

INSPECTION REPORT

BEAVERWOOD SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Chislehurst

LEA area: Bromley

Unique reference number: 101674

Headteacher: Mrs K Raven

Reporting inspector: S Tweddell
1709

Dates of inspection: 30 September - 4 October 2002

Inspection number: 249577

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 - 19
Gender of pupils:	Girls (mixed sixth form)
School address:	Beaverwood Road Chislehurst Kent
Postcode:	BR7 6HE
Telephone number:	02083003156
Fax number:	02083003251
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Brown
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1709	Sandra Tweddell	Registered inspector	English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9352	Malcolm Weaver	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2734	Paul Cosway	Team inspector	English (6 th form) Education inclusion	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to student?
23413	Robert Allen	Team inspector	English	
31218	Thomas Allen	Team inspector	Geography	
30911	John Barton	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages French	
27411	Heather Butensky	Team inspector	Special educational needs Citizenship	
17015	Lawrence Denholm	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
18076	Howard Dodd	Team inspector	Science	
10060	David Gutmann	Team inspector	Business studies Health and social care Sociology	

14490	Susan Jackson	Team inspector	History	
8139	Barbara Johnstone	Team inspector	Music	
15051	Lynne Kauffman	Team inspector	Design and technology (6 th form) Textiles	
30699	Arthur Kemp	Team inspector	Mathematics	
19867	Maxwell Pettitt	Team inspector	Art	
20420	Stuart Rawcliffe	Team inspector	Science	
6432	Mick Sewter	Team inspector	Biology	
8682	Martin Trevor	Team inspector	Design and technology (6 th form)	
32185	Margaret Turnbull	Team inspector	Religious education	
18755	Roger Whittaker	Team inspector	Physical education	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM	11
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	14
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	17
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	22
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	24
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	25
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	27
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	29
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	34
PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	53

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Beaverwood School is a girls' comprehensive school with 1336 pupils on roll, including a sixth form of 202 students. It is heavily oversubscribed. Pupils come into the school from a very wide and diverse area, which includes Bexley and Greenwich, as well as Bromley. There are five selective schools in the immediate area, which has some impact on the quality of the intake. Consequently, attainment on entry is at the lower end of the average range. The school has a small number of pupils from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups are of Asian extraction. Nearly all of these pupils are fluent in English. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is about average. There is a smaller number of pupils with special educational needs and with statements than in most schools. Many of these have emotional and behavioural difficulties. In September 2002, the school was designated as a specialist school for technology. The inspection took place early in the school year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Beaverwood School is a highly successful school with many outstanding features. Pupils make very good progress by the end of Year 9 to bring them up to above average attainment, and skilled teaching ensures that this progress is maintained throughout Years 10 and 11. Pupils achieve well in these years and by the end of Year 11, attainment is above average. In the sixth form, students make good progress and attain average standards. Teaching is good across all years, supported by excellent systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching. Leadership and management are very good and the leadership and management of the headteacher and two deputy headteachers are outstanding. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Very good leadership and management constantly seeking ways to improve the school further.
- Attainment is above average by the end of Years 9 and 11 and pupils make good progress overall. They make very good progress between Years 7 and 9.
- Teaching is good and just under a third of teaching is very good.
- Systems to review the school's work are excellent.
- Pupils behave well and have very positive attitudes towards their work. Relationships are very good. Provision for social and moral development is very good.
- The provision of extra-curricular activities is excellent and enriches the curriculum.
- The procedures for assessing pupils' progress and attainment are excellent and the monitoring of their academic performance and personal development is very good.
- Support and guidance for pupils are very good.

What could be improved

The school is aware of these points for development:

- Inconsistency of policy into practice across departments, particularly challenge for higher attaining pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997 and has made very good progress since then. Attainment in science and art has improved. Of particular note is the improvement that has been made in information and communication technology (ICT), seen in the recent designation of the school as a technology college. The rate of progress the pupils make has also improved. Teaching is of a higher quality than before. Very good progress has been made in recording the progress of pupils. There has also been excellent progress in the way in which all faculties now review their work regularly. Improvement has been made to the pastoral programme. Opportunities to learn about other cultures have improved significantly.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Standards in the school have been consistently above average, including in 2002. Attainment in 2001 was lower than in previous years, reportedly because of a small group of disaffected pupils. Attainment in the sixth form has been broadly average. A few boys attend the sixth form, but the numbers are too small to make comparison with national data reliable. At the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics in 2001 was above average and was average in comparison with similar schools. In science, attainment was average both in comparison with all schools nationally and with similar ones. By the end of Year 9, pupils' performance in all subjects in 2001 was above the national average for girls although the trend in performance has been below the national trend. This is partly due to the school having fewer high ability pupils than most comprehensive schools.

There are, as yet, no national data for 2002 with which to compare attainment. However, performance in GCSE improved from the year before and the school slightly exceeded its targets. Attainment in science and French rose due to action by senior management to improve standards. Attainment in science was significantly higher than in most schools. In most subjects girls achieved better results than girls nationally, although attainment in German and drama was below average. At the end of Year 9, attainment in most subjects was above or well above the average for girls. The trend in performance has been below the national trend, but every pupil is entered for GCSE, unlike in most schools. In the sixth form, performance in most subjects was above the national average, but figures have yet to be confirmed.

The inspection found that pupils make very good progress by the end of Year 9, and the progress is sustained because of good teaching throughout the school, including the sixth form. Attainment overall by the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is above average and at the end of the sixth form is broadly average. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Higher attaining pupils and those who are identified as gifted and talented make good progress overall, although there is some inconsistency across the school. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as their peers.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The majority of pupils are hard working and many enjoy their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. A very small number are ready to challenge authority but are usually well managed by teachers.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. There is an ethos of mutual respect throughout the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. A number of parents take their children on holidays within term time, which affects attendance figures.

The very good ethos of the school helps to develop confidence and self-esteem.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are good and 96 per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better. Almost a third of teaching is very good. In the sixth form, teaching is good and more than a third is very good. The very few lessons that were unsatisfactory were due, in the main, to teachers' getting to know their pupils and were predominantly in the younger classes. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is good, as is the teaching of other subjects. Those who have special educational needs are also taught well. In many classes, higher attaining pupils are challenged by their work, but this is not consistent across the school. Literacy is taught well and numeracy satisfactorily. More time has been given to developing teachers' skills in literacy than in numeracy. Strengths in teaching include good subject knowledge, which teachers use well to move pupils' learning forward. Planning of lessons is a strength, and ensures that learning progresses well. The high quality of teaching ensures that pupils achieve well across the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Extra-curricular activities are excellent and enrich the curriculum. The quality of careers guidance is excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall and the leadership and management are very good. In the main, pupils are supported well in classes, especially by their assistants. There are times when no support is available, which sometimes affects learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are insufficient pupils to make a judgement. A small number entered school during the inspection and staff were quick to seek support for them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for social and moral development is very good, and for spiritual and cultural development is good. Tutorial time is used well to promote personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are supported very well. Procedures for assessing their attainment and progress are excellent. There is a very good awareness of health and safety issues.

The school does everything in its power to involve parents in their daughters' education. Statutory requirements for religious education are not met in Years 10 and 11.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key	Very good overall. Outstanding leadership by the headteacher sets the tone of high expectations and the very good ethos of the school. There is a constant striving for excellence. Senior staff work excellently as a team to implement policies. The leadership of heads of faculty and year

staff	is good and many give very good leadership.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors have a very good understanding of the school and fulfil their legal responsibilities well. They are effective in providing a sounding board for new ideas.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The systems for reviewing the school's work are excellent and very good use is made of them at senior management level. There is inconsistency in their use by middle management and teachers, so the overall use of them is good.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The budget is very carefully managed and governors and senior staff are aware of the need to secure value for money.

In common with many schools in the area, there have been difficulties with recruiting and retaining staff. Senior staff work exceptionally hard to mitigate the effect of this and are generally successful in ensuring that teachers are matched to the requirements of the curriculum. The accommodation is very good and the overall level of resources is good. The school uses its funding as well as is possible for the benefit of the pupils' education.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Attainment and the progress that pupils make. • Teaching is good. • They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem. • Pupils are expected to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is well led and managed. • Pupils are helped to become mature and responsible. • The attitudes and values promoted by the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information about how well pupils do. • Closer working with parents.

A small but significant number of parents who returned questionnaires had children who had just started at the school, so were unable to answer many of the questions. The above table reflects the views of those who were able to give an opinion. Inspectors found that parents are justified in their positive opinions of the school. There was some disagreement between the responses on the questionnaire and the parents who attended the meeting about the quality of information that the school provides to parents. Parents at the meeting thought this was very good and felt well informed. The inspection found that, overall, the quality of information is very good. The inspection also found that the school does all it can to involve parents in the education of their children.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

Students enter the sixth form chiefly from the main school, but a small number, including a few boys, come from other schools in the area. There are currently 202 students on roll. Students come from a very wide range of backgrounds and there is a wide range of attainment on entry. The proportion of students coming into the sixth form from Beaverwood School has risen over the past few years: last year 60 per cent entered. About six students a year transfer from other schools. There is a small number of students from minority ethnic groups, reflecting the school population as a whole. There are five students with special educational needs and a higher proportion than average eligible for free school meals. Students can choose from a wide range of courses, which include GNVQ. The ability of students on entry to the sixth form is slightly below average, because of the inclusive policy of the school, which seeks to give opportunity of post-16 study to as wide a range of its pupils as possible.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

This is a good sixth form, in which students achieve well. It is cost effective. Students enter with attainment levels slightly below the national average, and they attain average results in GCE A-level examinations and vocational examinations. Results have improved steadily in recent years. Teaching and learning are good and the care, support and guidance the sixth form provides are of a very high quality. The leadership and management are excellent. The courses provided meet the needs of students well.

Strengths

- Teaching is good; over a third of it is very good.
- The students develop very positive attitudes to study and work hard to succeed on their courses.
- Students make good progress and achieve well.
- There is a very good range of courses for a school of this size on offer to meet the needs of all students.
- Assessment information is used very well to guide students and to track their progress.
- The care and support given to pupils are excellent, as is the advice on careers and further education opportunities.

What could be improved

- Challenge for higher attaining students.
- Consistent expectations of independence.
- The use of ICT across subjects.
- Curriculum arrangements.

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

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comments
Mathematics	Good: teaching is good and recent results show a significant improvement.
Biology	Good: Results at A-level are generally in line with the national average in 2002. Effective teaching impacts directly on the learning and success of students' performance. With experienced teachers, overall attainment and progress is good for most students.

Textiles	Very good: Students attain highly and make very good progress. Teaching is very good.
Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comments
Design and technology	Very good: Attainment is excellent and this reflects the quality of teaching.
Business studies	Good: good, often very good, teaching. Students work hard and attain well.
ICT	Good: Attainment in examinations is average and students achieve well. Teaching is very good. For other students, ICT is offered as part of a key skills programme in which it is well planned and well taught.
Physical education	Good: very good extra-curricular provision and enhancement help students to attain well and standards are improving still further in sports studies and dance.
Health and social care	Good: attainment is above average and students make good progress.
Music	Good: the subject is taught well by teachers who have good subject knowledge.
Geography	Very good: very good leadership and good teaching motivate students.
Sociology	Very good: Students make very good progress and reach high standards.
English	Good: Good teaching and a good range of courses help to motivate students.
French	Good: standards are in line with expectations. Teaching is good.

