career choices. Students' academic progress is not monitored with sufficient rigour to guide student improvement.

Aspect	Comment
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form.	Unsatisfactory. Strategic planning for the sixth form at Sedgemoor has not had a positive impact on standards and provision which, in a number of areas, is poor and has resulted in poor and falling recruitment.

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 good relationships between students and with staff. • The quality of the teaching. • The support from individual teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The advice they receive on what to study. • The overall level of advice and support. • The range of worthwhile activities. • The responsiveness of the school to their ideas.

Although some students are positive about the sixth form and enjoy their experience at Sedgemoor, others are negative about certain aspects. The inspectors agree that relationships are good and that teaching is good in some lessons. They do not agree that the school is unresponsive to students' ideas. There is a sixth-form council and there are opportunities for sixth-formers to be involved outside lessons, but many students are reluctant to take advantage of these. This fact, along with poor attendance, shows a limited sense of responsibility on the part of students rather than a deficiency in the school's willingness to listen. The inspectors agreed that the quality of academic advice and the impact of monitoring could be improved.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

1. The attainment of students on entry to the school in Year 7 is below average overall. The standard of work seen in lessons and in the books of students in Year 9 during the inspection was in line with the national expectation in mathematics and below it in English and science. This represents an improvement in performance to that reported in the results in the National Curriculum tests for 14-year-olds in Year 9 in 2002 for mathematics and a similar performance in English and science. Attainment is better in mathematics in that students are able to gain more grades above the national average (i.e. Level 6 or above) than in the other subjects. This improvement is a result of the better teaching and the ability of the year group as a whole.
2. The standard of work seen in lessons and in the books of the students in Year 11 during the inspection was below the national expectation, although there were variations in standards between the different subjects. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, standards attained were below the national average. Overall, this represents an improvement on the GCSE results reported in 2002 and is a result of the better teaching and of the ability of the year group as a whole.
3. The school's overall performance in the 2002 national tests in Year 9 when using average point scores was below the national average and above that of schools in a similar context, using the percentage of students eligible for free school meals as a comparator. The average point score in the tests maintained the upward trend, increasing from 30.1 to 31.4. Over time, the school's trend, using students' average point scores for all core subjects, is above the national trend. In the 2002 tests, the percentage of students attaining Level 5 or better improved in all three core subjects and, particularly in mathematics, on the results attained in 2001. The percentage of students attaining Level 6 or better was well below the national average in all three core subjects, although the percentage achieving Level 6 or better in mathematics was almost twice as high as in the other two subjects. In the 2002 tests, the average point score was higher for the boys than the girls. In 2002, there were differences in performances by minority ethnic groups but they varied across all three subjects. black-Caribbean boys and Turkish students did not do as well as the year group as a whole. The school's targets for the percentage of students attaining at least Level 5 were met in science and mathematics. These results represent satisfactory achievement for students who entered the school in Year 7 with attainment below the national average.
4. The school's performance in the GCSE examinations in 2002 was well below the national average in relation to students' average point scores and the percentage of students attaining at least five grades or more at A*-C but above those of schools in a similar context. This represents satisfactory achievement on the results these same students attained in their national tests in Year 9 in 1999. The results in 2002 saw the average point score per student rise from 29.3 to 30.5 and the percentage of students achieving five grades or more at A*-C increase from 26 per cent to 30 per cent. In 2002, the girls gained a higher average point score than the boys and this has been the case since 1998. The school's analysis of the 2002 results shows Turkish students and Black-Caribbean boys attaining lower results than the school as a whole. The school's trend in the average point score per student has been below the national trend. The school missed its 2002 GCSE targets.

5. In the GCSE examinations in 2002, the results of students in art and design and history were below the national average and they were well below the national average in design and technology, English language and literature, science, French, geography, music, mathematics and physical education. There were substantial falls in the percentage of A*-C grades in French and science. Standards were in line with the national average in drama.
6. The attainment of students is below that expected nationally overall. It is below in Years 7 to 9. It is below that expected nationally in English, science, design and technology, geography, history and ICT. It is in line with national expectations in mathematics, art and design, citizenship, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and religious education. It is below expectations in Years 10 and 11. It is below that expected nationally in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, geography and ICT. It is in line with expectations in art and design, citizenship, history, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and religious education. Given their starting point when they enter the school in Year 7, this represents satisfactory achievement.
7. Standards in literacy are below national expectations, although there is now evidence that the school's strategy is being implemented. There is good emphasis on developing the technical vocabulary of the different subjects. Standards in numeracy are satisfactory, although there is limited evidence of the impact of the school's strategy in students' work.
8. Progress overall by students with special educational needs is good. There is satisfactory progress towards subject knowledge and understanding, including the main subjects of English and mathematics. Progress in lessons which provide specialist tuition is good, including good progress in terms of students' targets in their individual education plans. Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 make significant improvements in basic literacy. There is some inconsistency in the work seen in folders as they sometimes work too narrowly on the structure of words. The best work is more varied, with a better focus on the use of words related to their context. Students in Years 10 and 11 are given additional guidance so that they maintain effective progress in coursework and homework for their subjects. The GCSE outcomes of students with special educational needs are satisfactory overall. The good feature for these students is that they do well despite their difficulties with learning because they gain confidence and maintain interest and commitment in their studies. These good features are improved upon in the achievement of students in the hearing impaired unit, who make very good progress in relation to their targets in their individual education plans and who attain standards in line with their ability in both the national tests at age 14 and in their GCSE examinations.
9. Most students who use English as an additional language possess a high level of competence with the language and can readily take part in the full range of the curriculum. The very few students whose inexperience of English makes their understanding of lessons difficult, are mostly recent arrivals to the school, or to the country, or both. Until the appointment of a new co-ordinator with specific responsibility for students with English as an additional language in September 2002, no tracking or logging of their achievement was in place. Now, easy, termly identification of under-achievement is possible through a new database, so their needs can be targeted with specialist teaching and guidance to put them back on track. Their learning is satisfactory in relation to targets set in respect of fluency in English and they make good progress in sessions where they are given specific support.
10. Students from minority ethnic groups are almost always proficient in speaking and listening to English. However, in the 2002 examinations, the school has identified black-

Caribbean and Turkish students as attaining lower average point scores than the school as a whole and a smaller percentage of these students attained at least five grades A*-C than in the school generally. In comparison, Indian, Irish, Greek and Chinese students do better than the school's average, although generally the number of these students is small and too small for fair statistical comparison.

11. Standards are not as high as those reported at the last inspection, though there have been improvements since 1998. The trend in improvements in the national tests at the age of 14 has been above the national trend. However, the trend in the GCSE results has been below the national trend.

Sixth form

12. The school's performance in the unconfirmed A-level and AS-level examinations in 2002 was below that achieved by students in the 2001 examinations when the results were below the national average when comparing national point scores. The girls' results overall were better than the boys'. From the consortium's analysis for 2002, students made little or no gains in performance in about half the examinations taken, when judged against their overall performance in their GCSEs, and their achievement is unsatisfactory overall.
13. During the inspection, the current standards of students were judged to be in line with national expectations in business studies, design and technology, drama and geography. They were judged as below expectations in art and design, English, history, ICT and sports studies. The number of students from Sedgehill in some groups is quite small and their attainment on entry to the subject differs considerably between subjects and between years. This partly explains why the attainment seen in lessons may be different from those reported as attained in national examinations.
14. The school's results compare unfavourably with the national average overall, as a much smaller percentage of students stay on in the sixth form than would be expected nationally, their attainment on entry is below the national average and those who do stay on have poor attendance records overall, which contributes to unsatisfactory achievement.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

15. The attitudes of students to their learning are satisfactory overall. Inspection evidence confirms the views of most parents that their children are happy and usually like coming to school. They often show high levels of interest in their work, are eager to please and keen to do well. As at the time of the last inspection, this is usually where lessons have been planned in response to their individual needs and provide varied and stimulating classroom activities. Girls often show a greater ability to concentrate on their work than boys; particularly those aged 11 to 14 years. They are often enthusiastic, work hard, co-operate with and encourage each other. Most students enjoy practical work and activities that allow them to find out for themselves but, overall, they are too reliant on direction from their teachers. In science, the ability of students to carry out investigations independently has improved since the time of the last inspection. Where there are established high expectations for them to work independently, for example in drama, ICT and history, they respond well; this is not, however, consistent across all subjects. Although the majority of students are keen to learn, there is a significant minority, particularly in those aged 15 and 16 years, where poor study habits have become established. The large majority of students show care in the presentation of their work but, overall, there is too much work that is incomplete, despite reminders

from their teachers. Girls often show a greater ability to concentrate; particularly those aged 11 to 13 years. They are often enthusiastic, work hard, co-operate with and encourage each other. Inspection evidence confirms the views of parents that there are good opportunities provided for activities outside of lessons and most students value and take advantage of these.

16. Although some parents have concerns about standards of behaviour at the school, evidence during inspection shows that newly introduced procedures are having a positive impact. During the week of inspection, standards of behaviour made a satisfactory contribution to learning. The code of conduct has been reviewed recently, with contributions from students through the school council, and expectations are clearly understood. In a few lessons, the behaviour of some students, usually disaffected and immature boys, slows learning. This is usually where the school's strategies for managing behaviour are not being consistently well applied. During the last school year, there were 446 fixed-term and 12 permanent exclusions. This is very high and had little effect on students in terms of modifying their behaviour since many were excluded for several fixed-term periods. Procedures have been fully reviewed and the SKY project is used well to identify and help students before they reach this stage of disaffection. There is also a local education authority funded project to work with students from specific minority groups. These measures have had a considerable impact, with a reduction in incidents of exclusion of more than 60 per cent during the current school year to date, in comparison with the same period last school year. No minority ethnic group is over-represented as a proportion of the school population in the current school year and this is an improvement on last year's figures, when some groups of black students were over-represented. Records show that, during the current school year, no student has been excluded more than once. There is a similar reduction in the current school year in the need to use time out to manage the behaviour of students who cause disruption in lessons. Monitoring by the school shows that the need for this measure varies between departments. Behaviour in and around the school at break and lunchtimes is usually orderly. There is occasional over-boisterous behaviour and disagreements amongst students but these are usually resolved without difficulty. Students socialise well in the dining rooms, queue sensibly for their food and are polite and courteous to the staff on duty. Most clear away after themselves without being asked. Elsewhere in the school, students are often careless with litter, usually from food bought from the vans at the school gate. Most students are motivated well by the system of awards; they are keen to collect merits, particularly students in Years 7 and 8.
17. As at the time of the last inspection, relationships throughout the school and the personal development of students are good. Students from the wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds that make up the school community get on very well together and there is a high degree of racial harmony. There is good opportunity for all students to feel a part of the whole school and this is particularly the case for students from the hearing impaired unit. The occasional incidents of bullying that are reported are taken very seriously by the school and dealt with effectively. Students in Year 7 know what they should do if they become aware of bullying and the school promotes a culture of 'telling' that most students subscribe to. Despite there being many staff that are new to the school, there are usually high levels of mutual respect and this ensures students are confident about approaching them with concerns. Most students are able to work effectively in pairs and small groups when required. They are usually polite and willing to listen to the views and opinions of others although, in some instances, they call out answers to questions directed at someone else, reducing opportunities for those needing more time to think things through to participate fully. The response of students to opportunities for their personal development is usually positive. They value being

given opportunities to take responsibility for some aspects of school routines, for example in the library and at reception. They are confident when taking part in assemblies and those involved in the student council usually do so responsibly, taking an interest in improving the school environment, although not all provide effective feedback to their classes about decisions made at meetings. In Year 10, students enhance their citizenship skills through working with the local police in primary schools to promote understanding of issues related to street crime. Other activities, such as community work, supporting the elderly and collecting for charity, ensure students grow in their understanding of the wider community in which they live.

18. Levels of attendance for the last school year are broadly similar to those at the time of the last inspection at 88 per cent and below the national average. Unauthorised absence for the same period has risen and is above the national average at three per cent. Procedures to secure good attendance have been reviewed during the current school year and are proving effective in improving standards. Some disaffected students, usually boys, with poor records of attendance have responded very well to the alternative programmes of study arranged for them and now achieve high levels of attendance. For the current year to date, attendance is close to the national average at 91.6 per cent and levels of unauthorised absence have been reduced considerably to 1.4 per cent. The main reasons for absence include holidays taken during term time; in some instances these are extended periods. There is also a hard core of students who persistently fail to attend and this is suitably followed up by staff from the education welfare service. Punctuality at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions is poor and has an adverse impact on the quality of the tutorial sessions at the beginning of the day. Students do not always move with a sense of purpose between lessons, resulting in some loss of effective teaching time. The standards of attendance and punctuality overall have an unsatisfactory impact on learning, including that of students with English as an additional language and students from minority ethnic groups.

Sixth form

19. Students in the sixth form usually enjoy their work. They value well-informed teaching and enjoy practical aspects of their work. Many have remained at the school for this stage in their education because they know and get on well with their teachers. Relationships with adults and with their peers, including those from other schools within the consortium, are usually positive. Some find the consortium arrangements difficult, for example the amount of travel required and difficulties in communicating with them when a teacher is absent. They sometimes travel considerable distances only to find that the lesson they should have attended has been cancelled and find this demotivating. Their ability to research and find things out for themselves is not always developed well when they start in the sixth form. Over time, it does improve. Students do not, however, develop to be active independent learners and this sometimes impacts adversely on the quality of their assignment tasks, although they usually show pride in the presentation of their work. Those with positions of responsibility, for example the school council and those helping with younger students, are conscientious and caring of others.
20. Attendance to lessons has deteriorated since the time of the last inspection and is poor overall, particularly to tutor group sessions that are used for personal guidance. This is particularly so where students have no lesson to attend immediately following the session and find facilities for private study in school restricting.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory overall. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection, both in the reduction in the amount of unsatisfactory teaching observed and an improvement in the teaching observed which was very good and excellent. Examples of excellent teaching were seen in physical education, outdoor education and personal, social, health and citizenship education. Elsewhere, examples of very good teaching were seen in English, French, history, ICT, mathematics, religious education, science and special educational needs. Relatively little unsatisfactory teaching was observed. A significant percentage of the unsatisfactory teaching was taught by temporary teachers, mainly in ICT. Where teaching observed was unsatisfactory, it was often linked to the unsatisfactory nature of teachers' planning, a lack of variety in teaching methods and a lack of pace and direction.
22. Overall, teaching is good in geography, history and religious education. It is satisfactory in Years 7 to 11 in English, mathematics, science, art and design, citizenship, design and technology, modern foreign languages, music and physical education.
23. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 93 per cent of the lessons observed. It was excellent in five per cent and very good in a further 21 per cent. Thirty-six per cent of the teaching observed was good and in a further 31 per cent it was satisfactory. In seven per cent of lessons observed, the teaching was unsatisfactory.
24. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the requirements of their subjects are satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, this results in teachers confidently setting out what it is that they want the students to achieve, as in a Year 7 religious education lesson on the story of creation in Genesis. Occasionally, the teachers' subject knowledge is less secure, as in some physical education lessons where there is insufficient emphasis on the full range of National Curriculum requirements.
25. The teaching of basic skills is unsatisfactory. Whilst the planning for many lessons identified that an element of basic skills was to be a focus, in the lessons observed, there was insufficient emphasis on this element. In some art and design lessons, there was a good focus on literacy, for example in a Year 7 lesson on William Morris but, in many lessons, the emphasis on literacy was limited to key subject vocabulary. There was very little evidence of numeracy in subjects other than mathematics and there is a lack of developing students' ICT skills across the curriculum.
26. Teachers' planning is good overall. There has been a big emphasis on the consistent adoption of a three-part lesson plan and this was seen to good effect in many lessons. Learning objectives are usually shared with the class at the beginning of the lesson. In some lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory, the lack of such planning contributed adversely to the quality of teaching. Teachers' expectations are satisfactory and students' learning usually meets those expectations. Where teachers had high expectations of students, there was usually a good response, for example in a Year 10 physical education lesson, where nearly a third of the girls attained standards in trampolining well above national expectations. Teaching methods are satisfactory in effectively moving students' learning on. In the best lessons, teachers planned activities well, for example in a Year 10 mathematics lesson on recognising and finding the difference between two squares and using that information to factorise and solve quadratic equations. In less successful lessons, the choice of activities can be inappropriate and this is a factor in students losing interest. Teachers in the main manage their classrooms well and maintain positive responses from the students. In the best lessons, this is achieved by praise and encouragement of good practices and by the organisation of students to help each other. This was seen to excellent effect in a

Year 10 theory lesson in physical education, where seating arrangements allowed the higher attaining students to support lower attaining ones. In most of the unsatisfactory lessons seen, teachers did not have full control of the class and this had an adverse impact on students' learning. The use of resources is satisfactory overall. In some lessons observed, the length of the session had an adverse impact on students' learning, as some students found it difficult to remain focused for that length of time. The use of additional staff in classrooms is not always planned thoroughly enough and then their effectiveness is reduced. Teachers' planning does not always identify different activities and resources to meet the differing needs of the students in the groups.