There is good work, along with very good teaching, in media studies and in some key skills lessons. The effectiveness of the good teaching in theatre studies is hampered by the very small group sizes. Teaching in Spanish and statistics is good and is very good in religious studies.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Excellent. Educational and personal guidance and support are particular strengths of the provision in this sixth form.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Excellent leadership from the headteacher and senior management team is complemented by the excellent management skills of the head of sixth form. Teaching and learning are regularly monitored to assure and improve standards and quality and the courses. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

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 choice of courses. Teachers are accessible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The advice given about the sixth form. Assessment of work. Information about progress. Careers advice.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for personal problems. • The range of enrichment activities. • Response to the views of sixth formers.
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Many students had just entered the sixth form and so were unable to respond to some of the questions. During the week of the inspection, their only reservations concerned timetabling arrangements that were not helpful. All praised the provision that the school made for them. They were particularly appreciative of the support they received.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Attainment on entry into the school is at the lower end of the average scale, due to five grammar schools nearby which take more able pupils. As a result there are fewer higher attaining girls than in a normal comprehensive school. However, there are also fewer lower attaining girls. In 2002, attainment at the end of Year 9 was above average overall, although there is a slight variation among subjects. At the end of Year 11, attainment was above average, although again, there is a little variation. The school slightly exceeded its target of 64 per cent five or more A* to C grades by 1.1 per cent. The targets are appropriately challenging. The data for 2002 cannot yet be confirmed by national figures. In 2001, attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 9 was above the national average and in science was average. In comparison with similar schools, attainment in all three subjects was average. Over the past few years, the trend in rising performance has been below the national trend. The attainment of girls in English over the past few years has been broadly average, and in science and mathematics has been above average. At the end of Year 11, attainment was average overall, but this was a freak year due to a small number of disaffected pupils. The trend in performance has been below the national trend, one reason for this being that all pupils are entered for GCSE examinations, as the school treats all its pupils equally. This depresses attainment when compared with other schools nationally.
2. Progress over the past few years between Years 7 and 9 has been very good and the inspection found that it continues to be very good. As there are fewer higher attaining girls, teachers have to work hard to enable girls to maintain the progress in Years 10 and 11, which in these years is good and is improving. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as their peers, as do gifted and talented pupils and the higher attaining. In a few subjects, they receive less challenge than they can cope with and here, progress is satisfactory. Pupils from minority ethnic cultures make similar progress as the school treats all its pupils equally. There are too few pupils for whom English is an additional language to make judgements about their progress.
3. The inspection found that attainment continues to improve. The reasons for this are skilled teaching, the excellent use of assessment at senior management level to set targets and track pupils' progress, the good leadership by heads of faculties and departments, and the excellent procedures that have been established to support pupils' academic and personal development. These combine to ensure that pupils make good progress overall. However, there is still some variation in attainment and achievement between departments, sometimes due to the high turnover of teachers, which inevitably has brought about inconsistencies in translating the policies of the school into practice.
4. In English, pupils attain well above average results by the end of Year 9 and above average results by the end of Year 11. Progress is good. In mathematics, attainment is above average, although staffing difficulties last year caused a slight fall in attainment. Progress is very good in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Attainment in drama in Year 11 has been affected by turnover of staff and attainment is well below average. In science, attainment has improved significantly under the direction of a new head of faculty and is well above average by the end of Year 11. By the end of Year 9, attainment is still broadly average. The achievement of pupils is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11.
5. The school has been focusing on literacy for many years and students use their skills well in other subjects. Numeracy has had less attention and is dealt with satisfactorily by most teachers. Pupils have the mathematical skills that they need in other subjects.
6. Attainment in both ICT and design and technology is well above average by Year 9. At the end of Year 11, performance in the subjects within technology is well above average, pupils maintaining the very good progress that they make in Years 7 to 9. Attainment in ICT has fluctuated, but in 2002, it was high. The use of ICT in many departments is inconsistent as new staff need training and the suites of computers are newly established, so pupils do not always use the skills they are taught in discrete lessons in Year 7.

7. Modern foreign languages have suffered from staffing difficulties. Rigorous action by senior management has raised attainment to average in Year 11, although attainment in German is still weaker and is below average. Progress is satisfactory and is beginning to improve as a new head of faculty has taken up appointment and is clear about how to raise attainment.
8. In history and geography, attainment is above average in Year 9 and broadly average by the end of Year 11. Progress in both subjects is very good in Years 7 to 9, and good in Years 10 and 11. Again, attainment in religious studies has suffered because of staffing difficulties. Teaching in Years 7 to 11 is by non-specialists, who although highly skilled, lack specific subject knowledge. Attainment by the end of Year 9 is average and by the end of Year 11 is above average. Pupils make good progress in Years 7 to 9 and very good progress in Years 10 and 11.
9. In art, pupils make good progress in Years 7 to 9 and attain above average standards. In Years 10 and 11, they make very good progress to attain well above average standards. Attainment in Years 7 to 9 in music is average and pupils make satisfactory progress, although in previous years, attainment has been above average. In Years 10 and 11, progress is good and attainment is above average. In physical education, pupils make good progress to attain above average standards by the end of Year 9. Attainment by the end of Year 11 has been below average, but is now improving due to action by the faculty and is above average, except in dance where it is well above average.
10. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Attainment of pupils at the end of Year 9 in English and mathematics has been maintained, although in science attainment has fallen. Across the school, pupils in Years 7 to 9 now make very good progress, whereas progress was good previously. Progress in Years 10 and 11 is now good; previously it was satisfactory. Attainment at the end of Year 11 has been maintained at above average and 2002 results have improved further. Attainment in art has improved significantly, although staffing problems in modern foreign languages have affected attainment in French in both Year 11. There is still inconsistency in attainment between subjects and the match of task to the ability of pupils remains an issue in some subjects.

Sixth form

11. The school's policy of targeting students' individual potential means that some enter the sixth form with lower grades than is sometimes found. Students achieve well in the sixth form to attain average standards. This is due to the excellent systems for monitoring students' attainment and tracking their progress, supported by excellent personal support and guidance.
12. Attainment in many subjects has fluctuated over the years but this is partly explained by small numbers of students in some subjects taking the examinations, which makes comparison with national data unreliable. Nationally corroborated information on attainment in Years 12 and 13 for 2002 is not yet available, although early indications are that attainment has been maintained at average at the end of Year 13. In many subjects, attainment is above average. No information was available about attainment at the end of Year 12.
13. In 2001, attainment was average overall. In the subjects where numbers of students are large enough to make comparisons valid, attainment in biology, mathematics, sociology, sports studies and GNVQ business studies was well above average. Attainment in design and technology was in the top five per cent of the country and in chemistry and geography was above average. Conversely, attainment in art and design and history was well below average and in English language and religious studies was below average. Attainment in English literature and A-level business studies was average. A few boys attend the sixth form, but the numbers are too small to make clear judgements about their progress.
14. The inspection found that attainment is average overall but that progress is good and in some subjects, very good. This includes lower attaining pupils, some of whom make excellent progress from a low base. In many subjects, higher attaining pupils achieve equally well as do pupils from minority ethnic groups. However, this is inconsistent across subjects. In biology, business studies, English and French, there is sometimes insufficient challenge for more able students.

15. In mathematics, business studies, health and social care and sociology, provision is improving, which is raising attainment further. Staffing difficulties affected attainment in business studies, but this situation has now been resolved. Attainment is well above average in mathematics, design and technology, textiles, health and social care and sociology and students achieve very well. Attainment in physical education, English language and geography is above average and students make good progress except in geography, where their progress is very good. Attainment is broadly average in biology, business studies, music and French although most students make good progress. In ICT, attainment is broadly average and students make satisfactory progress. Some faculties have insufficient access to ICT equipment, although long-term plans under the Technology College Initiative should ease this situation.
16. The school has maintained the average standards from the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good and are clear strengths of the school. These findings reflect those of the last inspection. Sixth form pupils themselves speak of the school being very good in all that it does. Pupils of all ethnic origins in the main school and sixth form are very well motivated and are keen to learn. The greater majority of pupils listen particularly attentively and respond quickly to instruction and to teachers' expectations for working individually, in pairs and occasionally in groups. They demonstrate a keen desire to take part in lessons and show a good deal of enthusiasm for their work. Where teaching is good or better, pupils respond very positively to the challenges given them, but on occasions where teaching is less effective some pupils lose interest and concentration. At these times, the behaviour of some pupils was inappropriate. This is partly as a result of pupils' being new to teachers and also that some work is not sufficiently well matched to all pupils' level of ability. Pupils use their initiative very well and carry out independent research in using computers and library books in their own time as there are not yet sufficient computer resources for pupils in all departments to use during lessons. The high quality of pupils' attitudes to their work and school results in freedom from graffiti in the school or pupils' books and litter is quickly cleaned up.
18. Pupils' behaviour is good, resulting in the school's being an orderly community. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. Pupils know what is expected of them, they respond accordingly and sustain good self-discipline. Pupils are polite and courteous to staff, adults and visitors. Movement around the school is orderly, although on some occasions, pupils do not all follow the school guidelines when moving around the narrow corridors and doorways, which sometimes become congested. Behaviour in the playground is occasionally boisterous but remains good overall. There was no evidence of bullying or oppressive behaviour. Pupils commented that the school is largely bullying free but any bullying occurring is dealt with very quickly and does not become a concern. The total number of exclusions last year, at 42, was below the borough average, and rests principally with a small number of offenders. The school deals with all cases of inappropriate behaviour efficiently.
19. Relationships among pupils and between pupils and adults are very good. Racial harmony is a strength of the school. Pupils of all ethnic origins represented in the school are well integrated, leading to the school's being a harmonious and orderly community. Pupils of all abilities and ethnic origins work and play very well together, with no indication of racial disharmony. Staff generally know pupils well and treat them both courteously and with friendliness, which pupils appreciate and respond to well. Pupils show very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and show concern for one another's welfare.
20. Pupils with special educational needs are positive in class in their response to lessons and work well collaboratively together. An example of pupils working well together was in a Year 11 curriculum support lesson when working on an essay on *Educating Rita*. In a Year 7 catch up lesson, all pupils were eager to answer questions asked by the teacher. Pupils have established very good relationships with their teachers, although there are one or two exceptions when teachers fail to motivate them.

21. Pupils' personal development is of high quality. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils of all year groups are keen to take responsibilities, including the girls who have been in school for only a few weeks. Older pupils continue to be the good role models mentioned in the last report and take their roles of responsibility very maturely. Each year group is represented on the school council.
22. The impact of the school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Whole school planning for this area of girls' development is good but is less well developed in the teaching in some departments. Particularly good examples were evident in English in pupils' poetry and also when pupils empathised with soldiers' feelings in World War 1; in a personal and social education lesson, pupils' awareness of others less well off than themselves was developed in relation to wealth and poverty. Good evidence of pupils' spiritual development was also present in religious studies and tutorial lessons that built effectively on the harvest thanksgiving assembly theme for the week.
23. Pupils' moral and social development are furthered very well as a result of the school's high expectations in participation in school activities and in following the school's learning agreement. These facets of pupils' development reflect the positive relationship between staff and pupils and underscores strongly the very positive ethos that pervades the school throughout its work.
24. Pupils' cultural development is good. A wide range of visits to places of interest focusing on Western European and other cultures underpins the work done in lessons. Good examples include pupils' cultural awareness of other civilisations through design and technology and in textile design. This awareness and consideration of other ethnic origins are also clearly evident in the racial integration of pupils other than white indigenous pupils, particularly where pupils from minority ethnic origins represent only a small part of the school's population.
25. Attendance is largely in line with the national average. Despite the school's very strong and repeated requests for parents to ensure a high level of attendance at school, too many families continue to take their children on holiday in term time. As a result of this and despite the very close links with the educational welfare officer, the level of attendance is satisfactory overall and reflects the findings of the last inspection. The greater majority of pupils' are punctual in arriving at school. Some slippage in the use of planned curriculum time is evident where a number of lessons both finish and start at the same time giving pupils insufficient time to move between classrooms.

Sixth form

26. Students in the sixth form have very positive attitudes to school and to their work. They enjoy being in the sixth form and have very good relationships with teachers and each other. The vast majority of students are hard working and many use their well-developed skills of research to work independently. In some subjects, however, there are insufficient opportunities for them to develop skills of individual research. They collaborate very well, there were some examples of high-level debate, with students having the confidence to put forward points of view and argue their case.
27. Most students are proud to be in the sixth form and represent it well in the school. They respond very well to the many opportunities to take responsibility, such as the student council. Other roles of responsibility include head girl and charity representative who also serve on the school council. They sometimes support younger pupils in their lessons and do this with sensitivity and maturity. Many run clubs, such as the Smile Club, which supports younger pupils, new to the school. Most attend regularly, although attendance at key skills lessons is patchy.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

28. Teaching throughout the school is good and almost a third of teaching is very good. Ninety-six per cent of lessons are satisfactory or better and almost three-quarters of lessons good or better. The overall quality of learning is also good and pupils make good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. There is a remarkable degree of consistency with such a high proportion of teachers relatively new to the school. This is because of rigorous evaluation of lessons by senior staff and careful feedback to individuals, coupled with in-service training. The very few

unsatisfactory lessons that were observed were mainly with younger classes. As it was early in the school year, a few teachers had not yet been able to consolidate the boundaries of acceptable behaviour in classes where a number of pupils have challenging behaviour.