27. The quality and use of teachers' assessment are unsatisfactory. Whilst teachers' planning often identifies a review session at the end of the lesson to aid this process, it was not consistently used in the lessons observed. Teachers' planning journals did not consistently contain notes evaluating the success of students in lessons, nor identifying the start point of the next lesson from students' previous attainment. There is insufficient assessment using National Curriculum levels and providing guidance to students on how to improve their grades. Marking of exercise books is not consistent; some of the books provided for scrutiny had not been marked for some time. Good use of assessment is seen in the teaching of students with special educational needs, including those in the hearing impaired unit.
28. The specialist teaching of students who have English as an additional language occurs mainly in the form of guidance in classes from a learning support assistant, who has had recent special training in providing such assistance. In addition, these targeted students have specific tuition to boost their literacy skills in special lessons on either an individual or small group basis. In these lessons, a very patient and sensitive approach is adopted which enables students with English as an additional language to gain confidence in speaking and in improving their listening skills. Assessments show that students' comprehension skills are improving and their reading and writing are improving at a slightly faster rate in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Students with English as an additional language benefit from relatively small classes in many subjects, as they have more opportunities for one-to-one interactions with the class teachers.
29. Support for students with English as an additional language and for others from minority ethnic groups is particularly effective in science, where the school provides very good arrangements through an additional specialist teacher. The school has plans to implement this in other subjects. In history, for example, the specific targeting of black students to raise attainment has been implemented and it is planned to do so in mathematics. Absenteeism is an issue for some students with English as an additional language and from some minority ethnic backgrounds, as it is for the school as a whole but, when students are present, particularly in Years 7 to 9, they learn well.
30. The support for students with special educational needs is good overall and very good for students in the hearing impaired unit. These students benefit from good, and sometimes very good, teaching in response to their specific targets in their individual education plans and this results in good progress in relation to them. Teachers are aware of students' needs in their classes but the planning to meet all these needs is not always consistent.
31. Students' learning is satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 11. Where teaching is excellent and very good, students' learning is better, for example in a Year 8 personal, social, health and citizenship education lesson, students made excellent progress in their knowledge and understanding of issues affecting the local area. In a Year 10 careers

lesson for boys, the students made very good progress in their understanding of good communication and good elements in an interview. The pace of lessons can be affected by the misbehaviour of some students and this has an adverse impact on students' learning. On other occasions, students' efforts are very good and their achievement is very good, as in a Year 10 history lesson on Romans and public health in the unit 'medicine through time'.

32. The learning of students in Years 7, 8 and 9 in the lessons with specialist support teachers for special educational needs, including the hearing impaired unit, is very good, overall. The variety of activities provided maintains interest and pace. The tasks set are tough but well presented. Students enjoy the challenge and so concentrate well. For example, Year 9 students improved their ability to write a letter of complaint. They struggled with reading the sample letters but responded very well to good help over phonics, linked very well to teaching about how to read with understanding. They were given a structure to support their writing, plus help on how to evaluate whether their letters had an adult tone, or not.

Sixth form

33. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory overall. Students' attainment at A-level and in vocational courses is below the national average and teaching is not sufficiently effective in ensuring that students' achievement is better than satisfactory. During the inspection, much of the teaching observed was good or better. It was very good in seven per cent and good in 60 per cent. It was satisfactory in 27 per cent of lessons observed and unsatisfactory in seven per cent. Very good teaching was seen in business studies. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they plan well. Given the attainment of the students on entry to the sixth form, there is insufficient emphasis on key skills and teaching methods which will support students in developing the capacity to learn independently. This is unsatisfactory and has an adverse impact on the achievement of students over time in the sixth form, particularly in helping them to secure the high grades which are increasingly achieved at A-level and AS-level. While the drama studios are used well, the use of ICT facilities is not consistently effective. There is insufficient guidance overall in the assessment of students' work to enable them to attain higher grades or to help them make greater progress over their time in the sixth form. There is insufficient use of assessment information overall to show students the gains in knowledge and understanding that they have made and what needs to be done to improve the gains in order to achieve higher grades.

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

34. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory in both Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. The appropriate statutory curriculum is not in place for ICT in either Years 7 to 9 or in Years 10 and 11 and therefore, in this respect, provision is unsatisfactory. The breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum are satisfactory. The time allocation is satisfactory and the programmes of study are planned well overall, encourage all to participate and are balanced in most subjects, though not all, for example the emphasis of games for boys in physical education. There has been a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in increasing the number of taught hours per week to meet the minimum recommended, although the change to 25 hours per week is relatively recent.
35. The school has recognised the importance of the place for activities which meet students' needs, raise their self-esteem and develop good life-skills. Alternatives to the

standard curriculum have been introduced, for example, with the outdoor education programme which includes first aid and rock climbing amongst the modules and provides certificates of achievement for each module. This is for students for whom a full GCSE programme would be unsuitable. Built onto this are further vocational courses in Years 10 and 11 where subjects such as modern foreign languages and design and technology are dispensed so that students have an accredited package that is tailored to their individual needs. The achievement of these students is celebrated by the school. Lower attaining, disaffected students have discussions about appropriate non-GCSE courses, with the result that students with previously poor attendance are now achieving over 90 per cent attendance; for example two students previously excluded on a regular basis are now studying motor mechanics at Lewisham College and are achieving 100 per cent attendance. Provision for students with special educational needs is good, and that for hearing impaired unit students is very good. Grants have been successfully used to extend the curriculum support for students from minority ethnic groups and for gifted and talented students.

36. The school's provision for developing literacy is satisfactory. The school has taken account of the undeveloped literary skills of many of its students by putting into place a co-ordinated approach to improving standards of speaking, listening, reading and writing across all subject areas. Training of staff in developing these skills has succeeded in producing a co-ordinated approach to aspects such as improving students' technical vocabulary. Training has been supplemented by valued initiatives such as summer schools for students in transition from their primary schools and encouraging reading through a regular library club. The school monitors its literacy teaching but, overall, it is having a variable impact. In history, not only is terminology explained but speaking skills are encouraged, as in a Year 11 discussion about renaissance medicine. In science, teachers correct spelling and target good sentence structure. In ICT, students are encouraged to write sentences at the end of each lesson, incorporating key words they have learned. However, at present, practice is not consistent across all subjects, for example opportunities to develop technical language are sometimes missed and reading is not sufficiently targeted in modern foreign languages. The correction of grammar, punctuation and spelling is not consistent across all the subjects. However, the increasing focus on developing good literary skills is beginning to have a positive impact overall on standards, especially in the 11 to 14 years age group.
37. The effectiveness of strategies for teaching numeracy skills is unsatisfactory across the key stages. Students have reasonable knowledge of number. All teachers have received training in the development of numeracy but there is limited evidence of its impact in lessons seen during the inspection. Examples that were seen include: geography, where there is the use of grid references and graphs; the use of graphs and calculations in science and the use of calculation in art and design and in business studies. Other subjects were not reported as developing or using numeracy skills.
38. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good and provides enrichment and extension as well as contributing towards the students' moral, social and cultural development, for example in theatre visits, music, sport and field trips, as well as visits abroad. The music and drama departments currently are preparing the students for a production of the musical 'Oliver'.
39. Equality of access and opportunity for students is very good in Years 7 to 11 and is one of the notable strengths of the school. Students with English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic backgrounds benefit from the school's cultivation of an ethos of awareness and respect for cultures other than the native or local culture. There is a very strong emphasis on promoting and celebrating the achievements of these

students. Displays around the school and many staff themselves promote good role models for students from a wide variety of backgrounds and experience. This helps to ensure that students feel equally valued within the school. The students from the hearing impaired unit have access to all the school's opportunities as well as having specific support and guidance provided for their specialised needs. This results in their full integration into the life and work of the school. The support that is provided for students with English as an additional language is good but, in a school the size of Sedgehill and the number and variety of students' needs, it is not yet sufficient to meet the needs of all and to ensure that they attain similar results to those of the school as a whole.

40. The statutory requirements for the provision for students who have statements of special educational needs are well met. The overall provision for students with special educational needs is good. Some students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are withdrawn from lessons. Suitable efforts are made to avoid them missing the same lessons consistently, whilst the gains they make from the specialist teaching are good. Many of the students in Years 10 and 11 with special educational needs benefit from an arrangement which reduces the number of GCSE subjects they opt to study, and the use of the time released to support their progress towards their other GCSEs.
41. There is a well-organised programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education which is taught by tutors in Years 7 and 8 and by a specialist team in Years 9 to 11. The school makes very good use of a number of local agencies such as the police and health education teams. Provision in this area has improved well since the last inspection.
42. Careers and vocational education is good. Work experience is carried out after the examinations in Year 11. At present, it is voluntary and usually it is higher attaining students who take advantage of the provision. There is provision for 16 students linked to college courses. This is for the disaffected students and the indications are that for some it is working well. Year 10 have a junior citizen week helping police run citizenship courses for local primary schools. They also run a club with pupils in a local special educational needs school and accompany these pupils on work experience.
43. The school is involved with the community, for example through charity work and through musical performances. The support the school receives from the community is good, for example from visiting speakers, local businesses, the police and the health authority. The music department has links with the Guildhall School of Music and musicians come into the school and give of their time for the benefit of the students' learning. Relationships with partner institutions, including the contributory primary schools, the sixth-form consortium and the local colleges, are satisfactory overall.
44. The overall provision for students' personal development is good. For spiritual development it is satisfactory. The provision for moral, social and cultural development is good.
45. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. All year groups have two assemblies per week and these are well prepared and contain good spiritual and moral elements. However, some assemblies and tutor periods do not include a spiritual dimension and the school is not meeting statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship. In the assemblies observed, students listened attentively and were led to reflect in moments of silence on their personal response to the subject, for example peace in the world. Subjects encouraging spiritual reflection include religious education with its exploration of philosophies and beliefs, music, art and design and English. The school

provides students with opportunities to take part in local services, for example that for Remembrance Day.

46. Students generally have a strong sense of right and wrong and they are given ample opportunity to explore ethical issues through a variety of subjects such as geography and global issues, physical education through consideration of fair play, rules and codes of behaviour. The personal, social, health and citizenship programme has explicit elements which strengthens the provision for students' moral development. There are published codes of conduct and the expectations for the school community are made clear and re-inforced.
47. The school presents itself as a friendly multi-ethnic community, based on secure foundations of racial tolerance and understanding. The staff are good role models. Students' social skills are encouraged through an effective school council, an anger management programme and involvement in the community, for example through musical performances and links with the local special school. Year 9 is given the opportunity to take on receptionist duties to develop their social skills and, in assemblies and school productions, students are given good opportunities to present themselves confidently to others. Students are provided with good opportunities to reflect on those less fortunate than themselves, for example in the activities and collections for both local and national charities and in their work with the local special school.
48. There is a culturally enriching programme accessible to all, both within the curriculum and through extra-curricular activities. A huge and positive influence on the promotion of black success has been achieved through posters and role models in the school, for example, 'Boyz to Men'. There is a strong emphasis on promoting the achievement of minority ethnic groups which is having a positive effect on achievement, especially in science. Subjects, including music, history, religious education, geography and art and design, provide good opportunities for students to develop their awareness of other cultural influences, for example through field trips, overseas tours by the school band and by discussion and recognition of the artistic expression of other cultures, for example Turkish art. Respect, tolerance and admiration are the learning outcomes of the students' experiences.

Sixth form

49. The curriculum provision in the sixth form for Sedgehill students is satisfactory. The consortium offers a wide range of subjects but the take-up by Sedgehill students is low and this results in some subjects having very small numbers. The teaching of key skills is fragmented and the option choices of some students restrict their ability to take key skills. The school is in breach of the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in not offering the students religious education in the sixth form.
50. Students are given good advice prior to entering the sixth form which results in a significant number of students following their courses outside the consortium. The students who do stay indicated that they were not satisfied with the level of advice that they received in the sixth form through their tutor sessions or other arrangements. Students with hearing impairment are supported well in ensuring that they have access to the full range of courses but there is less evidence of specific support being given to students with English as an additional language, either in specific lessons or in tutorial periods.
51. Students have access to the good opportunities offered by the school as a whole for extra-curricular activities but they indicated that they were not satisfied with the range of

activities offered to them discretely. Their contribution to the life of the school overall is limited. Good guidance is given to sixth-form students with special educational needs, including students from the hearing impaired unit.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

52. The school makes satisfactory provision for the health, safety and welfare of its students. Relationships between staff and students are usually good, ensuring that students have confidence that there is someone with whom they would be comfortable to share concerns. There are effective arrangements to introduce students to the school before they start in Year 7, together with useful sessions that explore relationships and bullying soon after the beginning of the school year. These usually result in students settling into their first year quickly and happily. The policy to guide staff in the event of them having concerns is clearly expressed but does not yet include all procedures. All members of staff were briefed on procedures at the beginning of the school year and the school is aware of the need to introduce formal arrangements to ensure new staff, including supply teachers, are fully informed. The school works well with student support services to ensure individual needs for specialist help are met. Some parents express concern about the level of supervision in the playground at break and lunchtimes. This is a difficult site to supervise; however, during the week of inspection, there was a suitably high level of staff presence to deal effectively with the very few squabbles and disagreements occurring.
53. There are suitable arrangements for dealing with first aid emergencies and the administration of prescribed medicines. Fire drills are carried out with sufficient frequency to ensure everyone knows what to do in the event of an emergency. The school has a regular programme of safety inspection covering equipment and appliances used that meets statutory requirements. The health and safety policy does not make clear the need for regular assessments of risk, stating only that they should be done 'where necessary'. Despite a local education authority audit in 2001 that identified as a major recommendation the need for this to be remedied, this important aspect of safety, both in the school generally and in some subject areas, has not been dealt with. Risk assessments are carried out conscientiously for all trips and visits that students make outside the school.
54. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. During the current school term, the school has placed a high priority on improving levels of attendance and procedures have improved significantly. This is reflected in the appointment of a senior member of staff to oversee and monitor it. The introduction of first-day contact with home in the event of unexplained absence, alternative study arrangements for some disaffected students, together with measures to raise the awareness of parents to the importance of good attendance have had a good impact on levels achieved during the current school year. The current computerised registration system effectively records those present at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. There are, however, too many students who are late to school, some arriving after registration, and the current systems for recording these do not always pick it up in time to prevent parents being contacted unnecessarily. Students usually value the awards given for good attendance, particularly those aged 11 to 13 years. The school monitors individual attendance well and makes very effective use of the time available from the education welfare service to deal with a hard core of students who persistently fail to attend regularly. At present, monitoring of attendance has not extended to levels achieved by the various groups that make up the school community or to subject areas. Although all annual progress reports to parents include a statement about the level of attendance

expected, they do not adequately make clear, on an individual basis, where poor attendance has had an impact on learning.

55. The school has reviewed behaviour and disciplinary procedures and these are good. These include a code of conduct that is understood well by students who were able to contribute to it through their student council. There are clear guidelines for staff about rewards and disciplinary procedures. Some parents feel that these are not consistently applied, for example in the letters that are sent home to them to commend their children's achievements. There are effective strategies to manage behaviour in lessons and, where these are used well, they promote high standards. There has been a recent focus on staff development in managing behaviour that has provided good support for those involved. It has resulted in a good reduction in the number of students who are removed from lessons because of their behaviour, and monitoring by the school has identified where further support is needed. Strategies to reduce the number of students excluded from school are proving very successful. These include a project to identify those in danger of being excluded at an early stage and providing effective support in anger management and the development of self-discipline. The mutual support group for parents of children for whom there are concerns about behaviour ensures they are able to exchange views and discuss concerns. This enables them to help their children more effectively at home. Procedures for supporting students and working with them and their parents to modify behaviour when they return from exclusion have been improved recently and are effective in reducing the number of occasions when it is necessary to exclude for a second time. A project that supports students from specific minority ethnic groups has successfully reduced the number of exclusions from these. There is a suitable policy about bullying and the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme ensures students know what to do if they are bullied or become aware of someone else who is being bullied. The school is successfully developing a culture of 'telling' where bullying is concerned and parents of children starting in Year 7 are fully briefed on procedures. Peer mentoring has been available in previous school years and plans are in place to reintroduce a peer mentoring scheme; student training is currently in progress for the start of this in the next school year.
56. Planning for the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme has improved since the time of the last inspection and provides good support for personal development and guidance. It includes all the required areas of study to prepare students effectively for making decisions affecting their lives, both in and beyond school. There is, however, some inconsistency in the way the programme is taught. Tutor periods at the beginning of the day are not always planned well and this sometimes results in wasted time. There is a good programme of careers education that is provided by specialist staff and ensures students are given every opportunity to consider the options available to them beyond compulsory school age. The work experience programme is not currently arranged to provide effectively for all students and there are plans to change this in the next school year. Form tutors usually know their students well and the positive relationships between them help them to offer good guidance and support. The school has recently put out a questionnaire for students to identify where there are opportunities to improve learning, and students are able to express views and opinions through the student council. The programme of assemblies is planned well to provide for effective personal development and guidance. The personal support given to students during lessons is usually effective. There are examples of very useful marking that helps them to know what is needed to improve their work; this is not consistent across all subjects. Annual progress reports do not adequately evaluate what students know and can do and where efforts need to be focused to secure improved standards.