29. Teaching in all subjects is good, although there are inconsistencies in all departments. The teaching of literacy across the school is good because of the work that has gone into this area. The teaching of numeracy across the school is satisfactory, as the whole school approach is at an early stage of implementation. The teaching of ICT across the school has been affected because large numbers of staff who had been trained through the national strategy have left the school and new members of staff have needed to be trained. Also, access to equipment is perceived as difficult by many staff. Generally the teaching is satisfactory, although when it is taught as a subject, the teaching is good. In music and religious studies, teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, but is good in Years 10 and 11. Staffing difficulties are the reason for this.
30. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well, and when they have support, the teaching is often very good. In most lessons where they are taught with their peers, pupils make good gains in knowledge and understanding. Some pupils are withdrawn from class for specialist support. Where lessons are most effective the pupils are given clear steps in order to learn. For example, in a Year 8 withdrawal lesson, the teacher was very clear about what she expected the pupil to achieve. In a Year 9 modern languages lesson, all pupils, including those with special educational needs had positive attitudes and persevered in the face of difficulties with pronouncing and understanding some phrases. All members of staff have copies of individual education plans and pupils with special educational needs are identified in lesson plans. In practice, although work generally meets the needs of the pupils, there is some inconsistency.
31. Higher attaining pupils are generally taught well, helped by the system of targets and tracking. In some lessons, the tasks are not adequately matched to their ability, so their learning is not challenged adequately. Gifted and talented pupils are recognised by the school, but there is inconsistency in how they are challenged and teaching does not always take account of their needs. The school's approach of tracking the progress of individual pupils ensures that pupils from ethnic minority groups are taught equally well.
32. A consistent strength in teaching is the specialist subject knowledge that the vast majority of teachers bring to their lessons. Teachers use their expertise well to move the learning of pupils forward. In a Year 7 class, the teacher's knowledge of the story *Darkwood Manor*, coupled with her understanding of how to teach literacy, enabled her class to extend their literacy skills and to understand how authors use language to embed deeper meaning into their writing.
33. Lessons are planned well to ensure that time is used to the full and pupils' motivation is maintained. Resources are also used effectively to maintain interest. Pupils therefore put much energy and commitment into their work. In the very good and excellent teaching, teachers also explained the aim of the lessons to the pupils so that they understood what was expected of them. This is a feature of the teaching of a number of departments. In a Year 9 geography lesson, this worked particularly well. Pupils were asked to decide on sites for locating a theme park, using a range of information supplied by the teacher. The teacher clearly explained what they were expected to know at the end of the lesson, and asked the pupils to write it in their books as a reminder. This enabled the pupils to focus on the task.
34. Very good relationships in most classes and effective management of behaviour create an environment in which all can listen and learn, a key strength of the school. Pupils in Year 8 were invited to discuss the findings of their research into Henry VIII. The ethos created by skilful management and supportive relationships enabled pupils to understand key features of this period of history.
35. Many teachers have high expectations and challenge pupils to extend their learning. Often, this is seen in the way they use questions to probe and thus provoke thought. Many teachers are skilled in pitching a range of questions to pupils of different ability, thereby challenging higher attaining pupils and ensuring that lower attaining pupils understand. In a science lesson, the teacher moved round groups, pitching questions appropriately at the groups, which consolidated their understanding of the principles of melting and evaporation.

36. All teachers set homework regularly and refer to it in their lessons. Most teachers assess the work of their pupils during the course of the lesson, assuring themselves that pupils have understood the point of the teaching. In a Year 11 mathematics class, the teacher moved around the class, offering guidance and advice, at the same time assessing their understanding. Work is marked regularly; the best marking indicates how pupils might improve their work. Often this is done in discussion with the pupils. There is however an inconsistency in the usefulness of marking across the school. Targets are referred to by many teachers during the course of their teaching, but not all teachers refer to the targets in their assessments.
37. Many teachers encourage pupils to be independent, a weakness in the last inspection. In one music lesson, the teacher gave many opportunities for pupils to offer their own ideas and time to explain them. The pupils enjoyed this and all worked with enthusiasm.
38. Many of these features came together in the very good lessons. In a Year 11 physical education lesson, the teacher shared the aim with the pupils and throughout explained carefully what was expected. The high expectations challenged pupils and therefore raised the quality of their performance. The teacher observed the work carefully, assessing individuals and helping them to improve their work. This enabled the higher and lower attainers in the group to learn equally effectively. Gifted and talented pupils in the group were appropriately challenged. Searching questions checked on their understanding and encouraged the pupils to think deeply. The teacher's high expectations of their independence by expecting them to solve problems made them think about their own learning. The learning and achievement of this group was very high.
39. Significant improvement in the quality of teaching has taken place since the last inspection, mainly due to the high quality of monitoring and evaluation at both senior management and faculty level. There is a much higher quality of teaching and more lessons are good or better. Pupils are more regularly encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and the use of assessment has improved. There are still issues to do with matching the task more closely to the needs of individual pupils in some lessons.

Sixth form

40. Teaching in the sixth form is good, and over a third is very good. No teaching was identified as unsatisfactory. Tracking the progress of students is a key strength of the teaching, ensuring that most students are taught equally effectively, although in some subjects, there is insufficient challenge for higher attaining students. Key skills are taught well. They are taught as discrete lessons and also through other subjects. Teaching of ICT varies according to the confidence of the teacher. Generally, lower attaining students and those with special educational needs are taught well.
41. A particular strength is the knowledge and understanding that teachers have of their subjects, which they use to extend the learning of their students. The very good relationships and management of students create an ethos in which students feel confident to express their views, which deepens their understanding. Some teachers convey enthusiasm about their subject, which inspires their students. One example was in media studies where the lively, enthusiastic approach inspired students to reflect deeply on the narrative of film and how it can be affected by a range of techniques. Generally, students are encouraged to be independent and to undertake research. There were many examples of this; in a Year 13 business education lesson, students were encouraged to work independently in groups and many showed good initiative in this situation. In a few subjects, students are too dependent on the teacher.
42. Resources are generally used well, but some teachers do not use ICT with confidence and have insufficient access to computers. In art/textiles, outside agencies support students' learning well.
43. Generally, teachers have high expectations although there are examples of gifted and talented pupils and higher attaining pupils being insufficiently challenged by their work. High expectations were seen in a sociology lesson, where students were successfully developing skills of critical evaluation. Teachers' questioning skills are effective, such as in an English lesson when effective questions led to a lively debate about seven modern deadly sins.

44. Planning is usually effective and ensures that time is used well. This was particularly good in a health and social care class, where the careful planning ensured that students' understanding and knowledge of digestion was successfully consolidated and extended. Some teachers share the aim of the lesson with their classes, which ensures that students know what is expected of them.
45. The good quality of teaching in the sixth form is a key factor in their good achievement.
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?
46. Overall curriculum provision is good, with many more strengths than weaknesses. The curriculum for pupils between the ages of eleven and fourteen is broad and balanced. There is an appropriate focus on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The other National Curriculum subjects receive an adequate amount of teaching time. There are opportunities for all to study two modern foreign languages before making their option choices and a good programme of lessons in personal and social development (PSD). Pupils with special educational needs receive good, well-organised support. Problems outside the school's control mean that some Year 7 and Year 8 pupils have to leave the school site to catch buses at 3 pm, 15 minutes before the official end of the school day. Despite this, they receive the recommended 25 hours of teaching time a week.
47. The curriculum is, in general, broad and balanced for pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. In addition to the core subjects, most pupils study French or German, design and technology, an expressive arts option, and also select from a range of other subjects. A developing feature of the curriculum is the opportunity provided for less academically inclined or disaffected pupils to take up a range of work-related options and other projects, which they enjoy and from which they benefit. Again, pupils with special educational needs receive good levels of support. Some pupils choose to take religious studies as one of their GCSE option choices. For those who do not, there is a range of provision, including religious education lessons and units of work in the PSD course. In total, however, the curricular provision for religious education for those not taking the GCSE course does not meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There is very good provision to meet the needs of pupils in science. Most girls follow a double science course. Those who have shown particular aptitude for science are able to study biology, chemistry and physics as separate subjects, leading to three GCSE qualifications. In ICT, there is an opportunity for those who wish to take the subject to GCSE level.
48. A well-structured and progressive tutorial programme is taught by form tutors in form time to Years 7 and 8. It covers citizenship, environmental issues, health education (including sex and drugs awareness education), careers education and economic and industrial awareness. The inclusiveness of the school is emphasised in the ways that equal opportunity issues, anti-bullying education and multi-racial themes are discussed in all years. The implementation of the personal and social education programme for Years 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 is good and the course itself is well planned. One lesson a week is devoted to the programme, taught by form tutors, apart from a small number of days when the entire curriculum is adapted to focus on a particular aspect of the course. Materials on an appropriate range of topics, such as sex education, are provided for tutors to help them to teach the programme. Constructive use was also made of tutorial time during the inspection, to further support the personal development of the girls.
49. In Years 7, 8 and 9, the literacy strategy is implemented fully and is effective. Strategies for promoting literacy appear in every faculty's scheme of work and they are applied effectively and mainly consistently. As a result, it is rare for poor literacy skills to restrict the progress in learning of lower achievers, even in subjects such as history, which are dependent on good communication skills. The strategy for promoting numeracy across the curriculum is at an earlier stage of implementation than that for literacy, but is already making an effective impact and is satisfactory overall.
50. Planning of the curriculum is generally very good and takes account of the needs of individual pupils. Gifted and talented pupils are identified, their progress is monitored carefully and a range of extension work is usually made available for them. At the time of the inspection, the provision for the gifted and talented pupils was under review. Further, whole-school, provision is planned.

51. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Learning support assistants liaise well with class teachers, but when they are not present, the work is sometimes inappropriate for them. Pupils who are withdrawn focus appropriately on basic literacy and social skills.
52. The curriculum is strengthened by a particularly rich and varied programme of extra-curricular activities and a substantial number of pupils enjoy these opportunities. A range of sporting clubs is available, along with a good variety of cultural opportunities. These include choirs, a poetry club, a maths club, theatre and dance groups and visits both in the local area and abroad (including Germany, Spain and France). Girls are offered the chance to take part in national and regional competitions and challenges, such as the UK Schools Mathematical Challenge (in which two pupils received a gold award), the Duke of Edinburgh Award and the World Challenge. All these opportunities are much appreciated by pupils and often help to raise standards. Overall, the extra-curricular provision is excellent, as is the careers guidance. The careers programme is very well organised and the school has won a national award for its quality.
53. There are very good curricular links with the community and with other educational institutions. The work experience programme benefits immensely from the links that the school has formed with very many businesses and other organisations in the local area. The Neighbourhood Engineers group, a committee of staff and local engineers provide a design day for Year 7, an 'egg race' for Year 8, a Year 9 project at the Science Museum, an industrial visit for Year 10 and careers information for the annual careers convention. Many organisations provide inputs into the GNVQ health and social care syllabus, including social services and Age Concern. The school is one of seven in the Bromley Schools Collegiate (SCITT) providing training for trainee teachers in the borough. There are also very good links with local schools, including local primary schools. For example, Year 6 pupils come to Beaverwood for induction, and members of the school staff visit the 56 feeder primary schools on a regular basis. A notable feature of curriculum development is the school's successful bid for Technology College status. The implementation of this includes close links with primary schools to develop joint initiatives. Faculties have plans to strengthen the links with both businesses and local primary schools.
54. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. There is very good provision in English, geography and in sociology, business studies and health and social care in the sixth form. Some of the good provision is evident in personal and social development and in cross-curricular studies. The school has done much to ensure that very good documentation is in place. However, this comprehensive documentation is fairly new and has not had sufficient time yet to make an overall impact. The school monitors the provision well at senior management level. Although this monitoring occurs regularly, it is not so evident at department level.
55. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual development. A number of different assemblies are held during the week and these help to promote pupils' awareness of the world around them. Form tutor times are often used very well. They provide an opportunity for pupils to take part in discussions, write poems and prayers and express their own ideas. The 'Thought for the Week' bulletin provides an excellent resource for teachers during form time and includes an opportunity for pupils to appreciate and reflect on different world religions. There is not much evidence in some subjects of planning for spiritual development. There are good examples however, where careful thought has been given to planning. This was evident in a Year 8 geography lesson when pupils were discussing the structure of the earth and in a Year 12 English language lesson when students were giving a presentation about their own lives.
56. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Parents spoke highly of this provision at their meeting. Very good provision is made in many subjects of the curriculum, including religious education and citizenship. Pupils explore moral issues, including the effects of war and every opportunity is given for pupils to discuss other issues that are of importance to them. Pupils show respect for property and take care of the local environment. The provision for pupils' social development is fostered very well throughout the school. Residential visits and extra-curricular activities, as well as provision in lessons and other activities, have helped to develop the social awareness of pupils.

57. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils gain an understanding of their own culture through many areas of the curriculum. A good improvement has been made since the last inspection in developing pupils' awareness of living in a pluralist society. Racial harmony is promoted well within the school. There has been a Black History Month and school visits have included one to Israel. Pupils gain an understanding of the cultural and ethnic diversity of British society in geography. In design and technology pupils explore design influences from other countries. There is a good cross section of literature in the library drawing on authors from across the world and a display of poems from around the world by Year 11 pupils. There are some weaknesses, however, for example, in art, where pupils' awareness of other cultures is not always fully developed.

Sixth form

58. The school has an average sized sixth form. For a school of its size, it offers a good range of advanced supplementary, advanced level and vocational courses. Advanced supplementary and advanced level courses include traditionally popular options such as English, mathematics, science and sociology. The curriculum also includes good expressive arts opportunities, with courses in theatre studies, music dance and art. There is excellent provision for learning modern foreign languages, with a total of four, including Russian, available for study. Sports studies is another area of quality, offering very popular and successful A and AS-level courses as well as a course leading to the Community Sports Leader Award. A significant number of girls represent their country or county in sporting events. Very successful technology courses are offered and the take up for these is good. The course in art/textiles is an interesting one that falls outside the remit of design and technology and it meets the needs of some students very well. Vocational courses include business studies at GNVQ intermediate and advanced level, and health and social care. Students also attend courses in key skills, which are well taught, but the bulk of the key skills teaching is through the subject areas. This is audited well and the progress that students make is tracked very well indeed. In most respects the sixth form curriculum is very good, for its breadth and the quality of experiences it offers, but it is good overall because it does not meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Aspects of the syllabus are covered well in the very good personal and social education programme and in the two conference days a year that are held for sixth form students, but the overall amount of time devoted to religious education is too short. The sixth form curriculum also fails to comply with statutory requirements by not providing for a daily act of collective worship.
59. The sixth form offers an excellent range of enrichment activities both in and out of school hours. For example, many students take part in optional physical education, and also in a range of activities, such as theatre and drama groups, similar to those enjoyed by pupils lower down the school. Take-up for these activities in the sixth form is very good, and many students run clubs or sporting activities for younger pupils.
60. Overall, equality of opportunity in the sixth form is satisfactory. Opportunities to benefit from a wide range of well-taught and well-resourced courses are very good and the opportunities offered for enrichment are excellent. Entry to examination courses generally requires students to achieve at least five GCSEs at Grades A* to C, but there is some flexibility if it can be shown that a student will benefit from entry with slightly lower qualifications. However, there were some equality of opportunity issues during the week of the inspection. Some classes are very small, containing as few as one student. Small groups mean that students have limited opportunities to interact with each other, as seen, for example, in a Year 13 theatre studies lesson that contained one student. When it comes to her practical work, she will have to perform in her practical examination with students from the Year 12 class. She will not have the opportunity to test her skills against those who have had the same amount of drama training as she. The timetable, as a result of financial pressures, means that subjects with large groups of students are able to offer five periods a week of AS or A-level teaching, whilst subjects with smaller numbers have to set self-study work instead of one or more of these taught periods. A significant number of lessons for sixth formers is taught after school, as a sixth period on the school day. Some students report that that they are too tired to benefit fully from this arrangement or that they cannot attend for family reasons. In some cases these have been rearranged to lunchtime slots. Although teachers try to make the total time the same, students report that these are sometimes shorter

and that noise from the corridors and adjacent classrooms disadvantages them. The inspection was held early in the first term, before the timetable was finalised, and the school is planning to monitor the situation and seek to remedy shortcomings.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

61. The school provides a very high level of care and support for pupils through its many initiatives including the pastoral system and Smile Club, enabling pupils to gain confidence, self-esteem and, to make good progress in their learning and excellent progress in their personal maturity. This reflects the school's continuing focus on its care for its pupils and is a significant improvement against the findings of the last inspection. The relationships between pupils, staff and adults are very positive and enable the good progress of pupils' learning.
62. Procedures for child protection are very good and show an improvement since the last inspection. The designated person and teaching staff have recently received training in current issues and training has been given to associate staff and midday supervisors. Confidential records are kept securely and close links are maintained with social services and the Police. Systems for ensuring the health and safety of pupils are excellent and indicate a significant improvement since the last inspection. Very effective systems are in place for checking all equipment, including electrical, science apparatus and chemicals and physical education equipment. A full asset management report has identified a number of areas for safety issues that have since been dealt with efficiently. Risk assessment is excellent and is overseen by the very competent members of the governing body. This ensures that all visits and overseas trips linked to curriculum areas receive the full attention necessary for ensuring pupils' welfare.
63. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Effective procedures are in place for contacting parents on a pupil's first day of absence when notification has not been received. This is effectively followed up through a well-defined process in the event of continuing absence. Despite the rigour with which the school analyses attendance information and communicates to parents to ensure full attendance, a number of parents continue to remove their children from school during term. This concern was also identified at the time of the last inspection.
64. Procedures for monitoring and improving pupils' behaviour are also very good. Pupils are fully aware of the school's learning agreement and have played a part in defining the terms of agreement. Staff are very good role models and offer a high level of support. These effective procedures and the caring ethos also ensure freedom from bullying and oppressive behaviour.
65. The school's procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' attainment are outstanding and are a strength of the school. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection. A particularly wide range of assessment data is held for pupils at all stages of their learning and the school keeps itself extremely well informed of the progress of each pupil irrespective of ability. This monitoring spreadsheet gives a comprehensive overview that includes ethnicity, free school meals and identifies those pupils who are gifted and talented, but not those with special educational needs. Staff use the monitoring sheet well for day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress. This very good monitoring begins from pupils' entry to Year 7 and continues throughout the pupils' time in school. Heads of year and faculty conduct annual reviews to identify areas for further development. The progress and success of these initiatives are regularly followed by the senior leadership team.
66. The special educational needs co-ordinator meets regularly with the year co-ordinators to review the progress that pupils make in both their personal and academic development. Support and guidance for these pupils is comprehensive and pupils are offered the same support and guidance as is available to all. The co-ordinator also liaises with the head of careers to discuss pupils with special educational needs (SEN). The careers officer attends all transition reviews. Pupils receive a comprehensive system of support both in the curriculum and outside the timetable-during school breaks and the lunch hour. The pupils are also offered residential programmes. Records are kept of all pupils receiving SEN interventions. They contain on-going evidence of pupil attainment matched against a pupil's individual education plan. The department provides

support when needed for National Curriculum tests and GCSEs. The department has established accreditation for pupils in travel and tourism i.e. a foundation level GNVQ.

67. Although some pupils' records of attainment are slow in arriving when pupils transfer from primary schools, the school very efficiently conducts verbal, non-verbal and quantitative tests relevant to English, mathematics and science. In addition, the school carries out ALIS and YELLIS analysis. This information comes from independent bodies which analyse pupils' performance and predict how well pupils are likely to do at GCSE and A-level. Subject teachers receive as much information about pupils as is possible, including predictions for those who have a high level of absence. This enables teachers to provide the support necessary for pupils to achieve as well as is possible. The actual attainment of those with poor attendance is matched against predictions to determine whether the support given has reaped positive benefits for pupils. Evidence indicates that many pupils benefit well from the focused support they receive. This is particularly good practice.
68. Each department carries out a detailed analysis of GCSE examination results and sets targets for the following year. Teachers assess each pupil against nationally expected levels in Years 7 to 11 and GCE in sixth form and use these as a basis for target setting. Parents are invited to attend target setting evenings and targets are agreed with the tutors. These targets are reviewed each half term and modified accordingly. Teachers' marking of homework follows the monitoring process closely, with pupils' work receiving grades for effort and achievement. Pupils are made aware of these grades and largely understand what they must do to improve their work. They are actively involved in individual target setting in both learning and in areas of personal development.
69. The use of assessment data is very good overall and is an improvement over the findings of the last inspection. The good planning of lessons generally provides a match of work to most pupils' abilities although there is some inconsistency across departments. Some departments and sixth form tutors follow the assessment policy very well for matching work to pupils whilst others give the same worksheet to pupils of all abilities in the class, resulting in some pupils being insufficiently challenged.
70. Careers guidance is excellent and the school has won an award for the quality of this. Pupils have access to a careers adviser and undertake work experience in Year 11. The careers library is available for them along with guidance from tutors and specialist staff.

Sixth form

Assessment

71. The procedures for assessment in the sixth form are exemplary. Students' expected attainment is mapped using information from GCSE and targets are set. Parents are invited to take part in the process. The targets are reviewed each half term and modified. Teachers discuss work with students, indicating how the work can be improved and students' progress is monitored through the profiling system. The information from assessment is used well by some staff but not all, as there are examples of work not sufficiently challenging higher attaining students. Information from ALIS is used to guide the work of the sixth form. At the time of the inspection, which was the fifth week of term, students in Year 12 had not been given their minimum target grades so did not know the level at which they should be working,

Advice, support and guidance

72. The level of support and guidance in the sixth form is very good. Students spoke very highly of the support that they receive from their tutors and the head of sixth form and they feel valued by the school. They are confident in discussing personal difficulties with someone and spoke of how, when they had problems, the school went out of its way to help them. Tutors play a significant role in this.
73. Careers advice is excellent. Students have access to specialist support from the careers service and spoke warmly of the careers advice that is available within school. They have good access to

the library when they need to seek information for their course, although access to computers is sometimes restricted.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

74. The school's partnership with parents is very good and is a further strength of the school. No clear judgement was made at the time of the last inspection, but evidence indicates that this is an area that has also improved. Parents value the school highly and consider it to be an effective school. These findings are supported by the school's receiving the Charter Mark, the Investors in People award, and the very high number of parents who wish to send their daughter to the school.
75. Despite the high value parents place on the school, a number of parents returning the questionnaire were not so highly praising as those at the parents' meeting. Full review of parents concerns has been undertaken and shows that a number of the concerns raised by parents are not substantiated. One issue that is supported by inspectors is in the information provided by the school in pupils' end of year reports. Reports are consistently good in English and mathematics and give clear knowledge of how individual pupils have progressed. This information is inconsistent however, across some departments and some teachers, where too many comments are given regarding pupils' attitudes and behaviour instead of specific skills learned and clear pointers for educational improvement. Despite this the quality of information for parents overall is of high quality with the school providing far more information of an excellent standard than is usual in most schools.
76. The impact of parents' involvement with the school is effective. This is due in part to the hard work of the small but very committed core of the parents and friends association. This group organises a wide range of social and fund-raising activities to very good effect in supporting the school. These include a social for parents of pupils new to the school and a crèche to ensure all parents have full opportunity to attend to meet staff and other parents. This proves very effective in practice and is readily endorsed by parents of pupils in Year 7. Parents are particularly happy with the risk assessment arrangements that are in place for ensuring their children's welfare when on visits in Britain and the continent. Consultation evenings are very well attended and school productions are heavily over-subscribed. The school has difficulty however, in encouraging some parents to take holidays other than in term time. This is a continuing concern to the school and does not reflect the extreme lengths the school takes to achieve full attendance.
77. The special educational needs co-ordinator endeavours to involve parents in planning and setting targets for pupils. Whenever parents are unable to attend meetings the co-ordinator will hold discussions with parents over the phone. This involvement has a positive impact on the motivation and progress of these pupils.
78. Parental support for pupils' learning is very good and parents see the student planner as an effective means of two-way communication with the school. The greater majority of parents also view the staff as being approachable and feel comfortable in taking concerns or suggestions to the school. Inspection evidence supports this very positive feature.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

79. The overall leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher's leadership is excellent. She has very high expectations of her pupils and staff and has set the tone for the ethos of high expectations throughout the school. Her strategic overview of the school is excellent and is seen, for example, in her shrewd questions at senior team meetings. She continually strives for excellence and is responsible for the many awards that the school has gained. The two deputy headteachers are excellent managers. They are skilled in their roles and fulfil them extremely well.
80. Heads of faculty have an excellent understanding of their role and contribute very well to the overall management of the school. Some have been appointed to the role in the past two years and have already made, or are starting to make, an impact on their faculties. Others who are

recently appointed know where improvements need to be made, but have not had time to put their management skills into effect. A key leadership group is the curriculum committee which meets regularly to review provision and to make decisions. Governors appropriately attend these meetings. Leadership and management of faculties are good overall, and some are led very well. Where there have been staffing difficulties, the senior management team has ensured that the faculty has been managed well.