57. There is thorough identification and then monitoring of the level and extent of the special educational needs of students, principally for literacy and behavioural needs. Appropriate tests are made with sufficient regularity, and good links are established with tutors and heads of year. The annual review processes for students with statements of special educational needs are carried out well. Good reports are available, from both school and external agencies, and parents are fully informed and suitably involved. Good quality individual education plans are written. They give a clear picture of the needs of each student, at the differing levels of need. They describe well strategies which can allow teachers to meet the needs. Teachers know of the individual education plans and some use them well. The targets in the individual education plans are a mix of specific and vague and, too often, targets do not have measures to show how much improvement is expected. This reduces the chances for students to benefit from these targets.
58. The school has introduced good procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress but these have not yet been consistently implemented by all departments in the school. Assessment is very good in geography but in science there is no central store of ongoing assessments and, in music, assessment procedures have only been operational since the last school year.
59. The whole-school policy document on assessment, recording and reporting identifies satisfactory principles for assessment and clear guidelines for the development of departmental policies. With the additional requirement that assessment should be clearly referenced to National Curriculum attainment levels, a GCSE/GNVQ grade or a 'tracking attainment' grade, it provides a good framework for the development of consistent practice. Generally, marking is regular and records are kept but the use of assessment information to guide curricular planning and teachers' planning of lessons is inconsistent and therefore unsatisfactory overall. Practice is good in English where it is used to review schemes of work, setting arrangements and is usually related to targets or levels but, in most curricular areas, this use of assessment is unsatisfactory.
60. Procedures for monitoring and supporting students' academic progress are satisfactory and have been helped by the introduction of a tracking system used to record information on students' effort, homework, attainment, attendance and punctuality. It will require departments to standardise their own attainment grades for it to be more effective at subject performance level. Nevertheless, the system is beginning to have a positive effect, stimulating dialogue between teachers and students regarding levels of progress. The introduction of academic review days in September and March offers opportunities for students to review their strengths and weaknesses with pastoral staff and to raise their levels of motivation and achievement. Students in Year 9 are well supported and monitored in the transition stage from Year 9 to Year 10 but, between Year 11 and Year 12, there is insufficient rigour in assessment procedures.

Sixth form

61. The educational and personal support and guidance provided for students in the sixth form are unsatisfactory overall. Students are well informed about options available in the sixth-form consortium and from other providers. There is a higher level of dissatisfaction from students than would normally be expected. Students expressed concerns about the level and quality of guidance that they receive in the sixth form. There was limited evidence presented that showed a good impact of the monitoring of students' progress, the identification of this into targets for improvement and the translation of this into higher students' grades and there is a lack of consistency between subjects. The last analysis of students' results showed that over half the grades obtained showed little or

no value-added. Most find the marking of their work useful in helping them to understand what to do to improve. There are some opportunities for students to show and develop responsibility, for example through the school council, but the range is more limited than one would expect.

62. Although there is suitable monitoring of the attendance levels of individual students, action taken to secure satisfactory standards has not been effective. The school has not monitored attendance by student group or subject and has not produced the specific data to identify areas for concern. Some absence marks are given where individual students have timetable clashes that prevent them from attending a class or where teachers are absent and lessons are cancelled. Students are not always suitably informed when this happens resulting in wasted journeys. Although students attending lessons are registered, there is no system in place to record all those in the sixth form who are in the school at any given time as required for emergency purposes. The weekly tutor sessions that provide for personal guidance and careers education are particularly poorly attended and this reduces their effectiveness. Students say they are not always planned well and waste time. They do form effective relationships with their form tutors and are able to approach them for personal support where needed and they value the help given with their university applications.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

63. Parents are generally satisfied with what the school provides and achieves and inspection evidence confirms much of this positive view. Most of those expressing an opinion are pleased with the standards of teaching; they say their children like school, are expected to work hard and progress well with their learning. Although some have reservations about standards of behaviour at the school, there has been a considerable improvement during the current term in response to the high priority given to this by school management and it is satisfactory overall. Although in many respects the school works closely with parents, particularly in relation to managing behaviour problems, inspectors agree with those who feel that information provided in annual progress reports and arrangements for parents to meet and consult with teachers do not fully meet their needs. This reduces opportunities for parents to be actively involved in their children's learning. The school is aware of the need for action in this respect and has prepared a questionnaire for parents to establish how it can better meet their needs.
64. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents through the information it provides is satisfactory overall. Parents say that information provided has improved recently. The prospectus and governors' annual report offer a broad range of well-presented information about routines, expectations and achievements. They do not include national comparisons with examinations at the ages of 16 and 18 years. The governors' annual report is not automatically sent to parents and the alternative arrangements for it to be requested and collected by students do not ensure that all parents who would like a copy receive it. Parents are contacted at an early stage where there is concern about any aspect of their children's life and work at school and are encouraged to be involved in finding ways forward when there are difficulties. Arrangements for informing prospective parents about the school are effective and there is a particularly well-written booklet explaining what will be taught in various curriculum areas and includes good information about how parents can help at home. This has also been the subject of a parents' evening that was attended well by parents of children in Year 7. Further similar evenings are planned for parents of children in other years. Parents are satisfied with the contact they have with form tutors, although they find difficulty in contacting the school by telephone. Action has been taken to improve arrangements for parents to leave telephone messages. They feel their concerns are usually dealt with well,

although more particularly when they are brought to the attention of senior staff. There has been a recent improvement in the quality of the school newsletter and it is now produced at the end of each month rather than once a term. Parents of children from the range of minority ethnic groups within the school community are informed well in writing and through meetings about current and planned initiatives that will provide support for their children.

65. Annual progress reports usually provide suitable information about attitudes to school and students' personal development. They offer detailed information about levels achieved and attendance. There is not, however, a suitable evaluation for parents of what students know and can do, their relative strengths and areas for improvement that lead to learning targets that link specifically to the subjects studied. Although all students are set targets, these are often not subject specific, for instance the need to concentrate more, or to revise but without specific direction about what should be revised. Some of the information needed by parents, for example how much progress their children have made, is not always easily accessible to them. The school is aware of concerns parents have about arrangements made for them to discuss their children's progress and has plans to remedy this during the current school year. Information about test results at the end of Year 9 is suitably reported.
66. The involvement of parents in the work of the school and their children's learning is satisfactory overall. A small but interested group of parents is involved in the parent and teacher association. Although they have not recently taken a strong lead in initiating activities, they provide effective support for fundraising and for school events, such as parents' evenings. Parents of children involved in the range of projects that support various groups, both academically and with pastoral matters, take good advantage of opportunities to be involved in their children's activities at school; for example in support groups, attending learning sessions and accompanying trips and visits. There was a good level of attendance at a recent meeting for parents of children in Year 7 about how to help their children at home. The setting of homework is not always regular and this does not help parents to know when their children need encouragement and support. Not all parents support the work of the school by ensuring that their children attend regularly and on time.

Sixth Form

67. Although some students are positive about the sixth form and enjoy their experience at Sedgehill, many others are negative about many of the aspects. Students are positive about the good relationships in the sixth form, the quality of teaching and the support some receive from individual teachers. They do not feel they are given good advice on what to study overall and they are critical of the level of advice and support they receive throughout the sixth form. They are also critical of the range of activities that are planned for them and they believe the school does not respond sufficiently to their ideas. Whilst there are regular reports to parents indicating their achievement, insufficient emphasis is placed on the impact that poor attendance and punctuality have on performance and on giving parents good quality information about the progress that students have made in relation to their starting point in the subject.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

68. Leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory. There has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection. The appointment of a new headteacher, accompanied by an additional deputy headteacher, has had a significant impact. There are very good signs that there will be substantial improvements, although

these have not yet been tested against national yardsticks. Leadership has given satisfactory educational direction to the work of the school overall and there is now a clear focus on raising standards, on improving behaviour and attendance and on improving the quality of leadership and management. The current leadership team has built on the school's previously successful drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the pace of improvement has accelerated with changes in staffing.

69. The school does articulate well its commitment to equal opportunities and a number of strategies have been adopted. The monitoring of students' attainment and achievement by differing ethnic groups or by the level of ability has improved considerably but the use of that information to guide teachers' planning of consistently challenging lessons for the differing groups in their classes is unsatisfactory.
70. The school has had a variety of school development plans since the last inspection, where the quality of planning was a key issue. When the new headteacher was appointed, a school improvement plan for 2002 to 2003 had not been completed and this was finalised in the early part of the autumn term. The process was not one that the headteacher would want to adopt in the future but the plan does identify well the school's priorities for development. Very good action has been taken in relation to these priorities. This has resulted in improved attendance, reduced exclusions, reduced use of the time out room and improved wearing of the school uniform by students. The leadership team has maintained its drive for improved teaching and, in most lessons, the agreed format for lessons is followed and this is having a good impact.
71. The quality of leadership and management of departments is satisfactory overall. There is very good leadership and management in the geography and religious education departments and this is reflected in improved standards. Leadership is good in history, ICT, music and design and technology and this is having a positive impact on standards. In science, the leadership is unsatisfactory. In the other subject areas, leadership and management are satisfactory. There is some inconsistency in the extent and quality of monitoring and evaluation that is carried out by departmental heads and the impact this has, particularly on the quality of teaching and learning.
72. The governing body is committed to the school's improvement but is still developing its ability to plan strategically for the future of the school. Governors have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses but do not yet hold the school sufficiently to account. They have had insufficient impact since the last inspection on ensuring that improvements are made in standards, attendance and behaviour and, in this respect, the school has been unsatisfactory over time in taking effective action in raising the school's performance in key areas. There are a number of statutory requirements that are not met. Currently, the curriculum offered does not give students their statutory entitlement in ICT across the curriculum. The requirement for a daily act of collective worship is not met, although the assemblies observed were usually of a high quality. The implementation of risk assessments in all areas of the school's work has not been undertaken.
73. The school's management of its finances is good. The management of the budget is efficiently and effectively carried out. There is careful planning to ensure that the school funding is used along the lines that had previously been decided. Principles of best value are applied well. An example of this was the renegotiation of the school's cleaning contract, where a saving of 25 per cent was achieved. The bursar plays a proactive part in the school and the local education authority in ensuring that the school gets good value for money from its purchases. Some recent examples include the purchase of a new minibus for the school and funds set aside towards the improvements of sports

facilities, including a proposed all-weather floodlit playing surface. Unit costs are above average for secondary schools. This has been used to create extra teaching groups in some years, with smaller numbers in each class, to meet the needs of students with special educational needs. The percentage of time teachers spend on average in contact with classes is below average, although some teachers use non-contact time in supporting other colleagues in lessons. All designated funds have been effectively and efficiently directed to the purpose for which they are intended, for example towards refurbishment of students' toilets and external cladding for the technical block. The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory but it gives unsatisfactory value for money because leadership and management are unsatisfactory, the level of student attendance over time has been unsatisfactory and unit costs are above average.

74. The match of staff to the curriculum is satisfactory, with the exception of ICT. The school is finding it increasingly difficult to fill some teaching posts satisfactorily, which is particularly important with the high turnover of staff. Sixty-six teachers have left in the past two years. Standards have suffered in the past due to the staffing difficulties in English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and ICT. Staff benefit from contact time that is below the national average. They are supported in their work by the learning support staff who pay particular attention to the needs of those students with special educational needs, with English as an additional language and with hearing impairment. Similarly, they are supported by the good work of administrative and support staff.
75. A policy for performance management is in place and annual reviews of all staff are carried out. As a result, targets are then set and in-service training to meet them prioritised. The staff development programme is effective and includes examples of the school responding to national initiatives, such as literacy, and to research developments such as accelerated learning.
76. Newly qualified teachers are carefully inducted and well supported by the school, the head of their main subject department and colleagues. Teachers in their second and third year of teaching are clearly benefiting from the enhanced professional development opportunities provided by Lewisham's participation in the national project to retain teachers. Twelve teachers in the school are involved and, in one example, the teacher has benefited from the opportunity to study schools in another country and to broaden their subject expertise. New teachers to the school are inducted by their main subject area but the school recognises the need for a more formal system. There is currently no formal system for the induction of supply staff.
77. Accommodation is satisfactory. There is adequate teaching space, although some rooms are small. Rooms are mostly grouped in departmental areas and this makes joint working easier. The buildings are well looked after and there are often attractive and informative displays involving a variety of students' work.
78. The school has responded well to the previous report on accommodation. The technology block has been refurbished and a modern foreign languages block has been built, adding a further six classrooms. Rooms have been redesigned in science and a refurbishment programme is underway. The library has been significantly extended, the gymnasium area redecorated and many toilets refurbished. The hearing impaired unit is now located within the sixth-form block and most of the problems of leakage in this building have been addressed. The school hopes for the award of performing arts status which would see the addition of a theatre on site. There is a clear strategic accommodation plan in place produced by the premises sub-group of governors and staff, which recognises the areas which needed to be upgraded.

79. Some science is taught in classrooms and some laboratories still need upgrading. Accommodation in ICT is well organised but some ICT is taught in the business studies suite where the layout of computers is inappropriate for students in Years 7 to 9. Similarly, teaching ICT in the library is made difficult by the distribution of 16 work stations around the large room. Whereas there is adequate provision for physical education, accommodation for dance is unsatisfactory. There is no specialist facility and the subject is taught in a drama room with a carpeted floor. Poor drainage of the sports field sometimes restricts activities.
80. Most departments have sufficient resources for their needs. There are insufficient ICT resources for a school the size of Sedgehill and this contributes to the failure to meet statutory requirements. There are gaps in science resources and the dance facilities are not adequate for both core physical education and GCSE classes.
81. The special educational needs department is very well led. There is sufficient monitoring of their work, and of the progress of students. The aims and direction for the work of the special educational needs department are clear, with good progress in recent years. The links to other elements of school provision are good. These include the care arrangements, the hearing impaired unit, and the provision intended to improve behaviour, such as the SKY Centre and the student mentoring. The work of the department is linked well to the work underway on the literacy strategy. Insufficient time is allocated to carry out the responsibilities of the special educational needs co-ordinator. The resources used by the department include strengths, principally ICT, accommodation and the expertise of the staff. There is new leadership and management of the provision for students with English as an additional language and this is beginning to have a positive impact on the effective targeting of resources.

Sixth form

82. Leadership and management in the sixth form are unsatisfactory. Although the school is part of a sixth-form consortium, there is no clear indication of where the sixth form contributes to the school's direction. This lack of direction is reflected in a significant drop in the number of students staying on in the sixth form in the school year 2002 to 2003 and, prior to that, numbers were smaller than one would expect nationally. A recent questionnaire to current Year 11 students suggests a similar staying-on rate but there now appears to be the will to market the sixth form appropriately. There is a lack of evidence in the school's planning over time of the priorities for the sixth form and this can be seen, for example, in accommodation in the school which is poor. The sixth-form students' responses to the inspection questionnaire were not positive in many areas and indicate, amongst other elements, a lack of a positive ethos. The school does not meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in respect of students taking religious education in the sixth form. Assemblies and tutor periods were not consistent in providing good models for students' personal development.
83. The sixth-form finances are managed well and the costs of the sixth form reflect the new funding arrangements. The cost of educating Sedgehill students, however, is higher than the cost of educating other sixth-form students in the consortium. There is a lack of information on the achievement of Sedgehill students in relation to their attainment in the subject at the start of their course and students were critical of the quality and extent of the guidance that they are given to attain higher grades. There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in sixth-form lessons and of monitoring the quality of support for students' personal development. There was no

evidence presented of the planned use of the expertise available across the sixth- form consortium to raise standards of teaching and learning.

84. The sixth-form unit is poor. It is an unattractive building and needs considerable refurbishment. In particular, the absence of appropriate areas for student private study makes independent learning in the sixth form very difficult and detracts from the development of suitable learning styles.
85. Resources are unsatisfactory overall. There are subjects with good resources, for example in drama. However, the resources available to students in the sixth-form block, including ICT facilities, are inadequate, especially in relation to supporting their ability to develop as independent learners.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

- (1) Improve standards achieved by students at GCSE by:

- (a) raising standards in science and French particularly;
- (b) placing greater emphasis on the teaching of key skills in all subjects;
- (c) using assessment information to plan for improvements in individual lessons;
- (d) giving students better guidance consistently on how to improve their performance; and
- (e) linking staff performance management targets more closely to the performance of individual classes.

(Paragraphs 4, 5, 25, 36, 37, 58, 59, 104, 112, 154)

- (2) Improve students' attendance by:

- (a) making the electronic system more effective across the whole site;
- (b) identifying and sharing more clearly the link between attendance and students' performance through reports and other communication with parents and students;
- (c) continuing to identify and reward examples of good attendance; and
- (d) continuing to develop the curriculum on offer to increase its relevance to all students.

(Paragraphs 18, 26, 29, 35, 54, 66, 136)

(3) Meet the statutory requirements for ICT by:

- (a) increasing the availability of facilities to enable all subjects to meet their requirements to contribute to this area of students' development;
- (b) focusing departmental spending to ensure that, where appropriate, departmental facilities are built up;
- (c) providing appropriate training to ensure that all staff have the confidence, the expertise and the commitment to use the new technology; and
- (d) offering discrete ICT lessons in all Years 7 to 9 classes.

(Paragraphs 36, 80, 102, 197, 125, 150, 152, 158, 164, 167, 178)

(4) Improve the use of assessment information by:

- (a) making sure that all staff understand the implications of the data that they receive;
- (b) teachers planning consistently for the variety of needs in their classes using the data provided;
- (c) senior staff monitoring and evaluating both the use and the impact of this planning on the quality of teaching and learning; and
- (d) teachers giving greater guidance to students on how they can improve their performance.

(Paragraphs 27, 56, 59, 60, 65, 107, 109, 117, 124, 151, 157, 174)

(5) Improve leadership and management by:

- (a) building on the good practice that is evident in the school;
- (b) having a consistent programme of development for all managers and governors so that they are confident and have the appropriate expertise to carry out their respective functions; and
- (c) monitoring and evaluating the impact that strategies have on improving standards, attendance, behaviour and students' personal development and using that information to support the school's strategic planning for sustained improvement.