81. Governors are very effective. They have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and where the school needs to develop, as their systems for gaining information are good. However, they are sometimes too dependent on the senior management team for information. The governing body has a wide range of expertise that they use well and give freely of their time to support the school. They are included in meetings where strategic decisions are made.
82. The process of school improvement planning is very comprehensive, beginning with a review and involving all teachers and governors. The priorities are appropriate for moving the school forward. It is carefully costed. Governors and staff use it continually.
83. There are excellent systems for reviewing the work of the school. Regular monitoring of teaching takes place with feedback to individuals and the whole staff. This is a reason why the quality of teaching is so strong. Assessment data are used exceptionally well by senior management. Heads of faculty are appropriately involved in monitoring their faculties. One example is the recent significant rise in attainment in science, following rigorous management action. Attainment in modern foreign languages also improved in Year 11. The use of information from monitoring is better in some faculties than in others.
84. The management of special educational needs is very good overall. Pupils with special educational needs are only loosely identified on the pupil monitoring booklet, however, this is held in a separate detailed booklet. The special educational needs co-ordinator is not a member of the senior management team, although she uses her line manager to pass on her knowledge and expertise of pupils. The co-ordinator maintains clear systems and procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs. Subject guidance has been drawn up by the department. All teachers have had training in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs.
85. At the time of the inspection, only one pupil was receiving support for learning English. However, two others arrived and the senior management team quickly arranged external support for them.
86. The school is committed to equal opportunities, seen in its aims, which it meets successfully and in the way in which it treats all pupils equally. The school gives very high priority to the professional development of its staff. One example is the involvement of middle management in the appointment of new staff to their faculty. An assistant headteacher was managing the appointment of a new head of department as part of professional development. The aim is to give staff expertise in this area, in preparation for any promotion they may seek. Performance management has built on from the previous system of appraisal and is well embedded in the practice of the school.
87. Finances are managed excellently. Funds are used well and the governors and staff constantly seek additional funding through awards and other initiatives. Budgeting is thoughtful and prudent. Governors seek value from all their spending, but are not yet looking at the value that spending has on the attainment of pupils. Excellent attention is given to the four principles of best value, comparison, challenge, consultation and competition.
88. There has been a high turnover of staff in the last two years with just under half having gone on to promoted posts. This inevitably has put pressure on senior staff who have spent much time in recruitment, and on managing some faculties. The turnover of staff has affected attainment in business education, English, mathematics and modern foreign languages. However, all departments except religious studies are now staffed with teachers who have expertise in the subject. This is a tribute to the senior managers of the school.
89. The school buildings very effectively cater for the school's needs, providing good quality accommodation with plenty of capacity for main school pupils and sixth form students. There is

very good quality provision for all departments, together with the extensive grassed area, sports field, sports hall and tennis courts. The buildings and grounds are kept in very good order and the school's maintenance of its resources is also very effective. One issue concerns the school that is supported by inspectors. The demountable classroom adjacent to the main building hall requires continual maintenance to keep it to a usable standard.

90. Learning resources are good overall with the exception of English, where more fiction books are needed. In art and design, books, texts, pictures and artefacts are satisfactory. Although provision of resources in these subjects is satisfactory, insufficient resources or access to ICT equipment is evident. Very good provision of resources, however, is made for the history department. Resources to support pupils with special educational needs are good overall but these pupils similarly lack access to computers to support their learning. The number of pupils for whom English is a new language has recently increased. The school already has effective arrangements in hand to secure sufficient resources to meet the needs of these pupils with these resources to become available shortly.
91. Taking account of the attainment on entry which is at the lower end of average, the attainment when pupils leave which is above average, the quality of education and the cost per pupil, the school provides very good value for money.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

92. The overall leadership and management of the sixth form are excellent. The headteacher has a clear vision of how the sixth form should develop and the management skills of the head of the sixth form complement this vision. Governors fulfil their responsibilities towards the sixth form well. They have effective systems for finding out about the operation of the sixth form, including being involved in school improvement planning and the curriculum committee where many strategic decisions are made.
93. Monitoring the work of the sixth form is good overall. The systems are excellent, but not all teachers use the information well to set appropriate tasks for their students.
94. The sixth form is cost effective as, for financial purposes, it is treated as a unit in its own right. Students enter the sixth form with a wider entry profile than is sometimes found and leave with average attainment so the value for money is good. Senior staff take excellent account of the principles of best value.

Resources

95. The accommodation for the sixth form is good and includes a quiet study room, which students appreciate. Students are allowed access to empty rooms in the school if they wish to work alone. Staff who teach in the sixth form are well qualified. Resources are generally good, although access to ICT is a problem in some subjects.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

96. This is a very successful school that has identified the issues that will make it even more successful. In order for this to happen, the headteacher, governors and staff should:
- (1) Tackle the inconsistencies within and across departments, particularly;
 - i. The use of information from assessment to set tasks that extend the learning of all pupils, including higher and lower attainers, pupils with special educational needs and the gifted and talented;
 - ii. Use information from monitoring teaching and learning to bring even more consistency;
 - iii. Carry out the plans to improve attainment in modern foreign languages;

- iv. Ensure that plans to develop ICT under the status of technology college are followed through. (paragraphs 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 18, 30, 31, 32, 36, 52, 54, 55, 56, 70, 76, 84, 91, 101, 107, 115, 120, 121, 122, 129, 135, 147, 150, 153, 156, 159, 160, 161, 163, 164, 165, 168, 169, 170, 172, 178, 182, 184, 185, 188, 203)

Sixth form

- (1) Ensure that information from tracking and assessment is used to plan work that challenges all students; (paragraphs 15, 40, 44, 72, 94, 219, 232, 271, 275)
- (2) Tackle the inconsistency amongst teachers in fostering student independence by drawing on the good practice that is already in the school; (paragraphs 27, 42, 198, 202, 219, 273, 274)
- (3) Ensure that all students take advantage of the plentiful access to ICT; (paragraphs 16, 41, 43, 96, 214, 220, 236, 258, 260),
- (4) Maintain the emphasis on recruiting and retaining suitable staff and on providing a satisfactory timetable for all pupils. (paragraphs 61, 199, 207, 215, 233, 271)

Other areas that governors should consider in their action plan are:

- The development of skills of numeracy; (paragraphs 6, 117, 130,)
- The consistency of developing skills of literacy across subjects; (paragraphs 108, 130, 148, 174, 184, 186,)
- The use of marking to encourage pupils to improve their work; (paragraphs 37, 107, 148, 192)
- The consistency of encouraging pupils' skills of evaluation (paragraphs; 126, 129, 184, 186)
- Meet the statutory requirements for religious education in Years 10 and 11. (paragraphs 9, 48, 59, 194)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	145
	Sixth form	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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Years 7 – 11

Number	5	39	54	40	7	0	0
Percentage	3	27	37	28	5	0	0

Sixth form

Number	1	18	28	4	0	0	0
Percentage	2	35	53	8	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1336	202
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	134	0

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	15	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	165	0

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	50

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	64 (37 of these in sixth form)

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	9.3
National comparative data	8.1

School data	0.5
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	0	218	218

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	189	148	150
	Total	189	148	150
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	87 (83)	68 (75)	69 (70)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	39 (22)	38 (48)	29 (32)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	168	181	157
	Total	168	181	157
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	77 (72)	83 (82)	72 (71)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	34 (29)	47 (47)	32 (34)
	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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2002	0	214	214

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	138	207	213
	Total	138	207	213
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	65 (55)	98 (95)	100 (97)
	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	School	42.6 (40.2)

per pupil	National	39 (39)
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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 pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	N/a
	National		N/a

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	3	56	59

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	3	64	67
	Average point score per candidate	(13)	(15.2)	(15.1)
National	Average point score per candidate	(16.9)	(18)	(17.5)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	3	56	59	0	8	8
	Average point score per candidate	13.0	15.8	15.7	N/A	11.2	11.2
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.7	17.4	N/A	11.4	10.6

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 pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0	na
	National		81.0

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1150	34	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	1	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
14	0	0

Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	2	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	5	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	4	0	0
Chinese	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	29	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	102	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	79.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.6

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	11.6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	286

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72.0
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 2	na
Key Stage 3	27.2
Key Stage 4	22.9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	3,931,727
Total expenditure	3,895,717
Expenditure per pupil	2,946,84
Balance brought forward from previous year	73,161
Balance carried forward to next year	109,171

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	39.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	36.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1121
Number of questionnaires returned	422

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	50	8	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	40	45	5	1	9
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	52	7	2	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	52	10	2	10
The teaching is good.	31	57	3	1	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	42	15	1	9
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	44	6	2	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	32	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	28	46	15	2	9
The school is well led and managed.	43	45	4	0	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	48	4	1	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	47	7	2	14

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Pupils make good progress, and their levels of attainment at the ends of Years 9 and 11 are above average.
- Teaching is usually good, and often very good.
- Relationships are very good, and pupils enjoy English.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT.
- The stock of books which pupils may borrow to read for pleasure is insufficient to promote the strong culture of literacy which would support further improvements in attainment.
- Evaluation of pupils' work and the follow up of these evaluations.

97. Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were above the national average and in line with those for similar schools. The data for 2002 indicate that results were further improved, and likely to be well above the national average. In the GCSE examinations in 2001, 76 per cent of pupils attained grades A* - C in English, and 72 per cent in English literature. The national averages for these are 56 and 61 per cent respectively. In 2002, 73 per cent of pupils attained grades A* - C in English, and 81 per cent in English Literature. Given that attainment on entry is in line with the national average, there are good levels of achievement and progress from year to year, as a result, principally, of good teaching and the high levels of motivation of the great majority. Corresponding standards of attainment were observed during the inspection. Other factors which enhance pupils' achievement are the ways in which assessment data are used to identify potential for improvement, and the additional teaching which is provided to secure it.
98. The last inspection found that in a minority of lessons, more opportunities could have been taken to exploit pupils' ability to work independently. This is no longer the case, and pupils in the current inspection were observed ready to research, to ask questions, and to stay on task without prompting or supervision. The last inspection also found that the use of ICT within the subject was unsatisfactory because of insufficient access to appropriate resources. This remains the case, although the school recognises that this is an urgent priority, and English teachers do their best to tackle the problem indirectly.
99. In the first of the two elements of English, speaking and listening, standards are above average throughout the school. Pupils listen carefully and analytically, and many answer questions readily and even eagerly, making relevant and intelligent responses. A few lower attaining pupils do not have a wide range of vocabulary, which prevents them from developing their responses.
100. Reading is generally accurate and fluent, although judging from a small sample of pupils, only a minority read independently for pleasure. Reading aloud, even for higher attainers, is often lacking in expression, particularly in Years 8 to 10. Texts studied in school are enjoyed by the majority, who have good understanding of how effects are achieved and of underlying meanings. In Year 7 they recognise the way in which settings are used to support stories. By the end of Year 9, pupils show that they can see some of the more subtle ways in which tension can be built into a story. They handle dialogue well and, in some lively media studies work, show how a situation may develop and be described through speech alone. At this stage, while the standards of reading aloud are no more than average, the overall standard of reading, in terms of analysis and knowledge, is above average. In Years 10 and 11 the same judgement applies; although some higher attainers in both year groups show a sensitive appreciation of authors' intentions, when they read aloud, performance skills are lacking and do not measure up to the above average critical skills which pupils show when they study a book in class. In one Year 11 lesson, pupils showed that they were familiar with many of the technicalities which film directors use when

interpreting a Shakespeare text. In another, groups presented competent commentaries on sections of a poem they had read, and skilfully discussed the difference between metaphors and symbols.

101. In writing, attainment is above average throughout the school. Pupils build rapidly on skills that are about average generally when they enter Year 7, writing in a variety of genres (narrative accounts, drama, rhyming and non-rhyming poetry, among others) in an increasingly lively and interesting way. Some of the writing is very sensitive. This is from a poem written by a pupil in Year 8 (spelling corrected and punctuation added):

*I have a place, my place,
Under the great oak tree,
In the shade;
This is where you come to me.*

*You come as the summer sun,
As the gentle breeze whispering through the grass,
I smell you - a sweet smell of honey.
I smell a scent from the past.*

*You greet me as the winter snow,
The frost licking my cold nose;
You please me with a blanket of snow.
I feel you under my warm clothes...*

102. By Year 9, pupils are producing well controlled pieces of original writing. In almost all cases it is lively and fluent, with the highest attainers putting together extended work which is well structured, worded, and argued. The technicalities of spelling, grammar and punctuation are correct, and it is clear that some thought and drafting has gone into the finished article. The majority take pains to make their work vivid and interesting, but in the case of middle and lower attainers the besetting problem is of a lack of control: the words come tumbling out without much reflection. The result may be lively, but it is often very much like casual everyday speech, with punctuation faults and phonetic punctuation ('imbarressed', 'surspishous'), as well as grammar mistakes ('I wonder who done it'). The faster learners in Years 10 and 11 produce some very well made narratives, in which structure is particularly well used to support the story. Even at this early stage, in the school year in Year 10, the mature content and the sophisticated word handling skills of one pupil's work were so good as to suggest an A* grade if the examination were taken on the spot. The problems associated with middle and lower attainers by Year 9 are also to be observed in similar groups of pupils in Years 10 and 11. Presentation, however, is good throughout the school. Handwriting is good and almost always joined; work is entitled and usually dated. Pupils often take trouble to improve the look of their work, indicating their pride in it.
103. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. This good value added is due to their good behaviour and to the very good attitudes, interest and enthusiasm which they show. Throughout the inspection, pupils' enjoyment and engagement with what they were doing were particularly noticeable, promoting the quality and accelerating the speed of their learning.
104. The other very strong influence upon pupils' rates of progress is the teaching which they receive, which is usually good and often very good. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. Teachers know their pupils very well (even early in the school year), and provide well for their differing needs. As a result, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The best lessons are characterised by good planning, good pace, good structure and good class control: in fact, lessons proceed with such clarity and at such a good rate that pupils do not have a chance to lose interest. Formal assessments of progress are very thorough and are used to set targets twice a year. Marking is always carried out, and often teachers make written comments on pupils' work. These, however, are often bland, and mostly congratulatory ('A lovely piece of work'). If they make suggestions for improvement, they fail to identify the ways in which this may be achieved ('Try to improve your spelling'). Only once was any follow-up to a comment seen, in which the teacher actually checked whether advice had been followed in subsequent pieces of

work. If the aim is further improvement, there is a clear need for marking to be more developmental, for teachers to share evaluations with pupils, and to review them systematically.

105. At present, there is a vacancy for the post of head of faculty. The previous post-holder has provided very strong leadership, and her influence and interest continue. The acting head of faculty has taken over very effectively, applying and maintaining established good practice, supported by existing policies and documentation. She has a clear understanding of her responsibilities, and a good vision of the developmental needs of the subject and the school. These are well supported by a cohesive and able subject team. The Key Stage 3 National Literacy Strategy is building upon the school's long tradition of focusing upon the need to develop literacy in all subjects. Training has been thorough, though currently incomplete.
106. Accommodation is good, in a suite of pleasant, well decorated classrooms. Resources are satisfactory in terms of classroom texts, though regrettably there has to be some sharing of sets of books among classes. However, significant opportunities to promote literacy and to develop a reading culture and a love of books in the school are missed. The stock of fiction in the Learning Resources Centre is unusually small. Stocks of books which English teachers may regularly and frequently lend to pupils are not provided, and as a result, chances to spread the pleasure of reading in this way are lost. This is not to say that this is always the case. It is to their considerable credit that some teachers have - often from their own resources - put together classroom collections from which pupils may borrow.

Literacy

107. The school's provision for the development of literacy is good across the curriculum. There is a literacy working group, including representatives of each subject. A new literacy policy is in place, and a training day was recently devoted to ways in which skills with words could be improved. Departments have produced lists of words specific to their subjects for display in their areas. The school has held book fairs, and has been involved in events to celebrate the lives and literature of particular cultures. Nevertheless, teachers' marking of technical errors is very variable between subjects, and while in some subjects the application of literacy skills in discussions and evaluations is good, in others they are not yet systematically encouraged.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Teaching and a commitment to raising standards.
- Leadership of the department, analysis of performance and willingness to embrace new ideas.

Areas for improvement

- ICT is not used widely enough to help students' learning.
- Lesson planning related to the timing of activities, in some instances needs reviewing.

108. Attainment of pupils on entry to the school is just below average. The overall results of National Curriculum tests for 14 year olds in 2001 were above average and average when compared to schools with a similar intake. The trend of attainment overall has been consistently above national standards during the last three years, but results at Level 7 and above remain below average. Overall, the attainment in mathematics and English is better than science. Unconfirmed results obtained in 2002 indicate a slight decrease in performance from the results of 2000 and 2001; staffing issues last year significantly affected the continuity of teaching.
109. Higher grade A*-C GCSE examination results were broadly in line with national averages in 2001; grades A*-G were higher. Results at the highest A*-A grades were below the national average. Unconfirmed results in 2002 show a marked increase, which confirms the overall improving trend in the last three years. All pupils are entered for the GCSE examination.

110. The inspection found that progress across the school is good and that attainment is above average at the end of Years 9 and 11. Standards seen in lessons and in work broadly reflect the pattern of results in national tests for 14 year olds and the results in the GCSE examinations. Higher ability pupils in Year 9 are able to recognise complex patterns in sequences and from this are able to conclude a formula. Middle ability pupils in Year 11 produced evidence of useful note taking, which is valuable when revising; they are able to confidently manipulate percentage change, depreciation and profit with good use of mathematics vocabulary.
111. Teaching and learning are good with occasional lessons being very good. The very best lessons are very well planned, appropriately timed with varied activities where mathematical vocabulary is emphasised. Clear introductions and sharing the purpose of the lesson are often coupled with a review of previous work which involves pupils closely. As a result, pupils are very clear about what they are expected to do. The teaching scheme used textbooks but in the best lessons, materials were chosen from a variety of sources; this created a balance and freshness, which engaged pupils' interest. In one particular Year 10 lesson, data handling was being considered and firmly linked with future coursework for GCSE. Mathematical vocabulary such as 'qualitative', 'quantitative', 'discrete' and 'continuous data' was effectively discussed. Some of these definitions were a recall of previous work, which placed them in context and enabled the learning to be sequential. This was very good technique and predicted the course and development of the lesson. A significant proportion of this class are predicted to attain the highest GCSE grades and their needs were very well met. The single instance of unsatisfactory teaching was mainly due to incorrect assumptions of pupils' prior learning resulting in inappropriate pitch of learning objectives and thereafter the pace of the lesson. Pupils experienced difficulties in understanding the main objectives of the lesson.
112. Learning by pupils with special education needs is good overall. Pupils who start the school at Level 3 or below follow selected materials provided in the 'catch up' programme of the National Numeracy Strategy. In one lesson observed there was a range of timed activities catering for all the differing needs within the group, which ensured that interest was maintained. The initial warm up session used wipe boards; this enabled each pupil to show what she understood in recognising place values. Most pupils were successful and both the class teacher and the teaching assistants sensitively dealt with any misconceptions. The main aspect of the lesson in recognising numbers and sequencing was well received by the pupils using worksheets appropriate to their individual needs.
113. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is evident in many lessons. Most feature a short beginning of mental starters and some use of a range of teaching aids. More effective lessons begin by reviewing learning objectives from previous lessons and all lesson plans include prior learning references. The strategy has challenged teaching styles and therefore influenced current practice. Booster classes feature in Year 9 prior to the National Curriculum tests, in particular targeting those pupils whose current performance is judged to be close to grade boundaries. The department is clearly receptive to new ideas; an example of this is a scheme designed to enhance pupils' mathematical thinking. The scheme has been used for two years and is now a regular feature of Year 7 and 8 lessons. When applied well, it challenges the way pupils approach their mathematics. Little evidence was seen in pupils' past work of the use of ICT. This clearly is an issue for increased development. However the one lesson observed using ICT was effectively taught. It provided the pupils with an additional dimension to their recent work on plotting curves and straight lines. Pupils recognised both the enhanced and restricted use of new technology and the need to continue with a variety of methods, including written work, when using mathematical calculations. Department documentation is very thorough and is being amended in the light of changes; no mention of spiritual, moral, cultural or social education was in evidence. However in one class evidence was seen of appropriate group work where pupils recognised the advantage of mutual cooperation in the furtherance of their work.
114. Leadership and management are good with innovative practices emerging and some dated strategies discontinued, in particular enabling more direct teaching to take place. The school assessment policy provides excellent data analysis, which is used within the department. Results are analysed by teaching groups and the recent modular results of a new GCSE scheme have received considerable scrutiny. Self evaluation is healthily applied which is open, participate and provides an informed measure of the department's effectiveness. Pupils are issued with excellent

study guides for Year 10 and 11. These map the content of each module together with target grades. This provides the pupil with guidance on content of work and the facility to monitor her own expected progress as the GCSE course develops. Additional books have been purchased which provide an extra challenge to the higher attainers. All these features represent an improvement since the last inspection. The lead from the head of department is clear in actively promoting high standards; she is well supported by a core team similarly devoted to make mathematics an enjoyable and productive activity. Overall the department is beginning to show an upward trend in achieving higher objectives in all aspects of its work.

Numeracy across the curriculum

115. In science students show a range of mathematical activities including the use of graphs, bar, line and indications of best fit. Evidence was seen of all operations of number; percentages, proportion, formulae and effective knowledge of transformation of equations. The use of calculators was not seen in use. Reference to numeracy is included in the Year 7 schemes of work. In Year 12 - 13 statistical work was seen including chi-squared distribution for significance testing. In geography grid references were used in Year 7 using coordinates in all four quadrants. Latitude and longitude were discussed in Year 8 together with the issue of differing climatic data, e.g. using bar charts for rainfall. In preparation for fieldwork tally charts were used to enable effective graphical representation of frequency data. Students in Year 10 and 11 were able to calculate percentages and draw both line and bar graphs. Statistical analysis was seen in Year 12 and 13 using significance and correlation testing. In business education numeracy included analysis of share movement, cost ratios and variance analysis. Overall the evidence suggests that students are able to meet the mathematical demands of other subjects although the planned contribution to numeracy across the curriculum is currently still in the developmental stage, resulting in variation amongst subjects.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Standards of attainment are above average at the end of Year 9 and at GCSE.
- The quality of teaching is generally good and sometimes very good.
- There is very effective leadership and management of the science faculty.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and show enthusiasm for science
- Resources, accommodation and technical support are good.

Areas for improvement

- Planning for the full range of attainment within groups and, in particular, ensuring that the higher attaining pupils reach their full potential, and lower attaining pupils have work that challenges them appropriately.

116. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is below average but by the end of Year 9, most pupils have reached a standard above average. In 2001, the number of pupils achieving National Curriculum level 5 was above average but the number achieving level 6 or above was below. Overall, attainment has improved over the past three years and the progress made by the end of Year 9 is very good for the majority of pupils.

117. In 2001, the attainment of pupils in the GCSE Double Award science examination was broadly average. This represented a drop in standards compared with the two preceding years where the percentage of pupils achieving at least a grade C was well above average. The results in 2002 were 'back to normal' with approximately 75 per cent of girls achieving grades between A* and C. In the separate sciences, attainment in biology and chemistry was below average for girls but less so in physics. Results in the single award science GCSE course are also below average, but this is largely due to the school's admirable policy of entering every pupil into some form of science GCSE examination. In general, over the last three years, the achievement of pupils by the end of Year 11 has been good.