(Paragraphs 69, 71, 72, 118)

Sixth form

(6) Improve the standards and achievement of students by:

- (a) giving them better guidance consistently on how they can improve their grades;
- (b) improving their abilities to act as independent learners;
- (c) placing greater emphasis on basic skills; and
- (d) reducing the loss of time when students are being taught.

(Paragraphs 14, 181, 185, 191, 193, 195, 200, 214, 223)

(7) Improve the sixth-form accommodation by:

- (a) identifying what will contribute to recruiting and retaining a viable sixth form;

- (b) planning the improvements so that they have a positive impact on students' learning habits, particularly the development of students as independent learners; and
- (c) consulting the students so that they feel good and involved with the planned upgrading of the accommodation.

(Paragraphs 20, 84)

(8) Improve the attendance and attitudes of students by:

- (a) making students more aware of the importance of good attendance and punctuality to the final results; and
- (b) changing the sixth form timetable so that it encourages greater attendance.

(Paragraphs 20, 62, 67, 185, 204)

(9) Improve the attitudes of students towards their sixth form by:

- (a) planning a greater range of activities which make students feel good about belonging to the Sedgehill sixth form and enable them to contribute positively to the life of the whole school;
- (b) improving the quality of tutorial time so that it contributes more effectively to students' personal development and provides more effective guidance in their transition to independent learners;
- (c) improving the opportunities in lessons and in other activities where students can show initiative and exercise responsibility; and
- (d) listening to, and acting upon, the opinions expressed by the sixth-form students.

(Paragraphs 20, 51, 67, 82, 197)

(10) Improve the monitoring of the academic progress of students in the sixth form by:

- (a) establishing an appropriate benchmark in the subject to enable students' rate of progress to be measured;
- (b) establishing the progress needed termly in subject-specific skills for students to achieve high grades;
- (c) assessing students' work regularly to determine their progress in relation to subject-specific skills;
- (d) sharing that information with students and setting them targets in relation to future progress;
- (e) senior staff monitoring termly the progress of students in all sixth-form subjects; and
- (f) senior staff evaluating subject and student performance in examinations and setting challenging targets as part of performance management.

(Paragraphs 33, 61, 83, 184, 194, 198, 201)

(11) Improve leadership and management in the sixth form by:

- (a) providing a clear educational direction for sixth-form provision for Sedgehill students;
- (b) identifying the priorities and the resources needed to achieve this vision;
- (c) establishing clear lines of responsibility for achieving this vision;

- (d) monitoring and evaluating progress towards targets set for achieving the vision; and
- (e) ensuring that the funding allocated is cost-effective in securing higher standards of attendance and student attitudes to the provision.

(Paragraphs 82, 199)

(12) Provide the opportunity for all students to take religious education in the sixth form by:

- (a) changing the sixth-form timetable to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

(Paragraphs 49,82)

THE HEARING IMPAIRED UNIT

87. The quality of provision in the hearing impaired unit is very good.
88. The overall progress of the hearing impaired unit students is very good. Very good progress is made toward effective communication with the whole community of the school. The hearing impaired students learn to make full use of residual hearing, and become very alert to the many other cues which sustain communication. Over time, the students gain confidence and become ready for life and further learning beyond school. GCSE outcomes are positive, for example the most recent results for hearing impaired students show 75 per cent attaining one A*-C grade. Students make very good progress toward the targets set out in their individual education plans.
89. The strategies used by the unit staff are very effective. Staff speak to students, carefully judging the extent that students grasp the meaning. They then develop and refine students' responses, including the use of speech. Hearing impaired unit staff make good use of written communications to improve students' literacy skills, both oral and written. In addition, staff use an impressively wide range of other techniques, such as gesture, signing and lip-reading.
90. Hearing impaired students spend nearly all of their learning time in mainstream classes, from Year 7 onwards. They have access to all written communication in lessons, as do all students. They have good access to teachers' spoken language through good use of radio aids by teachers and their own hearing aids. Again, this element in the overall strategy is effective. For example, even students with severe hearing loss make very good progress in subjects and are confidently preparing for future university studies. Students for whom English is a new and additional language, plus students with moderate and even profound hearing loss, make strong progress and integrate well into the life of the school. Every student relies on equipment, such as hearing aids, as key tools for learning and integration. Unit staff ensure that the aids work well for each individual. Individual and small group guidance is given, some in lessons and some in small groups taught in the unit. A student starting at the school in Year 7 will have support in lessons for most of each day during the early weeks.
91. Students respect the demands of the unit staff, and are keen to do well. Their attitudes to homework and the care they take over their work are sometimes exemplary, especially by Year 11. Students steadily improve their awareness of how to respond to adults and fully-hearing students in conversation. Sixth-form students have grown in confidence about undertaking adult roles and choices, ready for when they leave school.

92. The quality of teaching by unit staff is very good and hearing impaired students learn very well. Year 10 students are helped to concentrate and take interest. The best teaching for Year 10 structures the topics and maintains a steady pressure so that students make the necessary intellectual effort. Year 11 students learn very well with both high and low attaining students working very hard to know and understand the subject material. Also, they concentrate very well on hearing the teacher and other students, and play a full role in the dialogue about the topic being studied. Learners with English as an additional language make strong progress. All teachers assess and feed back to students very well during lessons. Behaviour is directed very well, without fuss but with clear boundaries which students respect. All teachers have excellent skill and expertise in implementing the strategies chosen for the unit.
93. The curriculum for hearing impaired students offers full access to all subjects and experiences offered by the school. This high ambition is achieved. For example, hearing impaired students participate well in music and they study foreign languages. Some specialist support is provided in class. If need be, this is supplemented by one-to-one support, such as when hearing loss is profound. Students in Years 10 and 11 take a smaller number of GCSEs than many students, but are provided with additional sessions in the unit which support their progress in all their subjects. All students follow a life skills programme, run by the unit staff, with a strong focus on communication and coping skills. There is an impressive range of extra-curricular activities used very well by hearing impaired students. English and mathematics for Years 10 and 11 are provided by specialist teachers from the unit. Sixth-form students have full access to subjects effectively supported by tutorial sessions with unit staff. The provisions to meet the requirements of students' statements of special educational needs are met, though the provision of speech and language therapy is not secure. The school is sufficiently alert and demanding about this matter and about the other elements of provision where the school relies on provision from external agencies.
94. Assessment of hearing impaired students is very thorough. Subject departments assess and report on progress and attainment for these students, as for all others. Unit staff undertake extensive further assessments specific to hearing impairment. These include additional checks on literacy and numeracy and regular checks that audiological support is effective. Annual reviews of statement provision are held as required and are supported very well by reports both from school and from external agencies. Parents are fully informed and involved in review processes. The individual education plans are of good quality. They give very useful and workable advice. Main school staff know what needs each student has, and what strategies are to be followed. The targets in the individual education plans give students important advice about self-help and improvement.
95. The unit is very well led, with many excellent features. Provision is managed very effectively, securing very good outcomes for the students. An ambitious range of factors, in and beyond the school, are influenced and managed very well. These include contacts with examination boards, liaison with technical services and other external agencies. The many strengths, as reported in the previous report, are fully maintained. The unit is now a school-funded service. A key resource replacement issue remains unresolved. Students' learning relies on extensive use of spoken language. The hearing equipment is too old to be sufficiently reliable. The school is not yet in a position to use modern equipment. Other resource issues are steadily improving. The accommodation in the base area is now better than reported at the previous inspection, though still lacking double glazing. The acoustic environment around the school is good, with much carpeting and some double glazing. Unit staff have a very high level of expertise. Liaison with subject managers is very good. Overall, hearing impaired students' needs are so well met because of the excellent methodology, aims and priorities underpinning the work of the unit.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	190
	Sixth form	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students		57

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	9	40	68	59	14	0	0
Percentage	5	21	36	31	7	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	0	2	18	8	2	0	0
Percentage	0	7	60	27	7	0	0

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

Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	1518	121
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	515	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	62	6
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	321	10

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	182

Student mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	42

Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving
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72

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.1
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.7
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	180	124	304

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	83	106	100
	Girls	78	70	69
	Total	161	176	169
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	53 (59)	58 (52)	56 (55)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	67 (66)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	16 (21)	34 (28)	18 (18)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	73	94	102
	Girls	68	67	73
	Total	141	161	175
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	46 (55)	53 (55)	58 (42)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	17 (16)	36 (18)	20 (16)
	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	157	133	290

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	38	136	150
	Girls	49	118	123
	Total	87	254	273
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	30 (26)	88 (87)	94 (95)
	National	51 (48)	89 (91)	95 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per student	School	30.5 (29.3)
	National	34.6 (39.0)

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	24	18	42
	Average point score per candidate	11.9 (12.8)	13.4 (15.4)	12.5 (13.9)
National	Average point score per candidate	n/a (16.9)	n/a (17.7)	n/a (17.4)

		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	24	18	42	5	2	7
	Average point score per candidate	11.9	13.4	12.5	9.6	18	12

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.

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those students who achieved all they studied	School	0	n/a
	National		

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	871	263	8
White – Irish	57	0	0
White – any other White background	90	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	54	45	0
Mixed – White and Black African	16	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	15	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	18	1	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	248	34	1
Black or Black British – African	36	13	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	94	60	1
Chinese	9	0	0
Any other ethnic group	148	30	2
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table 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)	104.35
Number of students per qualified teacher	16.0

Financial year	2001/2002
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Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	33
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	£
Total income	6,928,781

Total aggregate hours worked per week	885
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Deployment of teachers: Y7– Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	25
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	24.9
Key Stage 4	22.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Total expenditure	6,826,449
Expenditure per student	4,107
Balance brought forward from previous year	240,500
Balance carried forward to next year	342,832

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	66
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	67.7

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2.5
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	4.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1639
Number of questionnaires returned	88

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	42	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	34	58	1	0	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	52	9	2	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	53	13	5	2
The teaching is good.	28	65	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	43	11	5	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	34	7	1	6
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	28	2	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	38	38	11	3	10
The school is well led and managed.	33	51	1	0	15
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	52	2	2	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	30	1	2	16

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Good teaching in the lessons observed.
- The positive attitudes of many students.
- The implementation of initiatives to improve literacy skills and attainment generally.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in the subject, which are below the national average.
- Increasing the sharing of the best teaching practice across the department.
- More application of ICT.

96. Overall standards in English are below national expectations. The attainment of students by the end of Year 9 in the 2002 national tests was below the national average and this was similar to results in the tests in 2001. Girls attained results closer to the national average than boys. The inspection confirmed that standards are below national expectations in the key areas of speaking, listening, reading, and especially writing. This represents satisfactory achievement by the great majority of students, including those with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and gifted and talented students, since students join the school in Year 7 with below average standards.
97. By the end of Year 9, students make satisfactory progress in learning how to comment upon and analyse a range of texts, and they begin to appreciate, for example, how in a book such as 'On Foot through Africa', the author uses language in a particular way to express feeling. Some of the analysis of John Clare's poem 'First Love' is of a high quality. Lower attaining students tend to describe rather than analyse texts and the consistency of spelling, grammar and punctuation in their writing remains a weakness for many. Students enjoy opportunities to read their work aloud, as seen for example, in a Year 9 lesson in which students discussed the different reporting methods of broadsheet and tabloid newspapers, although a substantial minority of students find it difficult to read with sustained accuracy or expression.
98. The percentage of students in Year 11 attaining an A*-C grade in the 2002 English language and literature examinations was well below the national average, especially for boys. Results did show an improvement on 2001, especially for English literature. The inspection confirmed that standards are below the national expectations. As with the younger age group, this represents satisfactory progress for students of all levels of ability, in relation to their prior attainment.
99. By the end of Year 11, students make satisfactory progress in learning how to analyse character in texts such as 'Romeo and Juliet' and become more aware of the historical context of a work such as Mary Shelley's 'Frankenstein'. Higher attaining students in particular show a good level of personal response. Lower attaining students experience more difficulty in demonstrating their insight into particular texts. Students make satisfactory progress in developing their ability to argue a point of view verbally, as observed in lessons in which Year 11 students discussed the use of persuasive language in the media. Students with English as an additional language make

satisfactory progress in relation to their acquisition of English skills. Students with special educational needs make good progress in Years 7 to 9 with their English where this has been identified as a problem and, in Years 10 and 11, they make satisfactory progress.

100. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, although it was good in many lessons observed during the inspection. There were several strengths in the good lessons observed and they resulted in good learning. Teachers have high and challenging expectations to which most students respond well. Teachers use questioning and explanation well to consolidate and extend knowledge. This was a feature of several lessons, for example one in Year 9 in which students explored the concept of 'dilemmas' enthusiastically. Lessons are well planned and managed so that students progress satisfactorily as they move from one activity to another. This was particularly evident in a Year 10 lesson in which students explored characterisation in 'A View from the Bridge'; the teaching was lively and the teacher took care to involve all the students in discussion so that they succeeded in developing their ability to argue a point of view. Marking is constructive and thorough and teachers give clear indications of how students can improve their work, as in a Year 11 lesson in which the teacher gave very clear indications of how students could improve their analysis of persuasive writing and so achieve higher grades in the examination.
101. Where teaching is less effective, lessons are occasionally over teacher-directed, especially for higher attaining students, and this restricts their learning opportunities. This was evident in a Year 11 lesson in which able students were keen to discuss the reporting of the firefighters' dispute; they were given restricted opportunities to debate their views. Occasional difficulties in the management of challenging behaviour restrict learning in a small minority of lessons. However, most students have positive attitudes and respond keenly to well-paced activities.
102. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The relatively new head of department has worked hard to produce new and relevant policies and schemes of work. There is good assessment of students' work and this is used well to support curriculum planning. The commendable effort that has gone into implementing initiatives to raise attainment, such as transition units to cater for incoming students in Year 7, and the various strategies to improve literacy, especially of boys, are beginning to have an impact on raising standards. Activities, such as theatre trips, successfully broaden the English curriculum. The department makes a good contribution to moral and social provision and to citizenship, as seen during the inspection when students discussed issues such as mixed-race marriages and the morality of key workers striking. The balance of staffing between specialist and non-specialist teachers has improved. The use of ICT is relatively undeveloped, partly because enthusiastic teachers have limited access to facilities.
103. At the time of the last inspection in 1996, standards were below national averages, as now. Attitudes remain good and the teaching observed still has many strengths. The quality of monitoring and assessment has improved. Therefore, overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

Literacy across the curriculum

104. The school's strategy for improving literacy is being implemented satisfactorily. The school has taken account of the undeveloped literacy skills of many of its students by putting into place a more co-ordinated approach to improving standards of speaking, listening, reading and writing across all subject areas. Training of staff in developing

these skills has produced a more co-ordinated approach to aspects such as improving students' technical vocabulary. Training has been augmented by valued activities such as summer schools for students in transition from their primary schools, and by encouraging reading in a regular library club. The school monitors its literacy provision, which is having a varied impact. Key terminology is emphasised in history. The history department also encourages discussion, as witnessed in a Year 11 debate about Renaissance medicine. In science, teachers correct spellings, target good sentence construction and encourage extended writing, as seen in a Year 7 exercise on woodlice. In ICT lessons, students are encouraged at the end of lessons to write sentences incorporating the key vocabulary they have just learned. However, current practice is not yet fully consistent across and between departments. For example, opportunities to develop technical vocabulary are sometimes missed and reading is not sufficiently targeted in modern foreign languages. The correction of spelling and insistence on accurate grammar and punctuation are not consistent. However, the increasing focus on developing good literacy skills is beginning to have a positive impact on standards, especially in the 11 to 14 age group.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Students' positive attitudes to mathematics.
- Students' good relationships with their teachers.
- Teachers' good knowledge and understanding of their subject.
- The high quality of schemes of work and individual lesson plans.

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT to support teaching and learning.
- The assessment of students' work to inform areas for improvement in teaching and learning.
- Greater opportunities for the students to learn independently.
- The level of support given to lower attaining students and those with special educational needs.
- The development of numeracy across other curriculum subjects.

105. The attainment of students on entry to the school in Year 7 is below national standards. The overall results of National Curriculum tests for 14-year-olds in 2002 were below national expectations but were above average when compared with similar schools. Results in the 2002 tests were better than 2001 in the percentage of students attaining Level 5 or better and those attaining Level 6 or better. The boys did better than the girls. Performance of students in mathematics was similar to that in science and better than in English. Results have shown a steady improvement during the period 1997 to 2002 and this represents satisfactory achievement by these students on their attainment in mathematics on entry to the school. In work seen during the inspection in Years 7 to 9, attainment was close to that expected nationally and this was closely linked to the quality of teaching observed in a number of lessons and the nature of teachers' planning.

106. The percentage of students in 2002 attaining grades A*-C and A*-G was well below the national average, a similar position to 2001. However, the results in 2002 did show a marked improvement in attainment at grades A*-C, moving from 22.3 per cent in 2001 to 35.8 per cent in 2002 and, in terms of the average point scores, attainment was well

above that of similar schools. The standard of work seen in Years 10 and 11 was below the national expectation and this represents satisfactory achievement in relation to their attainment in the subject at the end of Year 9. This improvement is linked to the improved planning of the teaching in the subject. By the end of Year 11, students gained better results in mathematics than in English and science.

107. The quality of teaching throughout all year groups is satisfactory, being slightly better in Years 7, 8 and 9, where the quality of teaching was good in a small number of lessons. Effective teaching is characterised by well-planned lessons, with lesson objectives shared with the students. They start with a warm-up activity where students practice knowledge and skills learnt previously, move crisply into the main teaching activity and end with a summary activity where students are able to demonstrate what they have learnt during the lesson. Lower attaining students in a Year 8 lesson started the lesson by completing a series of mental calculation additions within a given time frame. The lesson then moved on to calculating perimeters of a number of shapes. The teacher questioned the class effectively and allowed the students time to think, with the clear expectation that they would have to explain their answers. Throughout the lesson, a brisk pace was maintained, the teacher encouraging students and praising their efforts. Students were given clear targets to meet and work at, and differing levels of difficulty were provided in order to meet the needs of every student. In particular, modified tasks were provided for a student with a statement of educational needs. The summary enabled students to demonstrate that they had understood the objectives of the lesson and gave the teacher the opportunity to assess progress made by the students. The quality of marking is variable. It is better in Years 7, 8 and 9 where teachers' comments give guidance to students on ways to improve standards. However, far too often, marking is cursory, with no comments or guidance provided. In one Year 7 class, marking was limited to ticks and, in some cases, students' books had not been marked for over three weeks. There was no evidence in lessons observed of students being given the opportunity to work in pairs or small groups. The evidence of ICT in lessons was limited to the use of overhead projectors. There was no evidence in lessons observed of computers being used as part of the teaching and learning process.
108. The quality of learning was satisfactory overall. Students generally worked steadily throughout lessons, maintaining concentration and attempting to complete tasks set. The overall progress by students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language was equal to that of other students. In Years 7 to 9, students with special educational needs often make good progress in relation to mathematical targets set in their individual education plans. In many of the lower attaining groups, teachers demonstrate sensitive and clear knowledge of students' needs. In one Year 8 lesson, where a teaching assistant was present, her contribution was effective in promoting learning by displaying her understanding of students' needs, using carefully structured questions to enable students to understand tasks they faced. Further encouragement by the teaching assistant gave students the confidence to attempt tasks they had previously found daunting. However, the use of teaching assistants was only observed in a small number of lessons. While students are aware of their target grades in GCSE examinations, very few are able to identify their strengths and areas for improvement.
109. The newly appointed head of department gives satisfactory leadership in mathematics. Schemes of work and departmental documentation have improved since the last inspection. Assessment of students' progress is primarily focused on national tests and mainly used to place students into teaching groups. However, detailed analysis of tests to provide information on which aspects of the curriculum are being tackled successfully and which need further attention, is not carried out in a detailed or

systematic way. The head of department is conscious of the need to adopt a more strategic, long-term view for the development of mathematics in the school. The introduction of the mathematics strand of the Key Stage 3 Strategy has prompted changes in teaching and learning and is reflected in improved results. The most significant of these changes has been in the planning of lessons, the teaching styles used and levels of assessment, although the latter is still unsatisfactory. Similar changes are taking place for GCSE lessons and this is reflected in the higher standards seen last year and during the inspection.

Numeracy across the curriculum

110. Most students, especially those aged between 11 and 14 years, have a reasonable knowledge of number gained from lessons in their primary schools, where the National Numeracy Strategy is being used. Teaching of basic numeracy skills by specialist mathematics teachers is effective so that students are generally able to use their skills adequately to meet the needs of other subjects. All teachers within the school have received training in the development of numeracy across the curriculum, but limited evidence of its impact was observed. In a Year 10 geography lesson, students had to produce budget costs in an investigation. This led to some very effective calculation. In a Year 7 geography lesson, students received clear explanations about grid references. The clear use of x and y axes was understood by students. Some science lessons included use of graphs and numerical calculations. This was particularly evident in science investigations. However, in too many lessons observed, there was little or no evidence of planning for numeracy or of it being used in lessons. Overall, the application of mathematical skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Support for boys of African and Caribbean heritage is good.
- Science investigations in Years 10 and 11 have improved since the last inspection.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in the subject, especially at GCSE, where they are well below the national average.
- The subject's contribution to the development of citizenship, spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the students, which is unsatisfactory.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning, particularly through lesson observations, which is unsatisfactory.
- The quality of the learning environment, which is unsatisfactory.
- Management of the behaviour of some students, which is inconsistent.
- Management and leadership of the department, which are unsatisfactory.

111. In 2002, standards in the national tests at the age of 14 in Year 9 were below the national average. The attainment of these students was below average on entry to the school in Year 7 so their achievement has been satisfactory. The school's performance in these tests was above average in comparison with similar schools. There has been a big improvement in the number of students obtaining Level 5 and above and the trend for improvement is better than the national trend. At the end of Year 9, the performance of girls, in terms of their average point score, was below that of boys, where nationally they are similar. The average point score for students at the age of 14 in the national

tests in science is below that in English and mathematics. There was a slight improvement of one per cent in the percentage of students attaining Level 5 or better in the 2002 results, compared with 2001.

112. In 2001, the percentage of students obtaining GCSE A*-C grades was significantly below the national average. The 2002 results showed a further drop to 23 per cent, despite increased support for targeted students and teachers. The 2002 GCSE A*-C grade result is well below the target set by the school.
113. By the end of Year 9, students' attainment is below national expectations. This represents satisfactory achievement on their attainment in the subject on entry to the school in Year 7. The highest attaining students in Year 9 have good knowledge and understanding of recent work on the periodic table, food chains and food webs and can design simple experiments to test a hypothesis. The majority of students understand the concept of a fair test but some are unsure about the term 'variable' in the context of an investigation. The lowest attaining students in Year 9 have difficulty with scientific terminology but understand the concept of insulation. The recent improvement in performance at the age of 14 has been brought about through staff development, the introduction of new schemes of work, the introduction of a new course and the provision of revision support materials.
114. By the end of Year 11, attainment is well below national expectations, students have not progressed at the expected rate and their achievement is unsatisfactory. This is partially as a result of staffing difficulties in previous years. The highest attaining students in Year 11 can design their own experiments and collect valid data, for example that related to rates of reactions. They have an understanding of the effects of changing surface area and concentration on rates of reaction. The lowest attaining students understand and can explain the reasons for mutations in simple terms. The specialist teacher, who is targeted to support African and Caribbean boys and who is a trained scientist, is having success and their achievement is better than that of their peers.
115. Since the last inspection, there has been a satisfactory improvement in the performance of students in Years 7 to 9 but an unsatisfactory one at GCSE. Time allocation in Years 7 to 9 is now sufficient to deliver the requirements of the National Curriculum, although last year it was not. All students still have too few opportunities to use ICT as a means of developing their learning; this was also reported in the previous inspection. The overall improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.
116. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The quality of teaching observed was good or very good in three-quarters of the lessons observed and, in 93 per cent of lessons, it was satisfactory or better. The quality of teaching was better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 to 11. Where the teaching was good or better, it had been enhanced by the planning of activities within the lesson so that students were aware of the progress they were making. Generally, teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding. Expectations of the students are generally appropriate with some challenging work being carried out. Evidence of this was seen in the lessons relating to investigatory work. Lessons are very carefully planned but a limited range of research and audio-visual activities are used. Students are placed in the appropriate class according to their attainment and the work given to them reflects what the class should be able to do. Within these groups, activities are sometimes designed for individual students. Good examples of independent learning were seen in the groups being taught certificate science and these students were achieving well because of this. In some classes, students show poor study habits and this is linked to over-formal teaching and the over-use of worksheets. An analysis of the use of the time out room for this academic year

shows that science is using this facility more than any other department. In some lessons, poor attitudes by a minority of students are adversely affecting learning; this was particularly noticeable among the younger students.

117. The teachers adhere to the school marking policy. National Curriculum levels and test results are to be found in the class teachers' record books but many students are unclear as to their current National Curriculum level. During marking, class teachers provide supportive comments, but few targets explaining how the students can improve are given. The quality of reports is unsatisfactory. They do not provide information about what the students can do or how they can improve their work. The use of homework to support students' learning is not consistent, although good practice was seen with work set for different abilities. Some inspired teaching was seen, such as the work with higher attaining students in Year 10 studying the solar system and the universe and with the lower attaining students studying waves. In both these lessons, the students were making good progress.
118. Leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. There is a lack of monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in lessons, although some book reviews have taken place. The department improvement plan has had little impact on the raising of attainment, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Whilst the schemes of work contain references to science's contribution to the development of ICT skills, there has been little impact on the students' learning in this area. Planning for, and the delivery of, citizenship, spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is unsatisfactory. This contrasts with the satisfactory contribution made towards the development of students' literacy and numeracy. There has been a high staff turnover in recent years and this instability has adversely affected the work of the department. Difficulties with the provision of technical support have also created problems. The existing team of technicians is working extremely hard to negate the effects of these difficulties. The quality of assessment and reporting is unsatisfactory, although some progress has been made towards the setting of targets for students. Accommodation has improved since the last inspection, with a recent improvement in display, but the learning environment does little to encourage high quality teaching and learning. Some areas are tired-looking and untidy. Despite substantial allocation of funds, the lack of resources is adversely affecting teaching and learning.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- GCSE results, which are improving year on year, and which are better in art and design than in many other subjects.
- The contribution of literacy within the art and design curriculum, which is contributing to the raising of standards.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment, monitoring and evaluation of students' work, which is unsatisfactory because students are not well enough informed about their progress and how they might improve.
- The planning of the curriculum, which is unsatisfactory because assessment information is not being used enough to help in the process.

119. In 2002, students' results in the GCSE examination were below the national average. This has been a consistent pattern for a number of years, but the results are improving

steadily from year-to-year and the gap between the school's and national results is narrowing. In 2001, the boys' results were better than the girls' and higher than the national average. Students do better in art and design when compared to other subjects in the school.

120. Inspection evidence indicates that when students enter the school at age eleven, standards in art and design are in line with national expectations. Students' attainment by the end of Year 9 is in line with national expectations and their achievement is satisfactory. Those currently in Year 8 are attaining standards in line with national expectations. This was seen, for example, in their figure drawings, which show a good use of line and tone and good analysis of body proportions. The standard of work currently seen in Year 9 is also in line with national expectations. This was seen in a project on Turkish Iznik pottery, where students traced drawings of animal and plant forms to make design motifs for decorating their pots.
121. The standard of work produced by GCSE students in Years 10 and 11 is in line with the national expectations. This was seen, for example, in a Year 10 lesson where students were critical of 'op art' and used this concept to produce paintings incorporating the influence of another artist to a satisfactory standard. Similar standards were seen in a Year 11 lesson where students looked at reproductions of surrealist paintings, wrote about them and then made drawings of objects similar to the ones in the reproductions. The achievement of these students in lessons observed and over time is satisfactory in the light of their standards on starting the subject in Year 10. Students with English as an additional language and with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers.
122. In this and other lessons, the need for students to write and speak about their own work and that of others made a good contribution to literacy skills and helped them to focus on important aspects of their work in art and design.
123. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and, in a number of lessons observed during the inspection, was better than this. In many lessons, planning is a strength, seen, for example in a Year 11 lesson where the teacher's own visual resources were used in the introduction to stimulate work and to raise standards. Teachers use demonstration well to support learning, as seen in a Year 7 lesson on printmaking. This, coupled with the good use of questioning during the demonstration, ensures that students understand what they are expected to do. Well-structured lessons broken down into easily understood elements, often with a strong literacy content, are a feature of the best teaching. This ensures students acquire skills in the specialist language of art. This was seen in a Year 9 lesson where students converted portrait drawings into an African-type mask based on a cubist theme. Teachers ensure that work is always understandable to students with special educational needs and students who have English as an additional language, who make good progress and whose results match those of their peers. The majority of students respond well to their art and design lessons but a minority of students disrupt lessons, which is a result of poor lesson planning that does not take predict pitfalls, or because of inappropriate seating arrangements.
124. A weakness in teaching is the setting and marking of homework. An analysis of teachers' markbooks and observations in the classrooms show that homework has not been set regularly. Where homework has been set, it has not been completed by all students and records have not been kept up to date by all teachers. In addition, the procedures for monitoring students' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory and

there is a lack of information on which curriculum planning can be based and this is unsatisfactory.

125. The use of computers has an inadequate impact on learning throughout Years 7 to 9. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting head of department has a good understanding of what needs to be done in both the long- and short-term to raise standards. This task is being tackled. The assessment of students' work and curriculum review are high on the list of priorities.
126. Since the last inspection, GCSE results have improved steadily and the indications are that this trend will continue. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

CITIZENSHIP

The overall provision for citizenship is **satisfactory**. The curriculum is covered in the personal, social, health and citizenship course.

Strengths

- The commitment and enthusiasm of the subject leader, who introduced the personal, social, health and citizenship course, is good.
- The opportunities for students to participate in school through such things as the school council are good.
- The Junior Citizenship Award programme in Year 10 is good.
- The use that the school makes of external support agencies, such as the local police, is very good.

Areas for improvement

- All departments have not completed an audit of their subject to explicitly identify the contribution that it makes to citizenship and this is unsatisfactory.
- The variety of teaching strategies that are used to ensure that students fully develop the skills of enquiry and communication is not broad enough.
- The quality of teaching of those teaching the explicit part of the course by providing training to ensure greater consistency.

127. Overall standards are in line with national expectations. Elements of the citizenship curriculum have been part of the personal, social and health education course for some time but the explicit focus on citizenship only commenced in September 2002. Assessment tasks are planned but, as yet, no clear information is available on the standards attained. The standards varied considerably. In the majority of lessons seen, students are making good progress. They are beginning to explore some of the important elements of the subject and are able to make a satisfactory contribution in class discussions. A Year 8 group were thoughtfully discussing the recent industrial action by the firefighters and in the process developing their understanding of democracy.
128. In a minority of lessons this was not the case. Students were unable to understand the material provided and were uninterested in the subject. They had a very limited knowledge of the subject. A Year 8 class looking at the life of a Member of Parliament (MP) had no real understanding of the subject. Their progress was unsatisfactory but overall achievement is satisfactory.

129. The school provides a number of opportunities for students to develop the skills of participation and responsible action. Students are elected to an active school council which considers important school issues. Prefects in Year 11 provide good support in a number of areas. Year 10 students volunteer to take part in the Junior Citizenship Award. Some subjects place a satisfactory emphasis on students developing independent learning skills, but this is not consistent throughout the school. Students are encouraged to complete a log of the work that they do in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) but this tends to be very simply and quickly done with no in-depth self-evaluation. Students in Year 11 also keep a 'skills log' which enables them to track their progress in the development of key skills.
130. Although there is considerable variation in the quality of teaching, overall it is satisfactory. The majority of teachers have a good knowledge of the main curriculum content and plan lessons well. They use a variety of teaching methods to ensure that lessons proceed at a good pace. A Year 9 teacher was effectively using a ranking exercise to stimulate a class discussion on prejudice and discrimination. In a minority of lessons, this is not the case. The head of department has prepared thorough lesson plans with good resources. These are not always 'owned' by the teachers and, consequently, their use of both resources and lesson plans is somewhat rigid, and lessons lack vigour and challenge. The heavy reliance on worksheets and photocopied information leaflets in these lessons does not encourage independent learning.
131. The quality of learning varies considerably. In the good lessons, students are interested and involved. They play an active part in discussions and are already demonstrating the ability to weigh-up the evidence and discuss issues confidently. A Year 8 class was enthusiastically discussing local issues and writing letters to the local MP. In a minority of lessons, students were bored, could not fully understand the information they were being inundated with and they were uninterested in the subject.
132. The overall management of the subject is satisfactory. The commitment and organisation of the personal, social health and citizenship education subject leader is good. She has an excellent relationship with a number of external agencies that come into school to support the teaching. The existing assessment procedures are currently being revised. Others do not always share her enthusiasm. There is no evidence that any other subject has seriously tackled the need to identify the elements of citizenship in their subject. As a result, opportunities to develop citizenship systematically throughout the curriculum are missed.
133. The school has made good progress in implementing the introduction of citizenship into the curriculum. There are plans to provide more training and to ensure that all subjects include citizenship as an element in their teaching.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Improvements in the quality of teaching which are beginning to raise standards.
- Good management, which is providing clear guidance for such things as assessment which is helping teachers to focus more accurately on the potential of students.

Areas for improvement

- The attendance of some students is unsatisfactory which results in them failing to achieve an A*-G grade at GCSE.
- The number of GCSE grades at A*-C, particularly among boys.
- The use of ICT to improve learning within design and technology is unsatisfactory.