118. In work seen during the inspection, attainment at the age of 14 reflects the standards found in the recent tests, being generally above average. In lessons observed, pupils gained an understanding of basic concepts, such as the order of reactivity of metals with reactions with oxygen, water and acid. Standards of literacy were good with most girls being able to fluently explain, in spoken and written form, their understanding of scientific concepts. Numeracy skills were also above those expected for this age, as were their ICT skills - the department's recent investment in 15 laptop computers for classroom use is already having an impact. From evidence in books, most pupils from the age of 11 to 14 develop a better understanding of biology, chemistry and physics, as well as improving their practical skills. Progress is generally very good for the majority of pupils, but the most capable girls are insufficiently challenged in lessons and consequently fewer than expected reach the highest National Curriculum levels (i.e. 6 and above) by the end of Year 9. Pupils with special educational needs make progress consistent with others. In lessons where there is group work, pupils naturally help and support each other and teachers are skilful in the way they intervene to offer appropriate help and guidance to the lower attaining pupils.
119. The work of pupils in Year 11 is also above average. Most pupils have a good depth of scientific understanding and can apply their knowledge to problems such as the factors affecting the rate of photosynthesis in plants and the relationships between electric current, force and magnetism in simple electromagnetic devices. Work analysed in pupils' books indicates good advances in all three areas of science in Years 10 and 11. Progress is generally good but again there is a lack of differentiation of pupil tasks/activities in lessons with insufficient demands being placed on the most capable girls. Standards of literacy and numeracy are above average for the majority of girls in Years 10 and 11 and many show an impressive degree of confidence and self-assurance. Their ICT skills are also above average, with many routinely using computers at home for their coursework assignments.
120. The quality of teaching and learning in science is good. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and expertise and lessons are well planned to match the requirements of the National Curriculum and the GCSE specifications. Most lessons involve some form of practical work - at least a demonstration by teachers - and normally pupils enjoy some 'hands-on' practical work. The teachers' consistent and rigorous approach to classroom management ensures that science lessons take place in a safe and well disciplined fashion, so that pupils can learn efficiently. Expectations are high overall, although not enough attention is given to the matching of tasks to the different levels of attainment within the groups. Similarly, there are limited, specific, written resources for pupils with special educational needs. Questioning techniques are used well by teachers to draw out ideas, ensure participation by all pupils and identify misunderstandings or confusion.
121. Pupils' attitudes to work are generally very good, resulting in good progress. Relationships are also good, with pupils having no hesitation in asking questions and seeking help and guidance from the teacher. This creates a learning environment that is positive, productive and enjoyable for all concerned. They co-operate enthusiastically on practical tasks and, as a result, ideas are shared and skills, such as teamwork, are developed well. The majority of pupils take great pride in their work, often using their desk-top-publishing skills to impressively present their homework.
122. The management and leadership of the science faculty are both very good. The head of faculty has been in post for just over a year and has already implemented a number of beneficial changes such as the implementation of a more reliable system to assess and monitor the progress of pupils as they move through the school. Well planned subject guidance is in place with teaching arranged to maximise the benefits of individual teachers' subject specialisms. The day-to-day work of the faculty is supported by a comprehensive faculty handbook which contains up-to-date policies and an ambitious, but largely realistic, development plan for the future. The head of faculty has created a refreshingly open and mutually supportive ethos within the science faculty, with teachers being encouraged to share good ideas and observe each other's lessons. Resources are managed well and the newly acquired set of laptops helps to provide pupils with regular experience of the ways in which the use of ICT can enhance the learning process in science. The accommodation for science is above average for most schools and provides a pleasing and stimulating environment. The convenience of teachers' being able to teach the

majority of their lessons from their own designated laboratory plays a significant part in maintaining the high quality of learning which takes place within science lessons.

123. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The quality of science teaching has improved significantly and this has resulted in above average standards of attainment at GCSE and at the end of Year 9. Pupils' attitudes remain positive and there has been an increase in their enthusiasm for science. Many of these improvements are due to the impressive way in which the faculty is now led and managed.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Pupils' progress in practical work.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- Monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress.
- Results at GCSE.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities for use of ICT in art at both key stages.
- Review Key Stage 3 curriculum to include more focus on art from other cultures.
- Pupils' knowledge of the work of artists.

124. The standards of pupils' work at the age of 14 are above average. They enter the school with broadly satisfactory practical skills and make good progress across Key Stage 3, particularly in drawing. They use pencil, charcoal and pastel to good effect in a range of topics, including drawing their own portraits, still life composition and creating street scenes using perspective. Pupils apply colour with care and imagination when completing typographical posters and paintings linked to expressionism. Design skills are secure across a range of media and the research undertaken in sketchbooks is detailed and often imaginative. Pupils sometimes lack confidence when asked to discuss and evaluate their work and few can recall the work of artists they have studied. Pupils with special educational needs achieve standards in line with other pupils and those identified as talented in art achieve high standards.
125. The standards of pupils' work at the age of 16 are well above average. In the 2001 GCSE examination the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades was above the national average, confirming a rising trend over the past few years and further enhanced by the 2002 results. The standards of the work seen during inspection indicate a very good rate of progress in practical work. Pupils develop strong research skills when developing finished pieces from initial ideas and make excellent use of their sketchbooks to compile material, as in examples on Art Deco and the face. Work is often imaginative and makes bold use of a range of media, with finished pieces often completed to a high standard, as in built landscapes. The standards of drawing are often excellent, with many pupils able to make rapid and accurate representations from life. Pupils have a secure understanding of the artists they have used during their research and evaluative skills show improvement over those found in Years 7 to 9. Pupils with special educational needs achieve standards in line with other pupils. Pupils identified as talented in art achieve high standards. There is no difference in attainment for pupils from the range of backgrounds represented in the school.
126. Pupils demonstrate very good attitudes to art at both key stages. In the majority of lessons they behave well, form constructive relationships with teachers and work with enthusiasm and concentration.
127. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and often very good. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen. Teachers know each pupil very well and develop their skills and confidence through positive encouragement, incisive individual advice and a strongly supportive, good humoured and well-disciplined classroom environment, which develops good independent learning and excellent working habits as they proceed through the school. In the most effective lessons pupils make quick progress because teaching is challenging and teachers have high expectations reflected in

a range of open-ended tasks. Lessons are well planned to make most use of the time available for practical activities and teachers have excellent subject knowledge, enabling them to give clear expositions of tasks set. On occasions, teachers miss opportunities to use questioning to check that all pupils fully understand their work, which impedes the development of pupils' evaluative skills. Pupils are able to make progress because teachers have a very good understanding of assessment. They keep meticulous records and provide pupils with clear targets for improvement as reflected in the quality of art reports. Teachers make good use of homework to support classroom activities. However, they pay limited attention to key skills: key words are provided but rarely referred to in lessons and there are few opportunities for pupils to develop ICT skills in art lessons. In the one unsatisfactory lesson inspected, the teacher demonstrated weak class control, gave an unimaginative exposition of the work to be completed and made poor use of resources.

128. Pupils' learning is enhanced by the good management provided in the department. Teachers are specialists with a clear commitment to raising standards in art and the ethos of the department effectively supports the school's aims. The quality of record keeping and assessment is very good. The head of faculty has a clear idea of what the department needs to do to improve further, reflected in a very good action plan. Subject guidance for Years 7 to 9 needs reviewing to incorporate ideas from the recently appointed staff. More focus needs to be placed on the study of specific artists, and the department needs to provide some topics which develop pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness of non-western art in greater depth than currently exists. Current initiatives in literacy and numeracy need to be further embedded in the curriculum. The provision for pupils to utilise ICT to develop their art is currently insufficient.
129. The art department has made good improvement since the previous inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The records of performance.
- The attitude of the pupils towards their work.
- The leadership and management of the faculty.
- The overall standard of teaching throughout the age range.
- The progress made by pupils in Years 7 to 9.

Areas for improvement

- The match of tasks to the range of abilities in classes.
- Extension of the support given to pupils on the faculty register of pupils identified as being gifted or talented in the subject.
- Further support of some pupils with special educational needs.

130. Over the past four years, pupils have performed consistently well in the tests at the end of Year 9. Attainment is high. Pupils coming into the school at the age of eleven have average design and technology skills and their progress throughout the three years is very good overall. Evidence from the inspection shows that pupils are working at levels that are similar to those achieved last year. Basic skills and processes are taught effectively overall and this contributes considerably to the good results achieved.
131. The GCSE examination results of 2002 show good results on food, graphics, resistant materials and textiles courses. The number of pupils achieving A*-C grades is significantly better than the national average and slightly better than the average of girls' schools. The numbers of pupils achieving A*-G is very similar to the national average. Of the four areas of study, food technology was particularly successful in obtaining 87 per cent grades A*-C; textiles achieved 71 per cent, resistant materials 73 per cent and graphics 76 per cent. Over the past four years there have been fluctuating levels of success for food, resistant materials and textiles and the faculty now needs to stabilise the results on a year to year basis. Over the past four years, graphics standards have steadily improved to the present level. Changes in staffing as well as changes made in the choice

of subjects available in Years 10 and 11 account for some of the fluctuation in results. Girls make good progress overall in Years 10 and 11. The inspection found that attainment continues to be high.

132. Teaching was found to be variable in quality in Years 7 to 9 but judged to be good overall. In these year groups, three-quarters of the teaching observed is good or very good and one quarter is satisfactory. The majority of the teaching is good. In Years 10 and 11, the situation improves slightly and the teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent. Once again, the majority of the teaching is consistently good. In one Year 11 group where graphics was being taught excellently, the interaction between the pupils and the teacher was exceptional. The way in which the teacher challenged imaginations and promoted ideas as well as encouraging and teaching designing skills showed the highest level of skill. In this lesson the pupils progressed at a splendid rate and their attitude to the work was first class by showing little inhibition in working in front of their peers. By comparison, in another lesson with Year 11, one teacher did not maintain sufficient lesson pace for the majority of pupils by focusing too intently on a few who were being troublesome. Progress in this lesson was satisfactory, although it could have been significantly better by using other organisational methods, particularly in the support for pupils with special educational needs.
133. The attitude of pupils towards learning is at least good in the vast majority of lessons; this helps to further good or high quality teaching. In the best lessons pupils were seen to have individual control of their design ideas and the utilisation of the techniques they require for production of artefacts or products. The increasing use of ICT in the production of design work in both two and three dimensions is helping pupils' design developments in an effective way. Very good use of ICT was observed in textiles, resistant materials and graphics. Pupils generally have a clear idea of their own performance and indications of what they need to do in order to achieve higher level work. Assessment techniques are used by teachers within the faculty in a very effective way and the methods of assessing, recording and predicting are of a high order. Most teachers form good relationships with the pupils and lessons have a harmonious quality about them. This is probably seen at its best in graphics and food. In some other lessons it was observed that the pupil-teacher relationship was not of such good quality.
134. The rooms that are part of the design and technology faculty are variable in their quality and suitability for current design and technology lessons. Generally somewhat small for the large groups of pupils they accommodate, the facilities are pushed to their limits in order to cope. Graphical design and textiles suffer to the greatest extent where the facilities barely reach the high standard of the work expected of the pupils. Further accommodation is planned and this, when completed, will provide welcome support for an active curriculum area. Learning resources are generally of good quality and in plentiful supply.
135. The faculty is managed particularly well. Systems are very well organised and show a purposeful and considered approach. Monitoring and evaluation of the faculty's work is exemplary and this is clear in the records, planning and understanding of the needs within the subject. Staff meet regularly and share a common understanding of the tasks that lie ahead and these are invariably planned very effectively.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Very good leadership and management of the subject.
- Good relationships between staff and pupils.
- Good use of assessment and tracking of pupils' progress.
- Very good organisation and use of resources.

Areas for improvement

- Further develop extension activities for higher attainers and gifted pupils.
- Extend the provision of new textbooks for all year groups.

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide greater access and use of computers for Key Stages 3 and 4.• Plan and use further opportunities for the spiritual development of the pupils. |
|---|

136. The A* to C grade GCSE results for 15 year old pupils in the 2001 examinations, fell below the national average, reversing the upward trend since the last inspection. The results reflect a cohort of lower than expected motivation and absence from examinations. However the results for 2002 show an improvement over the previous year. The standard of work seen for students at the end of Years 10 and 11 during the inspection is above average. Teachers' assessments for pupils at the end of Year 9 show that standards are above average. The standard of work seen during the inspection confirms this assessment. Pupils make very good progress from their time of entry to the school and by the end of Year 9 they have acquired a good foundation in the subject. They continue to make good progress by the end of Year 11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when support is provided and generally achieve well.
137. Pupils in Year 7 receive a good grounding in basic skills. In a lesson on map analysis they successfully identified geographical features using four-figure grid references. They showed awareness of environmental issues in personal evaluations of their environment following their neighbourhood survey. They begin to appreciate the impact of tourism on landscape during their study of national parks in Kenya. The wide range of topics covered by the end of Year 9 shows a broad and balanced curriculum. In Year 8 they are made aware of world problems in their study of earthquakes and volcanoes and the impact of flooding on the lives of the people of Bangladesh. Detailed studies of rivers and river systems extend their knowledge of technical terms such as 'confluence' and 'infiltration'. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 build on the topics encountered in previous years and show knowledge and understanding of the human response to natural hazards such as volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. They understand some of the reasons for migration such as the movement of workers from Mexico across the border with California, or the creation of shanty towns in less economically developed countries such as Kenya. They examine costs and benefits of coastal management schemes and evaluate the effect of human activities on the ecosystem.
138. Students and pupils have a positive attitude to the subject and their behaviour is very good. Relationships among students and with staff are very good. They work co-operatively in pairs or groups and show enthusiasm for the subject. The staff use strategies which are effective in class management and in maintaining interest throughout the lessons.
139. The quality of teaching is good overall with examples of very good teaching. Lessons are well planned so that the pupils have a clear understanding of what is to be achieved by the end of the lesson. The good pace maintained throughout lessons and the very good use made of time hold the pupils' interest and concentration, which results in high productivity and work of above average standard. A range of teaching approaches including note taking, letter writing, defining technical terms and essay writing, reinforces the whole school policy for literacy skills across the curriculum. Homework is regularly set, marked and the results used to inform pupils of their progress as well as to plan subsequent lessons. For example the homework of a Year 8 class indicated that there were important gaps in their understanding of the use of latitude and longitude as a result of which the teacher used part of the next lesson to ensure full understanding before moving on to the next stage of learning. The teachers make use of opportunities for the furthering of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Examples include the issues arising from deforestation of the Amazon forest, cultural variations in Kenya and the multicultural nature of Britain, social responsibilities in working together in groups for decision making and taking part in educational visits including residential fieldwork.
140. Management by the head of faculty is very good. There is a clear vision for development, shared by all staff with commitment to achieve high standards. Relationships between staff are excellent, sharing ideas and supporting one another. Excellent documentation and implementation of whole school policies reflect the aims of the school. A broad and balanced curriculum is offered and made relevant to the life of the pupils, for example the investigation of shopping facilities in Gravesend and the impact of the Bluewater Shopping Centre. The work of the department is well planned and learning is enhanced by visitors such as members of the Japanese Embassy to bring additional life and meaning to the studies of Japan. Good use is made of resources which are supplemented by up-to-date materials such as newspaper reports of natural hazards occurring in different parts of the world. The department has access to a computer suite, which it is using.