134. In 2001, the performance of the students in the GCSE results was well below the national average, with girls doing significantly better than boys, and both boys and girls doing less well in design and technology than in their other subjects. In 2002, the GCSE results showed an improvement in graphics products and resistant materials, which contributed to the overall rise in the number of students gaining A*-C grades but standards were below average overall. The number of students who gained GCSE grades A*-G was below the national average overall, which was mainly due to poor attendance by a number of Year 11 students.
135. When students enter the school in Year 7, attainment in design and technology is well below national expectations. Those who were aged 14 in Year 9 in 2002, attained results below the national expectations. In lessons and in the work seen in Years 7 to 9, attainment is much nearer the national expectation and their achievement is good. For example, in a Year 8 resistant materials lesson, where students were designing and making an extending arm, students experimented with levers and pivot mechanisms to the standard expected. Expected standards were seen in a Year 9 food technology lesson where students investigated the working characteristics of puff pastry in the edible container project. In this project, folders were well structured, showing standards in investigation, evaluation and presentation in line with national expectations. Standards below those expected nationally were seen in a resistant materials lesson where students made wooden boxes. The construction of the lap joints was below expectations with the majority of students being unable to cut accurately with a tenon saw. The progress of students with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs is satisfactory, mainly because there is not always sufficient discrete support for them in these lessons.
136. In lessons and in the work seen of students approaching the end of the GCSE courses, standards were below those expected nationally. The majority of students, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, meet their potential in relation to the targets set for them by their teachers. For example, in a Year 11 graphics products lesson, where students are designing a point of sale display, the standard of graphics and presentation relates well to students' prior attainment and to the targets set by the teacher. The area of weakness, which is evident in all GCSE technology courses, is the significant number of students who will not obtain a GCSE grade because of their high level of absence from lessons. Those who do complete the course achieve satisfactorily but those who do not underachieve.
137. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good teaching and learning were seen in about half of the lessons observed. Lessons were well structured and learning objectives were shared with students at the start of each lesson, this ensured that students had a good understanding of what they need to do, for example in a Year 10 resistant materials lesson where students analysed telephone handsets and made models based on the information. Because the lesson was well structured, students understood fully how to approach their work and standards were raised. Demonstrations are used well in some lessons and this helps students to understand the working characteristics of materials, and which tools are best suited for a specific job. This was seen to good effect in a Year 8 resistant materials lesson where the good demonstration, coupled with a running commentary and good questions from the

teacher, increased students' understanding of how to cut acrylic. In contrast to this, in a lesson where students were making lap joints, the poor matching of tools to the job meant that standards were below those expected. The poor matching of teaching style and lesson organisation to the needs of students meant that, on occasions, teaching and learning were unsatisfactory. For example, in Year 10 food technology lesson, the introduction was too long and the organisation of the distribution of materials was inefficient. As a result, the pace of the lesson was too slow and this had an adverse impact on student motivation and the quality of learning. Teachers have a good understanding of the requirements of the GCSE courses which is evident in the thorough assessment of course work seen, for example in a Year 11 textiles lesson. This helps to raise standards. Students generally respond well to work in design and technology. In over half the lessons seen, attitudes were good and never less than satisfactory. The few isolated incidents of poor behaviour were well managed by teachers and, in most lessons, students worked productively.

138. The management of the faculty is good. The work of teachers is regularly monitored and good practice is shared within the faculty. The planning of lessons and projects has improved, and this is contributing to the raising of standards. The coherent assessment procedures now in place in Years 7 to 9 reflect the guidance that has been provided by the head of faculty and is helping to improve the understanding teachers have about the attainment and progress of their students. The increased use of data about overall attainment is helping teachers gain a better picture of the potential of their students, particularly at GCSE. The curriculum for all students has been reviewed, which has led to decisions such as the changing of examination boards to match well the needs of students. The content of the curriculum for younger students, in particular, has not been reviewed sufficiently to ensure that computers have a much greater impact on their work and also to ensure that learning about such things as structures and systems and control is more secure.

139. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards have improved and there is no longer a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching and learning. The faculty development plan indicates that there is a good understanding of where future improvements need to be made. This is an improving faculty, which has the shared commitment to improve still further.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Students' achievement is good in Years 10 and 11 and attainment is above average for the school.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, with good development of geographical skills, especially geographical vocabulary, mapwork and case studies.
- Leadership and management of the department are good.
- Accommodation is very good and resources have improved.

Areas for improvement

- Attainment at both the ages of 14 and 16 is below the national average.
- Progress in Years 7 to 9 is inconsistent, linked to the quality of teaching and the behaviour of students.

140. Attainment of students in geography at the age of 14 is below that expected nationally and their achievement is satisfactory in relation to their standards on entry to the

school in Year 7. This is reflected in the standards reached in the teacher assessments in the National Curriculum tests in 2002. The GCSE geography results in 2002 were below those nationally and similar to those attained in 2001 and, for these students, their achievement was satisfactory. In the work seen during the inspection, standards were above those expected nationally and this reflected good achievement by these students since the start of the course in Year 10. This is a reflection of the very good teaching observed during the inspection in Years 10 and 11.

141. The quality of teaching is good. Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was judged good or better. Lessons were unsatisfactory on two occasions and, on both occasions, it was closely linked to poor behaviour management. Teaching is consistently good or better in Years 10 and 11. Students frequently respond with interest and most maintain their attention very well. Behaviour is frequently very good but, where it is unsatisfactory, it seriously detracts from both learning and progress, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Overall, the quality of teaching produces a good response. There is good development of students' geographical skills, especially geographical vocabulary, mapwork and case studies. There is fieldwork in each year, most centred on Swanage where some excellent work is produced on flood control schemes. Marking is very thorough and teachers use a full range of strategies designed to help students improve.
142. Leadership and management of the department are good. There is a clear educational focus to the work of the department, especially in raising standards attained in tests and examinations. The head of department has high expectations of what students should achieve and these are shared by teachers. Departmental planning and documentation are good. Schemes of work have been extensively re-written and are reviewed annually. Assessment in geography is good. Much has been done to develop the tracking of student progress through improved record-keeping. Careful feedback is given to students on individual assessment sheets. Self-assessment is encouraged, mark schemes are shared and students are sometimes paired for peer assessment and the impact is seen in the improved attainment, especially in Years 10 and 11.
143. There is a good contribution to students' personal development. Students are taught to be concerned for the world environment and there is an inherent respect for different cultures, often the focus of geographical enquiry. For example, students showed considerable empathy with the problems of shanty towns in Mexico.
144. Accommodation is very good and resources have improved considerably with the introduction of new textbooks. There is an excellent weather station monitored electronically on the classroom computer and there is an excellent range of ICT applications in most classes which are used well.
145. The improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory in terms of the standards achieved and improvement made to the curriculum offered to the students.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- The very good improvement in standards at GCSE, particularly the 17 per cent of students at the highest grades A*/A in the 2002 results.
- The popularity of history as an option choice is very good.
- The shared commitment of the history department to improvement is very good.
- The quality of marking is good.

Areas for improvement

- To revise the schemes of work to provide better guidance to those teaching history.
- To improve resources for GCSE which are unsatisfactory.

146. The students' performance in GCSE examinations over the past three years has been improving, having initially fallen since the last inspection. In 2001, student performance was below the national average, as it was in 2002. However, in the 2002 examinations, the percentage achieving A*-C grades was much higher, particularly at the highest grades of A* and A. This is the result of the good teaching by a strong team of history teachers. The subject remains a very popular option choice and boys and girls are achieving similar standards. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of students' work confirm that the standards of work being achieved by students in the current Years 10 and 11 are close to national expectations. This represents good achievement over the two years of the course for all students, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language. All students describe historical features well, such as the Roman system of public health. Middle and higher attaining students effectively analyse and then explain complex historical issues, such as how changes in medicine were affected by factors such as war and religion. The relative weakness in the work of lower attaining students is their failure to use accurate historical detail to support their answers. Many students have weaknesses in their ability to judge the usefulness of historical sources.
147. The standards of work achieved by the students in the current Year 9 are just below national expectations. This represents satisfactory achievement for the majority of students, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language. Students of all abilities demonstrate increasingly good factual knowledge and understanding, such as the Year 9 students who explained correctly what nineteenth century factory conditions were like in their writing in the role of factory inspectors. Students demonstrate an increasing ability to handle historical sources and interpretations such as video material reconstructing life inside a cotton mill in Manchester.
148. The quality of teaching and learning in history is good in both Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 to 11. Strong features of the most effective teaching are the good relationships between teachers and students. Teachers' management of students is generally very good when dealing with the poor behaviour of a minority of students. Lesson planning is a strong feature, both of individual lessons and of a series of lessons. Year 9 students were able to demonstrate a good understanding of working conditions in nineteenth century cotton mills during a role-play as a result of the teacher's careful preparation through a series of lessons where they had examined a range of historical sources such as video, parliamentary reports and visual images. Teacher-use of visual images makes a major contribution to student understanding, as was demonstrated by a Year 7 class who showed their good understanding of medieval life when recapping their previous work on a set of colour picture sources. The best teaching is also enhanced by very sharp teacher questioning which forces students to refine their thinking and to more carefully explain their ideas. At GCSE, the teachers' knowledge of the syllabus enables them to prepare students very well for their examinations. In a Year 11 lesson, the students were forced to think about the significance of the work of Ambroise Pare, rather than just producing a mini biography. As a result, by the end of the lesson, the students engaged in a spontaneous discussion of what influenced his discovery. Another strong feature at GCSE is the way in which teachers give students the basic information and then use the lesson time to force their students to think hard in order to strengthen their understanding, as was seen in lessons on Roman public health and on the impact of the Renaissance.

149. The leadership of history is good. There have been a number of satisfactory improvements since the last inspection, most notably the improved examination results from the consistently high numbers opting for history at GCSE. Other improvements have been made to the system for assessing students' work in Years 7 to 9 and the head of history now monitors teaching and learning in history through lesson observation. The current schemes of work do not give sufficient guidance to all those teaching history, and they do not currently specify the expectations for student attainment at each level of ability. The recent changes in curriculum time in Years 7 to 9 should ensure better coverage of the twentieth century area of study once they have been worked through but there is still insufficient coverage of local history. Resources for history are only just satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and unsatisfactory for GCSE. There is a clear need for more up-to-date textbook materials that will help to enrich and deepen students' understanding of past societies. Effective use is being made of ICT to support student enquiry by making a far wider range of source material available to them. There has been satisfactory improvement in history since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Good leadership and support for other teachers by the ICT co-ordinator.
- Individual students, including those with learning difficulties, in ICT classes are well supported.
- Well-documented schemes of work, lesson plans and assessment in Years 7 and 9.

Areas for improvement

- Provision of discrete ICT classes in Year 8 to provide continuity and progression at Key Stage 3.
- The application of ICT across the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 to broaden the provision in line with the National Curriculum.
- To recruit additional full-time specialist teachers of ICT.
- To extend the professional development of all teachers in ICT to raise their confidence and expertise.

150. Standards are below the national expectation by the end of Year 9. This represents satisfactory achievement by the students on their standards in the subject on entry to the school in Year 7. This is largely due to the gap in the provision of discrete ICT lessons in Year 8. The standards obtained in the Key Skills course in Years 10 and 11 are in line with the national expectations. There is insufficient use of ICT across the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 and, therefore, standards of students overall in this key skill are below the national expectation. This represents satisfactory achievement on the standards they have brought to the subject at the start of Year 10. The achievement of students with English as an additional language is similar to that of their peers but students with special educational needs receive some good support and their progress is good.

151. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Where discrete teaching takes place in Years 7 and 9, teachers plan well, have good subject knowledge, manage students well and use resources effectively. In these circumstances, students learn well, acquiring good ICT skills, and teaching and learning in Years 7 and 9 are good. In

Years 10 and 11 they are satisfactory overall in the discrete ICT lessons but there is insufficient use of assessment to show students how to improve.

152. The curriculum on offer does not meet requirements. The lack of discrete ICT lessons in Year 8 hinders students' progress and is not taken up consistently across all the other subjects. There is insufficient emphasis on ICT as a key skill for all students in Years 10 and 11 and this is unsatisfactory. There is very good equality of access to the ICT facilities that are available.
153. Leadership and management of the subject are good and there is a clear direction and a very good commitment to improving the work of the department. The resources that are available are good but they are not sufficient for a school the size of Sedgehill. The quality of specialist staff in the school is good but they are insufficient to cover the needs of the subject. There is satisfactory monitoring and evaluation but the school as a whole has not taken sufficient action to keep ahead of the developments in this subject since the last inspection. Therefore, the improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Teachers' good subject knowledge.
- The leadership of the head of department is providing a good sense of direction.
- Improved and improving departmental documentation.

Areas for improvement

- Attainment in French, which is significantly below national expectations.
- Target setting related to attainment in specific language skills, which is unsatisfactory.
- The effective use of ICT, which is unsatisfactory.

154. Results at GCSE examinations in French in recent years have shown a steady decline in the proportion of candidates who achieved A*-C grades and have been well below the national average. The A*-G pass rate was also below the national average. The results for 2002 indicate this trend has not been reversed in French and, although there has been some improvement in Italian, results remain below the national average. Girls outperformed boys in line with national gender differences. Staffing problems have disrupted continuity and progression in many classes and are a major reason for falling standards.
155. In work seen, the standard of work of students in Year 9 is in line with national expectations. Higher and lower attaining students are developing listening skills well. Higher attaining students show good understanding of the past tense in written work. Reading for comprehension is not always secure. There is insufficient reading aloud in class to boost oral confidence and to improve pronunciation. Knowledge and understanding of grammar have insufficient regular reinforcement. However, these standards represent satisfactory achievement on students' attainment in the subject over the three years.
156. The standard of work seen by students in Year 11 is below national expectations. Higher attaining students demonstrate good knowledge of vocabulary and good levels of pronunciation. They speak well in situations controlled by the teacher but are much less

confident when asked questions of a general nature based on previous learning. Lower attaining students show good understanding of short, written extracts on familiar topics. They make brief, appropriate responses with comprehensible pronunciation but their recall of previous learning is also insecure. This represents satisfactory achievement on their standards when they started the GCSE course in Year 10.

157. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. There are several elements of good teaching in lessons throughout the school. Teachers use the foreign language extensively and so set their students an appropriate challenge. Their management of students is good. In most lessons, teachers provide a variety of appropriate activities. With some teaching groups, however, there is a tendency to teach to one level and not to discriminate between individual students' needs. There is inconsistency of practice in the marking of students' work. There is insufficient awareness among students of the levels of their performance. They do not have a clear understanding of what they need to do in order to raise their standards.
158. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department has identified areas for improvement and is developing, with her colleagues, a shared vision relating to the raising of standards. Disruption to staffing during the year prior to the inspection has hindered the development of systems for monitoring teachers but there has been the resumption of a more formal programme of identifying and extending the sharing of good practice that already takes place. Assessment is being improved but there is insufficient clarity in targets for students' improvement linked to National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades and there is insufficient consistent use of targets across the department. This results in students having an unsatisfactory self-knowledge of their own learning and does not encourage them to work effectively. Whilst many of the resources are good, there is insufficient use of ICT to help raise standards. Overall, the improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- The leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Standards attained in the subject, which are much higher than many other subjects.
- The contribution of peripatetic music teachers, which is very good.
- The extra-curricular provision, which is very good.

Areas for improvement

- Use of ICT where statutory requirements are not met.
- Consistently effective classroom management.
- Increasing the variety of activity in lessons, particularly singing.
- The use of ICT is unsatisfactory.

159. This is a well-organised department where standards of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good features. Areas for development highlighted in the previous inspection have been largely tackled, for example improving the assessment and monitoring of students' progress and improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

160. Schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 provide a range of learning experiences in which performing, listening and composing are suitably integrated. Students respond positively

to opportunities to explore sounds in a range of activities. A large number of students enter the school with below average attainment but steady progress is made with many of the students at the end of Year 9 working at the standard expected nationally. This represents good achievement by the students on the standards they demonstrate on their entry to the school in Year 7. The progress of students with English as an additional language and with special educational needs is partly dependent on the support that they receive and is satisfactory overall.

161. In Years 10 and 11, students taking GCSE follow a syllabus with an emphasis on performing. In performing and composing, standards are generally in line with those expected and frequently higher. Students perform with high levels of accuracy and conviction, both individually and in ensemble work. They are encouraged to compose in a wide variety of styles and idioms with the quality of recordings often being very good. The department achieves GCSE results which are higher than in many other subjects in the school and closer to the national average, although still below it. The achievement of these students is satisfactory in relation to their starting point in the subject in Year 10. Those students with English as an additional language or special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates.
162. A committed group of 12 peripatetic teachers tutor the students in a variety of instruments. Pass rates are high with some students gaining merits and distinctions. Twenty students are presently sitting the Associated Board Grade examinations in their respective instruments.
163. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and good in Years 10 and 11. Some good, as well as unsatisfactory, teaching was observed. Where there is good teaching, tasks are matched to meet the differing abilities of students, particularly those with special educational needs, the gifted and talented and lower attaining students. The lessons are well planned and paced so that students respond with enthusiasm. They are encouraged to evaluate their own learning with the result that good progress is made in these lessons. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, a significant minority of students are allowed to disrupt the lesson to such an extent that pace goes out of the lesson, teaching is interrupted and little, if any, learning takes place.
164. Students make satisfactory progress overall in learning. Although the department has no specific strategies for student guidance for the range of needs in the classes, students with learning difficulties and disabilities, such as hearing impaired students, are successfully integrated and given guidance in their learning, for example instructions are repeated more slowly, appropriate targets are set and much encouragement is given. In Years 7 to 9, tasks do not always challenge the students sufficiently and are not commensurate to the time allotted to them, for example adding a keyboard rhythm to a simple melody is completed in a quarter of the time allocated by most who then become bored. Higher attaining students, especially the gifted and talented, were not provided with sufficiently challenging tasks (this was also noted in the previous inspection), for example students who already read music or play instruments were asked to spend a large part of one lesson learning a simple tune. In only one lesson observed was there any singing; the students did not appear to be interested in this element of their musical education. In Years 10 and 11, learning is good; students spoken to expressed interest and enjoyment in their music making and took justifiable pride in their achievements. The use of ICT is not in place across the subject, although it is a statutory requirement, and, therefore, does not impact satisfactorily on the students' learning.

165. The department makes a positive contribution through individual and group activities to the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly through the rich and very good extra-curricular programme open to all students.
166. The school band has a high reputation with many community links, for example playing at Remembrance Dayservices, carol concerts and has an impressive overseas touring record. Preparations are in place for a trip to Seattle and Vancouver in 2004. There is a variety of ensembles both vocal and instrumental, choir and strings, which are well supported and enrich the life of the school. The dedication of the staff inspired by the head of department is high and committed to the widening of the students' experience and personal development.
167. Staff appraisal within the department is in place and is having an impact on improvements in effective teaching styles, the management of disruptive students and improved learning. The quality of leadership and management is good. The department development plan has ICT as a priority and this reflects the need for staff to have additional training to use it confidently and effectively in the subject. The staff have had some general ICT training but the impact on students' learning has been unsatisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Extra-curricular provision is very good.
- Marking of GCSE files is thorough and very informative.
- The provision and quality of outdoor education are excellent.

Areas for improvement

- Students' attainment is well below average in GCSE examinations.
- A few boys' behaviour and lack of concentration is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9.
- Schemes of work and teaching do not include enough tasks for assessment or identifying opportunities to develop students' numeracy and ICT skills.

168. The results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were well below the national average. Previous results have fluctuated year by year but 2002 results match those in 2001 with 28 per cent of students gaining A*-C grades. Fewer girls than boys take the subject and their results are very similar to the boys. Whilst most students attain well in the practical activities, marks in their theory papers are poor and their attainment overall is below the national expectations.
169. GCSE students attain well in football and volleyball. They play with skill and a good understanding of team strategies. Students in Year 10 can warm up and stretch independently but are not confident when naming specific muscles. Students in Year 11 have a better knowledge of health and fitness and lead their own activities in small groups effectively. Notebooks of higher attaining students are neatly presented with many good quality diagrams. A few lower attaining students have poor handwriting and spelling and do not understand the subject-specific vocabulary. Teachers use a variety of excellent strategies in theory lessons to help students improve their knowledge. However, there is a lack of consolidation of students' learning because insufficient emphasis is placed on theoretical aspects in practical lessons. Notebooks are regularly and constructively marked and students are kept informed of how they can improve. Overall, their achievement is satisfactory in relation to their standards when they start

the course in Year 10. Students in Years 10 and 11 are attaining below average standards in GCSE dance. Year 11 girls are taking the course in one year. This will not give them sufficient time to improve their knowledge and understanding of dance components, in spite of the good specialist teaching, but their achievement is good in relation to their standards when they started the course in Year 10. Fourteen students in Year 10 take an outdoor education course that has been specifically designed to meet their needs. Over two years, they gain accreditation in first aid, canoeing, climbing, conservation, water safety and orienteering. It is an excellent initiative that provides positive links to careers and promotes good personal development and their achievement is good.

170. The attainment of the majority of students in core physical education in Years 10 and 11 is in line with national expectations. A few students attain above this level in basketball and trampolining. Boys in Year 11 are very competent basketball players. Their shooting and rebounding skills are very consistent. A few girls in Year 10 are able to perform advanced twists on the trampoline and most girls can link movements together to form a fluent routine. Girls in Year 11 attain below average standards in badminton because they do not have a full understanding of the basic skills and rules. Students build and extend their performance skills satisfactorily but they do not develop their evaluative skills sufficiently and there is a lack of guidance in promoting this strand of the National Curriculum in the schemes of work. Overall, their achievement is satisfactory.
171. By the end of Year 9, students attain standards in line with national expectations. Boys in Year 9 have reasonable dribbling and shooting skills in basketball. From not having played the activity previously, most Year 9 girls have made good progress in badminton. When playing football, Year 8 girls lack control and accuracy when receiving and passing the ball but a small number reach a high standard in this activity. By the end of their first unit of work, Year 7 boys have made sound progress in gymnastics and dance. Students are reasonably fit and know the reasons for warming up and stretching but boys are given little opportunity to do this independently because their unsatisfactory behaviour frequently results in activities being led by the teacher. Boys are often restless and lack concentration. Their listening skills are poor. This hinders their learning and that of others. Girls stay on task and are better focused than boys at this age. Overall, achievement is satisfactory in relation to their standards in the subject when they start in the school in Year 7. Students with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make similar progress to that of their classmates.
172. Individual students and teams achieve high standards in district, county and national competitions in golf, basketball, football, swimming, cricket, rugby, netball and athletics. The attainment of these boys and girls is above, and sometimes well above, the national expectation and they benefit considerably from the opportunities provided by their teachers as part of the very good extra-curricular programme.
173. The quality of teaching, observed during the inspection, was satisfactory overall with a few good and very good lessons and one lesson where teaching was excellent. Learning is satisfactory overall and students of all abilities make satisfactory progress. The majority of students enter the school having very little experience in a number of activities and, by the end of Year 9 and Year 11, they have made satisfactory progress in practical activities and reach the expected levels for their age. This satisfactory achievement is caused by the well-planned learning activities provided by their teachers. Relationships with students are good. This helps teachers to manage the behaviour of some very difficult students, especially younger boys. Lesson objectives are shared with the students at the start of each lesson and revisited at the end of the lesson. This

is a particularly successful strategy with lower attaining students who often need to refine and revisit skills before progress can be made. When lessons are indoors, teachers focus on developing literacy skills by displaying key words and objectives but ideas to develop numeracy skills and ICT are not yet identified. Very good lessons give students the opportunities to acquire new skills, to select and apply these skills and to evaluate their own work and that of others. Opportunities are not frequently provided to enable students to take responsibility for their own learning, for example games lessons are very performance based and students are not set tasks which analyse their performance and that of others.

174. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The head of department is relatively new and is beginning to act on the department's development plan. He has supported the newest members of staff well. The programmes of study now include a health and fitness unit but, in the boys' curriculum, the balance between movement and games activities is unsatisfactory. Teachers assess students at the end of each unit of work but there is no central system for recording levels in each activity. Levels are not activity specific and students are not sure about how to improve their work. The schemes of work lack detail, for example in indicating the strands of the National Curriculum and teaching methods and highlighting opportunities to teach literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The indoor accommodation is extensive but of poor quality. The area is drab. The showers do not work and there are not always enough changing facilities for the number of groups. There is no designated provision for an all-weather games surface and a dance area. The playing fields are frequently water-logged and hinder individual skill development. The girls studying GCSE dance have to work on a carpeted floor that is totally inappropriate and detrimental to raising standards. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The very good leadership of the subject.
- The progress made by students of all abilities is good.
- The good teaching with well-planned lessons that challenge students well.
- The good contribution that the subject makes to students' personal development.

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT, which is unsatisfactory.
- Make better use of the local faith communities.
- Review the curriculum in Years 7 and 8 to provide better progression from primary school provision to that in Years 7 to 8.
- Greater use of teaching strategies that encourage students to reflect and evaluate.

175. Examination results are in line with national averages. These have gradually improved since the last inspection. Students arrive in school with a wide variation in their knowledge and understanding of religious customs and beliefs. Students of all abilities make good progress and, by the end of Year 9, reach standards that are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. They have a satisfactory knowledge of the beliefs and practices of the major religions that are found in our society. For example, Year 8 students have been looking at the life of Jesus and were carefully examining the important part that miracle stories play in the story of His life. They are able to use religious language well and have a good understanding of the way in which religion has

an impact upon a person's life. Year 9 students had a good understanding of Hindu beliefs and practices. The levels of literacy were good, with work being presented well with some good examples of extended writing. Students' ability to evaluate and reflect upon the deeper issues was not so well developed. The progress of students with special educational needs is similar to that of their peers. Students with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress, at times being dependent on the amount of support they receive. This is an improvement on the standards attained in the teacher assessments in 2002.

176. The current Year 10 students make good progress and attain standards that are above national expectations. They have a good knowledge of the way in which religious faith influences morality and are able to use religious language and ideas well. They were examining the question of euthanasia in a sensitive and thoughtful manner. They are orally confident and their written work displayed a good understating of the main issues.
177. Despite the limited time available for the course, Year 11 students are also making good progress and are on target to achieve grades that are at least in line with those predicted. The progress of students with special educational needs is similar to their peers and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Students have a good knowledge of the effect of teaching of Islam and Christianity on contemporary social and moral issues; for example, a group was discussing the Islamic teaching found in the Hadith in a knowledgeable way. This is an improvement on the examination grades in the 2002 results.
178. The overall quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned with suitable tasks for students of all abilities. The leadership of the subject leader ensures that all teachers have a good knowledge of the subject. A satisfactory range of teaching methods ensures that lessons have good pace and that students of all abilities are challenged to produce work of a high standard. In a Year 7 programme, a short clip from a film was effectively used to illustrate the concept of faith. As a result, students were interested and involved. They respond well in group discussions, displaying a sensitive appreciation of the values and beliefs of others. They complete assignments well with their written work demonstrating good literacy skills. When projects are set, they display good independent learning skills. The classrooms contain some good displays that students have produced. Suitable homework is set and well marked. ICT is not effectively used and strategies that encourage students to reflect upon their own religious response could be used more widely.
179. The leadership of the subject is very good. There is a strong team spirit with all teachers being committed to the subject. All policies are in place, though as yet they are not all carried through. A good example is the one on ICT which is not yet effectively used by the department. The curriculum broadly follows the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus but there is a need to review the provision in Years 7 and 8 in order to ensure good continuity and progression from the primary schools. The time allocation in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory. The school is endeavouring to cover the full GCSE course in one lesson per week. This results in considerable pressure being placed upon the knowledge element of the syllabus to the detriment of allowing time for discussion and reflection.
180. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. Standards have risen, teaching is consistently good and literacy skills have improved considerably. The range of teaching strategies which encourage more reflection and evaluation is not wide enough.

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

In the inspection, nine 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 2002.

GCE AS-level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art	11	82	n/a	18	n/a	3.3	n/a
Business Studies	10	60	n/a	10	n/a	2.7	n/a
Drama	9	78	n/a	0	n/a	2.8	n/a
English Language	3	100	n/a	0	n/a	3.3	n/a
English Literature	12	83	n/a	17	n/a	5.3	n/a
General Studies	18	100	n/a	11	n/a	2.3	n/a
Geography	5	60	n/a	20	n/a	3.3	n/a
History	14	71	n/a	7	n/a	2.4	n/a
Information Technology	10	80	n/a	10	n/a	2.6	n/a
Law	8	50	n/a	0	n/a	1.8	n/a
Media	11	100	n/a	55	n/a	4.4	n/a
Physics	3	33	n/a	0	n/a	1.0	n/a
Psychology	19	37	n/a	16	n/a	1.8	n/a
Sociology	4	100	n/a	75	n/a	5	n/a
Sports Studies	5	60	n/a	0	n/a	2	n/a

GCE A-level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	9	100	n/a	22	n/a	5.3	n/a
Business studies	13	92	n/a	8	n/a	2.3	n/a
Drama	2	100	n/a	100	n/a	9	n/a
English literature	8	88	n/a	14	n/a	4.3	n/a
General studies	9	89	n/a	0	n/a	4	n/a
Geography	1	100	n/a	100	n/a	10.0	n/a
Law	7	72	n/a	29	n/a	3.4	n/a
Sociology	2	50	n/a	0	n/a	3.0	n/a
Sports studies	5	100	n/a	0	n/a	4	n/a
IT	7	29	n/a	0	n/a	0.7	n/a

Psychology	4	100	n/a	50	n/a	5.0	n/a
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SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Students are respectful and well behaved.
- Record keeping is satisfactory.

Areas for improvement

- Market the subject to Year 11 students so that more would wish to take A-level and AS-level courses.
- Provide appropriate courses for all who wish to upgrade previous GCSE results.
- Improve the use of assessment, which is unsatisfactory in giving guidance to students on how to improve their grades.
- Increase the use of ICT in sixth-form courses to contribute to key skills. Currently, it is unsatisfactory.

181. Of the 35 Sedgehill students who, since 1998, have taken A-level mathematics, less than half have gained grades A-E and only one has gained a grade A. Boys have achieved slightly better than girls. Overall standards are well below national averages and attainment is below that achieved by the same candidates in their other subjects. 2001 results showed some improvement with three of the five candidates gaining A-E grades, their average points score being higher than previous years but, in 2002, there were no candidates. The previous inspection report had noted excellent results. At AS-level, standards have been very poor, with 15 of 16 candidates since 1998 failing to achieve even an E grade. Even allowing for the attainment levels of students entering these courses, their achievements are well below expectations. For GCSE retakes, 2002 results show over 50 per cent of candidates attained grade C or better, an improvement over the 2001 figure of 42 per cent.
182. Teaching of the one A2-level and three AS-level Sedgehill students who currently study mathematics is at other schools in the consortium. Analysis of their work and discussion with them suggest they are making satisfactory progress, but Sedgehill's monitoring of their progress is inadequate. Modular courses should enable the school to provide at least some of the teaching, preferably the reintroduction on site of a full course leading to A2-level. A recent student survey indicates interest, but first there has to be overcome, amongst Year 11 students, a preference to transfer to other schools for AS/A2-level mathematics.
183. GCSE retake candidates receive two timetabled lessons per week. In lessons observed, teaching is satisfactory and students receive appropriate help, including beyond class time. The one large class contains Years 12 and 13 students, each of whom may previously have taken intermediate or foundation tiers. This range of ability creates difficulties for effective class teaching and current instruction is not fully suited to their requirements. Questioning can be insufficiently focused – a correct answer from one student does not mean all have understood. Students are well behaved but their listening skills vary. They can pursue tasks, such as drawing scatter diagrams, but rarely interpret their results, a feature equally apparent in their coursework. In working through past examination papers, they make numerous errors, for example not

checking their processing carefully enough. One-to-one or small group discussion helped to rectify mistakes.

184. Departmental leadership is satisfactory but reactive rather than proactive, partly resulting from staffing changes. Record keeping is good. There is some analysis by gender but no clear policy emerges from this and use of assessment data is unsatisfactory overall. The use of ICT in sixth-form lessons is minimal, though graphic calculators are available. The library network contains numerous useful mathematics programs, including for A2- and AS-level. A clearer departmental vision for the future, with a resurgence of purpose, together with suitable strategies and training, is recommended.

BUSINESS

Business studies

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

Strengths

- Attainment in lessons observed was close to national expectations.
- AS- and A2-level groups work well and often make good progress.

Areas for improvement

- The attendance of students on business courses.
- Better use of assessment information to inform teachers' planning.
- Monitoring and evaluating the quality of the department's provision.
- Increased opportunities for students to develop as independent learners.

185. The business studies department offers sixth-form business education in two areas – AS/A2-level and vocational courses. The vocational courses are certificated as the two-year Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) and the one-year GNVQ Foundation and GNVQ Intermediate Certificates. AVCE has been offered at the different schools in the consortium on a rotational basis and no students from Sedgehill entered for AVCE last year when it was not on site. Standards of attainment seen in lessons were close to national expectations. In 2001, the A-level business results were significantly below the national average. Last year, the unconfirmed grades improved, although there were relatively few A and B grades. Performance at GNVQ has been satisfactory for those students who have been regular attenders at lessons – all of whom achieved a pass grade or above. The common factor for all those who were ungraded was poor attendance and the department has not yet devised appropriate strategies to ensure regular attendance from all students.

186. AVCE groups vary in student ability but staff work hard to ensure that courses are effective. Many students progress from one vocational course to the next level in business studies or another subject. AS- and A2-level groups work well and often make good progress. Student response is satisfactory. There is little oral response from some AVCE groups, especially where many students have English as an additional language and do not receive additional support.

187. Teaching is satisfactory overall and good teaching was observed during the inspection. However, there are insufficient opportunities for students to develop skills of independent learning and research. Study facilities in the sixth-form block do not help this development and teachers' expectations are not yet consistent in setting appropriately challenging tasks and clearer structures for individual study.

188. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There have been recent changes in the leadership and management of the department. There is a departmental development plan but this does not take sufficient account of information from the analysis of data or of monitoring and evaluation of the department's work, especially the quality of teaching and learning. Schemes of work have not been produced to complement the published syllabuses.
189. Business studies sixth-form courses are delivered either in the sixth-form block or the business studies suite. This latter provides an excellent facility for modern business education enhanced by extensive use of ICT. Resources are good and students have reasonable access to up-to-date books and references. However, there is little evidence that students make effective use of the many journals and newspapers available to them apart from those they are instructed to read or which are handed out as photocopies.
190. The assessment of coursework is thorough and is an implicit part of AVCE and GNVQ modular approaches. Many of these assessment techniques have been incorporated into AS/A2-level modular courses and staff are especially good at sharing mark schemes fully with students. They are also keen to ensure that students are fully aware of what they need to do to ensure that coursework meets the criteria required for the highest levels of achievement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Information and communication technology

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

Strengths

- The range of ICT courses provides good opportunities for students to progress from one to another.
- Coursework in Year 13.

Areas for improvement

- Standards achieved in AS- and A2-level examinations.
- Management and quality assurance of sixth-form ICT provision.
- The quality of teaching, which is unsatisfactory.
- The unsatisfactory attitude of students to aspects of their learning.

191. Sixth-form ICT courses are offered in conjunction with the local sixth-form consortium. The range of ICT courses offered includes GNVQ, AS-level, A2-level and AVCE. Although coursework was available for scrutiny, some courses had only started at the beginning of the current academic year, precluding any examination results available for this inspection. The results for AS- and A2-level examinations for 2002 were below national averages, more significantly at the AS-level. The dropout rate for the former course was reported by the school to be high.
192. The teaching and subsequent learning in observed lessons were unsatisfactory. There was a lack of pace in the lessons and a failure to provide a range of activities which encouraged the students to respond positively. When students were engaged in individual practical work, the response was improved but too little was done to encourage this kind of learning.

193. The choice of vocational and academic courses offered in the sixth form is good. The quality of practical work seen in Year 13 ranged from satisfactory to very good. There was little or no clear management of sixth-form ICT and no monitoring of quality of teaching and overall standards. Difficulties are encountered when selecting students for advanced ICT courses as there are no courses running in Years 10 and 11 from which sixth-form students would naturally progress. There are no testing procedures in place for selection of students in Year 11.
194. Students respect the ICT facilities available to them around the school but are restricted in the use of the sixth-form computer suite during informal times such as the lunch break. Homework is neither set nor marked on a regular basis. The head of department for ICT does not currently regard sixth-form ICT activity as a priority.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical education

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

Strengths

- Students are positive about the subject and have very good relationships with students from other schools and their teacher.
- Good advice and guidance are given to students about their coursework assignments.

Areas for improvement

- The monitoring of students' files and marking of tests and homework are not as regular and thorough as they could be and this is unsatisfactory.
- There are no computers or storage facilities for other resources in the teaching room.
- Students' learning is hindered by the lesson and study arrangements imposed by the consortium timetable.
- There is insufficient analysis of students' attainment in relation to their prior attainment and the use of this to raise students' levels of attainment.

195. Results in A-level have varied over the last four years, but have mostly been below the national average. In 2001, results were well below average but the unconfirmed 2002 results were better with 100 per cent of students attaining A-E grades. There was a direct correlation between students' attainment at GCSE and their final A-level results. Over time, the number of higher grades (A or B) has been well below the national average. No students attained these grades in 2002. The unconfirmed 2002 AS-level results were below the predicted national average.
196. The standards attained by current students in Years 12 and 13, as observed in their theory lessons, in their written work and during discussion, are below national expectations. A few students are working above this level and in line with national expectations. Students in Year 13 have produced well-researched personal performance portfolios and exercise programmes. Higher attaining students present their work very well and match it closely to the examination criteria. They make very good use of spreadsheets, pie charts and graphs. Students' files are not so well organised and there is little evidence of accurate notes being taken. Files are not monitored sufficiently by the teacher to ensure students have an effective learning resource for the future. Students know much about the sports in which they participate, for example swimming, hockey and athletics, but they do not always apply this to their theoretical learning. In a lesson on group cohesion, the teacher tried hard to encourage

students to identify features from their own specialist sport to deepen their understanding. A few students in Year 12 do not have a responsible attitude to their assignments. They do not use their time well for independent research and many have not yet produced sufficient work. Students in both years do not use specialist vocabulary regularly in either their written work or in discussion. Overall, their achievement is satisfactory in relation to their starting point in the subject in Year 12.

197. Students from all schools in the consortium work well together and they have very good relationships with their teacher. Students are positive about physical education, and express an interest in the subject. However, these attitudes are not reflected in the small amount of time they spend in the department or in the amount of effort they put into their coursework. This is partly due to the amount of time they have to spend at other schools, the teaching being confined to two blocks of lessons and the fact that they are allowed home in any non-taught time. These conditions, imposed by the consortium, limit frequent contact with the teacher and hinder students' learning.
198. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The teacher has good subject expertise and very good knowledge of the examination criteria. Lessons are well planned, especially the block of three consecutive lessons, but are not always sufficiently interactive. Teaching is based in one room that has no storage for resources and no computers. This limits how some topics are taught and has a negative effect on students' learning. However, some lessons are taken in the library where students can use the Internet for research. One good lesson was observed when the dissection of a heart was used very well to illustrate structure and function. The teacher gives good individual support and guidance when students are planning their coursework and students express their appreciation of the advice they receive. However, short-term targets are not set and there is a lack of structure about the monitoring of students' progress.
199. The leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. The head of department has undertaken all the sixth-form teaching because of staffing changes over recent years. This has proved a large workload and has limited his effectiveness in providing students with a varied and stimulating programme of study that captures their interest. The department does not analyse students' prior performance in enough depth, resulting in a lack of focus on students' individual learning needs.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design

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

Strengths

- High conceptual content in lessons which challenges students and raises the standard of their work.
- Knowledge of the diverse intentions in artists' work which encourages students' expression of their own ideas.

Areas for improvement

- The proportion of A and B grades at both AS- and A2-level is unsatisfactory.
- The record keeping of attainment to set targets to raise standards, which is unsatisfactory.
- Attendance, which is unsatisfactory.

200. In 2001, GCE AS- and A2-level results were below average. Results have been broadly falling over recent years.
201. Assessment and target setting are uneven in quality. Currently there is no evidence available of the achievements at GCSE of the students in Years 12 and 13 and, consequently, what they should be attaining now.
202. Inspection evidence indicates that current attainment is in line with national expectations. This was seen, for example in a Year 12 lesson on body language where the students showed relatively sophisticated understanding of all aspects of the visual language and how they could apply this knowledge using watercolour technique mixed with chalk and charcoal. Similar standards were seen in a Year 13 lesson where students articulated and explained in writing the connections between their work and the influences from other artists. Satisfactory attainment is achieved because students work responsibly and respond with maturity to the higher demands of the sixth-form syllabus and their achievement is satisfactory.
203. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers use explanations well, especially of contemporary approaches, to support learning of conceptual possibilities. This was seen, for example, when one student used acrylic paint to make a large-scale artefact on a board, influenced by the artist Julian Opie. Teachers give the sixth-form students clear, written evaluations of progress and objectives for the future, at the beginning of a lesson, which results in students understanding what they have achieved and how to proceed with their work.
204. For the majority of students, attendance to lessons is inconsistent, which affects progress. The stimulus of the sharing of ideas between the students is weak because the numbers in the groups are low.
205. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, numbers on courses have fallen. The acting head of department is tackling the issue of low recruitment to the sixth-form course.

Drama

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

Strength

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Standards in the A-level examinations are broadly in line with national averages and achievement is good.
- The quality of leadership and management is good.

Areas for improvement

- The numbers of students choosing the course.

206. A-level and AS-level drama results in 2002 were broadly in line with the national average. In recent years, results have been consistently at or above the national average. Numbers of students choosing the subject have varied in recent years, but have generally been small, despite the considerable success of students in the GCSE examinations in drama at the end of Year 11. Currently, there are five students in Year 13 and four in Year 12. The take-up of Year 12 AS-level students into the Year 13 A-level course is good; however, in 2002, all students in Year 12 carried on into Year 13.

207. The standards of work seen are generally in line with national expectations and achievement is good. Students demonstrate, in both class and written work, the capacity to explore and present drama texts and devise their own performances. They are able to inform their understanding with quite extensive research into drama theory and literary and historical background material. They show good skills in the use of voice and movement, though are more comfortable in improvisation than in speaking a script. Their writing includes detailed accounts of lesson activities and critical responses to theatre productions. Students work well together, exchanging ideas freely and articulately. Generally, their performance skills are greater than their academic skills.
208. Students in Year 12 participated enthusiastically in a warm-up exercise then showed good knowledge and understanding of Lorca's 'Yerma' in responding to questions about a scene. In groups, they were able to prepare and perform different presentations capably, exploring the effects of different positioning, movement and the use of space. They were perceptive in noting the effect of body language. They read the text clearly and without inhibition. They worked well together, co-operating unselfishly and showing enjoyment.
209. Students in Year 13 showed good skills in a warm-up mime exercise and were able to create both pair and whole-class mime sequences. They prepared and performed group improvisations of the key activity in a scene from Gay's 'Beggars Opera' with energy. Students negotiated roles, planned the narrative and improvised dialogue confidently. They appreciated each other's work. In the formal reading of the text, students were less comfortable and had some difficulty with the unfamiliar language but they showed interest and application. In another lesson, the same class worked with interest on discussion of alternate staging for their devised project based on Eliot's 'The Waste Land', presenting their ideas forthrightly.
210. Students are enthusiastic about the course and enjoy the good relationships in lessons. Some find the written requirements of the subject daunting but receive good support from teachers.
211. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good range of experience and good drama skills which enable them to explain and illustrate well. Lessons are well-prepared, informed by good knowledge and understanding of course requirements. Students are stimulated and challenged so they learn well, developing understanding and improving skills. Relationships are good, mature and good-humoured, and encourage the exchange of ideas. Students are well supported by the provision of a range of background materials and their work is carefully marked, with helpful comments on points for improvement of standards.
212. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The new head of department has a clear vision of the development of the subject and manages the team of teachers well. Regular meetings and a well-prepared scheme of work support consistency of teaching and there is good practice in the monitoring of work in lessons and student progress. The newly qualified teacher in the department has received good induction and support. Significant use is made of the analysis of examination assessments and, as a result, a change has been made to the examining board for Year 12. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities for students, including visits to theatres and participation in public performances.
213. The good quality of provision in drama has been maintained since the last inspection.

HUMANITIES

History

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

Strengths

- The positive attitudes of students.
- Leadership and management are good.

Areas for improvement

- Student attainment, which is below the national average and achievement which is unsatisfactory.
- A better match of unit choices to student strengths.

214. Students' performance in A-level examinations has been below the national average. There were no candidates entered in 2001. In 2002, the one candidate from Sedgehill failed to achieve a pass grade. Students' performance in the AS-level examination has been unsatisfactory. The two students entered in 2001 both achieved E grades. In 2002, all ten candidates achieved a pass grade, with one securing the highest A grade. However, for the majority of this group, their AS-level grade was much lower than their previous attainment at GCSE, indicating unsatisfactory achievement.

215. The Year 12 students are being taught AS-level history at one of the partner schools in the consortium. Observation of the Year 13 lessons being taught at Sedgehill and a scrutiny of students' work confirm that standards in the current Year 13 are below the national expectations. The current Year 13 group of ten students are working at a good standard but carry forward the marks from their AS-level examinations. They are able to analyse historical sources critically, as was demonstrated by their annotation of Nazi propaganda posters to show how these tried to influence German voters in elections in the 1930s. The students are aware of their difficulties with aspects of the course and are working hard to improve as is evidenced by their comprehensive note sets. They are committed to their work and would welcome the opportunity to study their own individual interests through coursework. The students are able to write convincing answers to historical questions although they still show a need to respond more precisely to the questions posed. They have made some use of ICT but have insufficient breadth to their reading beyond the core texts.

216. The teaching of history is satisfactory. Strong features of the lessons seen are teacher knowledge and good planning. For example, in one Year 13 lesson, the teacher divided up various nineteenth century reform measures between the different groups of students and asked them to use presentation software to produce a summary. The apt choice of Internet sites and text and reference books amply supported the students' research and led to some high level discussion of what features were most significant. Teachers' marking is very conscientious and gives good guidance to students on the quality of their notes. Students clearly enjoy lessons.

217. The head of history, together with his team, has analysed the reasons for the results at AS-level, which can be partly attributed to staffing changes. Schemes of work have been written, further resources are being developed and teachers are sharing ideas. There is a strong, shared commitment to raise standards and to succeed amongst teachers and students in history and the quality of leadership and management is good.

Geography

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

Strengths

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

Areas for improvement

- Most students have yet to achieve that fluency in essay writing that will assist them to gain the highest examination grades.
- Strategies to increase the take-up of the subject in the sixth form.

218. Current consortium arrangements provide for only four students from this school.

219. Standards overall are in line with the national average. The most recent unconfirmed results are in line with the national average, albeit from a small number of candidates. The proportion of students gaining grades A or B has been below the national average in recent years. Results have shown a gradual upward trend since the previous inspection. In relation to their GCSE results, candidates did better than expected. Value added analysis reveals that geography results show better progress by students than in most subjects in the school. The most recent AS-level results are also in line with the national average. In most years, there has been an above average retention rate from AS- to A-level courses. There has been no consistent pattern of male or female superiority in any of these results.

220. Lesson observation was confined to Year 13; there are no geography students in the current Year 12. Standards of work seen in lessons and in scrutiny of students' files and coursework during the inspection are consistent with recent examination results and are in line with national expectations. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection. Students compile comprehensive notes, extracting relevant information from a range of sources. In some cases, the work in their files is poorly organised, lacking the coherence desirable in a source for revision. They show a good knowledge of topics in both physical and human geography. In a lesson on volcanoes, students displayed a detailed appreciation of the impact of eruptions on human activity. With encouragement from their teachers, they are developing independent learning skills. Students produce well-researched coursework, using advanced statistical methods to analyse their gathered fieldwork data. They use computers to enhance the presentation of both text and graphs in this coursework, and make good use of the Internet in independent research. Most students have yet to achieve a sufficiently fluent essay style to ensure the highest examination grades.

221. Teaching is good overall, and frequently very good. Lessons have a clear structure. A range of learning resources is used very effectively. Teachers display good subject knowledge, not only in what they say, but in the way they give effective guidance in the use of resources. They encourage independent learning by urging students to carry out detailed research on a variety of topics before presenting their findings to their peers. Students learn well, responding positively to good teaching. They work collaboratively and listen respectfully to each other. They use resources well and enjoy fieldwork assignments. Extended pieces of writing are marked regularly and students are given clear and accurate judgements of the quality of their work, which help them to improve it. Good relationships with their teachers give students the confidence both to seek help without embarrassment and to present their research findings to their classmates.

Teachers provide additional support through well-attended, voluntary, after-school workshop sessions. A slight weakness in the teaching is that students should be taught to be more selective in their note taking.

222. Good leadership and management of the subject have a large influence on the quality of teaching and learning. Students' progress is monitored thoroughly through detailed analysis of performance data. Detailed schemes of work and relevant case studies contribute significantly to teaching and learning. Good stocks of reference materials are well deployed. Teachers keep up to date with examination requirements through appropriate in-service training. This department is strong in most respects. Overall provision, however, cannot be regarded as better than satisfactory in the light of the absence of provision in the current Year 12. Provision in the current Year 13 is good, but the overall take up is low in relation to the numbers studying the subject in Years 10 and 11. The current situation has been produced largely by factors that lie outside the direct control of the department.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning were good in lessons observed for the relatively small number of students taking the subject.
- Students' attitudes and relationships in the classroom are good.
- There are good features in the leadership and management of the subject.

Areas for improvement

- The standards attained in examinations.
- The number of students choosing the AS-level course in Year 12.

223. A-level English results in 2001 were below the national average. AS-level English results were below the national average. Results have been consistently below or well below national averages in recent years. Achievement in relation to students' levels of prior attainment and their anticipated grades is only satisfactory although, in 2001, all students obtained a grade at AS-level and all except one obtained a grade at A-level. Over recent years, the number of students choosing the subject has declined significantly – the A-level entry in 2001 was less than half the entry of earlier years. Currently, there are ten students following the A-level course in Year 13 and seven students following the AS-level course in Year 12.

224. The standards of work seen are generally below national expectations, representing only broadly satisfactory achievement in the light of students' levels of prior attainment.

225. Students in Year 12 have made a satisfactory start on the AS-level language course which is now offered, though Sedgehill students can elect to follow an AS-level literature course elsewhere in the consortium. In preparation for a coursework piece on the language of the media, they showed some perception in identifying the linguistic features of different newspaper articles, with teacher help. Students were involved in their own learning and making their own notes. They worked co-operatively in pairs on text analysis, and their good relationships with each other and the teacher enabled them comfortably to share their ideas and request assistance when required. Students were

able to make good use of the explanations provided by their teacher of such features as lexis, graphology, semantics and phonology to make comparisons, and they presented their conclusions quite confidently. Students were not comfortable in using the technical terminology of the subject in speaking, though they are able to use it in their writing.

226. The work of students in Year 13 following the A-level literature course is well informed by their successful completion of the AS-level course, in which a majority achieved their target grade. They were able to use their previous study of 'Antony and Cleopatra' to inform their assessment of the opening of 'Othello'. They worked co-operatively in groups and confidently presented their conclusions about the key moments in the form of a storyboard. With teacher help, they recognised the effects of different forms of staging and focus and were able to compare their proposed presentations to a filmed production on video. Encouraged by the teacher, students engaged readily in thoughtful discussion, which was also represented in extended written answers.
227. A resit GCSE English course is also offered to students in Years 12 and 13. Supportive teaching, informed by good knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the examination, encouraged students to participate actively. They worked steadily in a good-humoured and co-operative atmosphere.
228. Students are happy with their courses and feel they are well informed about the requirements of the examinations. They appreciate the good relationships they have with teachers who know them well and, as a result, students improve their grades.
229. For the relatively small numbers of students following the AS- and A-level courses, teaching and learning are good. A relatively newly created team of teachers shares the teaching, which gives students a valuable variety of experiences. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject's requirements which inform well-prepared lessons; they are also aware of the students' learning needs and present their lessons accordingly. Students are stimulated by a variety of activities and well supported by the provision of a good range of background material and information. Students' work is thoroughly and helpfully assessed, using GCE grading and detailed comments on how to make improvements. Relationships in the classroom are good; students are encouraged by the sympathetic support they receive.
230. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. There is a new and much more formalised approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning than has been the case in the past. The scheme of work carefully identifies the requirements of the courses and their assessment, and regular meetings enable teachers to share good practice. These measures have, however, not yet had an impact upon the standards attained in examinations, nor on the decreasing numbers of students choosing the subject.