Methodical assessment is carried out at the end of each unit of study and good records of pupils' attainment are maintained.

141. Very good improvements have been made since the last inspection. Although there was a decline in the A* to C grades in 2001 due to specific reasons there had been a significant improvement over the previous three years, maintaining standards above the national average each year. The progress which pupils make from Year 7 to Year 9 has improved from sound to very good. Teaching is regularly and systematically monitored by the head of department and senior management team, with feedback aimed at improving standards. As a result the quality of teaching has improved. Carefully planned schemes of work clearly identify what is to be taught. Resources have been updated and increased. Assessment procedures have been introduced with target setting which enables the monitoring of students' progress.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- The department is well led and managed.
- The department has a positive ethos and staff share a commitment to improvement.
- Teachers provide interesting lessons using a good range of resources and a wide variety of teaching methods.

Areas for improvement

- Achievement of the highest attaining pupils.
- The quality of diagnostic feedback given to pupils.

Standards of attainment

142. Over the three years to 2001, GCSE results in history fluctuated from a position significantly above average to very slightly below. In 2001, GCSE results in history fell just below the national average and below the national average for girls. In 2002, the overall percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C rose.
143. Inspection evidence shows that pupils make good progress and that attainment at the end of Year 9 is above average. Pupils have a basic knowledge and understanding of the key concepts, events and personalities in the periods they are studying. They recognise that history is based on evidence, and show an appreciation of chronology. All, including those with special educational needs, can respond to simple historical questions and select information from a variety of pictorial and written sources. The majority of pupils possess satisfactory oral and listening skills, and a significant number demonstrate sound interpretative skills. All but lower attaining pupils can make effective links between causes and consequences and have a good knowledge of historical terms, which they use appropriately. Overall, writing skills are well developed. The majority of pupils produce work which is fluent and well presented. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to write at length and can use evidence to reach conclusions independently. Less able pupils write in simple sentences to describe historical events.
144. At the end of Year 11, attainment remains in line with the national average, and pupils continue to make good progress. They are more assured when organising and using historical facts in writing and discussion. Higher attaining pupils identify trends and synthesise historical information. They write at length with increasing fluency and produce reasoned arguments based on different interpretations of evidence. Lower attaining pupils draw simple conclusions when examining evidence, and are able to use sources to support limited narratives. Most pupils sustain their concentration during lessons and work with interest. Many become independent learners by the end of Year 11. Pupils take pride in their written work, which is frequently well presented. Overall, pupils make significant gains in knowledge, understanding and skills from Year 7 to Year 11.
145. Lower attaining students and those with special educational needs make good progress with the support of their teachers. The department works in close cooperation with the learning support staff and teachers produce simplified learning materials for pupils with special needs. Lessons are planned to include all pupils. Extension work is set to stretch the skills of the more able pupils. However, more emphasis could be placed on building a culture of achievement and specific challenge for the highest attaining pupils.
146. The quality of teaching in history is never less than satisfactory, and good overall. Lessons are well prepared, structured and paced. Teachers share clear learning objectives with pupils at the beginning of each lesson, and these are linked to examination requirements in Years 10 and 11. Using a broad range of teaching methods, teachers draw from an imaginative variety of teaching materials, which are produced by the department. They aim to make lessons, in which they persistently extend knowledge, skills and understanding, as interesting as possible. Particular attention is paid to the teaching of literacy skills, for example through the use of glossaries and writing frames. Through skilful questioning, teachers are able to encourage pupils to participate in class, together with the development of critical thinking skills. Effective use is made of plenary

sessions to help pupils to measure the progress they have made. Regular homework is set, but opportunities are lost to enhance student attainment, as marking though constructive in tone is often shallow in content. In the same way, more could be done to improve literacy skills through the regular correction of spelling mistakes, grammar and sentence construction. Teachers use praise to advantage.

147. The department is very well led and managed. A positive ethos and common sense of purpose have been effectively developed. Levels of cooperation are very good as teachers work hard and aim to share good practice. Clear objectives and policies underpin a commitment to raise standards. Appropriate schemes of work are in place. Record keeping and assessment practices are clearly defined. By close reference to performance data, teachers acquire the knowledge which allows them to set appropriate targets for their pupils. The department has a coherent style.
148. Displays in the history classrooms are designed to celebrate pupil achievement. An interesting programme of external visits serves to enhance the curriculum. With improved use of ICT, further steps could be taken to stimulate learning, especially for the less able students. The department plays an important part in the school at large and organises a range of activities, such as a Black History Month.
149. Performance levels at GCSE and standards of attainment by the end of Year 9 are in line with those recorded at the last inspection. The quality of teaching, learning and management is largely unchanged.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Quality of teaching and learning: pupils are challenged, productive and motivated.
- Good provision of hardware and robust networking, with helpful technician support.

Areas for improvement

- Range of accredited vocational provision in Years 10 and 11.
- Access to ICT resource for all departments.

150. Over the last four years, standards in external assessments have remained consistently high, in many cases substantially above national benchmarks for the age group. At the end of Year 9 in 2002, around 90 per cent of pupils achieved level 5 or better in teacher assessments against a national average for girls of around 70 per cent. Results in GCSE information studies have fluctuated from year to year, but those in the most recent external assessment show just above 80 per cent of those pupils who were entered - about a quarter of the year group - passing the subject at Grade C or above. The national average was 64 per cent. This is outstanding. In the same year, GCSE business and information systems was offered for the first time, with an A*-C pass rate of 74 per cent. The school makes good use of target setting to help pupils ensure they are working successfully. Most pupils reached their targets.
151. Where ICT is taught as a discrete subject, the quality of teaching and learning is high. Younger pupils use software applications to create presentations about themselves, access to complicated software eased by well-produced and helpful planning templates. In technology there is good use of software for computer aided design and computer aided manufacturing, and the youngest pupils use programs well to design and produce artefacts, learning much about systems and control in the process.
152. The use of ICT in other subjects varies according to the expertise of staff. There are some good examples of its use. In mathematics software was used for modelling quadratic equations and helping pupils spot the relationships between co-ordinates, while in technology pupils competently used CAD/CAM software in the production of both designs and artefacts. In modern languages pupils confidently use computers in the manipulation of text, internet research,

communications, and computer based audio learning systems. Interactive CD-ROMS and websites have been used in geography. In some art lessons, pupils in Years 10 and 11 use software to explore and manipulate images, as well as using internet to gain access to those images.

153. Many pupils use ICT confidently. One pupil, for example, has used maps and data from the Ordnance Survey website to add substance to planning for the location of a florist's shop. Many pupils enjoy the subject.
154. Teachers are skilled and tactful in the individual guidance offered to pupils in the classroom, and many of the materials provided are not only relevant to the learning in hand but provide a humane or humorous context for the learning to take place. For pupils in Years 10 and 11 who do not opt to follow the subject at GCSE, there is some provision in the cross curricular programme - in which there is also very good use of ICT in careers education. Students complete a detailed questionnaire of their likes and dislikes, which are tallied against a list of occupations which exploit their strengths and disregard their dislikes or weaknesses. The resultant list is the basis for further detailed discussion and research.
155. Currently in Years 7 to 9, ICT is taught within a carousel of subjects in technology. Additional time is derived from two full project days, managed by the English and mathematics faculties, which focus on the use of ICT in those areas. Success in this type of provision depends on strands of ICT competence being identified and followed up in departmental schemes of work, and also ensuring that the attainments of individual pupils are tracked and recorded. This happens inconsistently.
156. In the production of materials and the administration of learning, many staff make good use of computer resources. This is a data rich school, in which ICT is used effectively to track pupil attendance and achievement.
157. The management of the subject is efficient and contributes to high attainment. Although there has been a vacancy for an ICT co-ordinator (caused by staff departure in July, too late for the current notice period) the restructuring of responsibilities has secured continuing quality of provision, actually increasing the amount of taught time in the transitional structure.
158. Specialist teaching accommodation is generally good, although two of the computer rooms are extremely cramped and all suffer from poor ventilation and considerable heat gain, which can make late afternoon lessons rather hot and soporific. Good technical support contributes to a secure network which allows work to go on without being interrupted. Not all departments yet have enough access to hardware, although all heads of department and heads of year have computer terminals - there is a case for extending this access to all staff, addressed in the plans for technology college status.
159. The school improvement plan incorporates ICT provision into the central areas of planning. Major upgrades are committed to wireless network and investment in new premises. The school is looking to appoint an ICT co-ordinator who has a qualification as an advanced skills teacher. This person will report to a newly appointed assistant headteacher who carries responsibility for the technology college programme. The school is planning to tackle some fragmentation of responsibility, and allow for better development and tracking of skills, particularly in Years 10 and 11. In the curriculum there are plans to develop the use of the internet across all subjects, while the training programme seeks to ensure that by 2003 all eligible staff have completed training in ICT.
160. Since the last inspection, there has been substantial progress in all aspects of ICT, and the subject is taught throughout the school by qualified specialist teachers. There is improving performance; better uptake of the subject in Years 10 and 11; improvement in curriculum planning and assessment and the identification of ICT strands in major curriculum areas; major capital and training investment over the period; the introduction of post 16 GCE courses at AS and A-Level; the development of a coherent ICT Key Skills provision in sixth form; good use of external funds for general staff training across the school - although a high turnover of staff means the school has lost some of its investment in training and its pool of expertise.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- During their time in the school students make good progress.
- Teaching is good overall.
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good.
- Leadership and management in the department are good.

Areas for improvement

- The progress made by more able students in German in Years 10 and 11.
- Inconsistencies in teaching.
- Subject guidance.

French

161. In 2001 GCSE results were in line with national averages for French compared with all students nationally but below national averages for girls. The proportion of students gaining A*-C followed the same pattern. However the proportion of students gaining A*-G was above the national average. Performance in French was not as good as in other subjects and the proportion of students achieving the higher grades was lower than in most other subjects. Results in 2002 showed a considerable improvement and were close to the average for girls nationally with more students achieving the higher grades.

Spanish

162. In 2001 GCSE results were below national averages for Spanish compared with all students nationally and well below national averages for girls. The proportion of students gaining A*-C followed the same pattern. However the proportion of students gaining A*-G was above the national average. Performance in Spanish was not as good as in other subjects and the proportion of students achieving the higher grades was lower than in most other subjects. Results in 2002 showed a considerable improvement and were close to the average for girls nationally with more students achieving the higher grades.

German

163. In 2001 GCSE results were well below national averages for girls. The proportion of students gaining A*-C followed the same pattern. However the proportion of students gaining A*-G was above the national average. Performance in German was not as good as in other subjects and the proportion of students achieving the higher grades was lower than in most other subjects. Results in 2002 showed a considerable improvement and were close to the average for girls nationally.

All languages

164. The fact that all students in 2001 achieved grades A*-G is particularly commendable because the school enters a higher proportion of its students for GCSE examinations than is the case nationally. Results in 2001, particularly in Spanish, were affected by the staffing difficulties experienced by the school. The trend since the last inspection is for results to remain close to national averages for students overall but below average by comparison with girls only.
165. In 2002, although attainment dropped from previous years at the end of Year 9, it was above the average for girls, although this needs confirmation when national data is available. By the end of Year 9 higher attaining students are confident in the use of the three main tenses and often bring good variety of expression and complex grammatical structures into their written work. Average and below average students write accurately and usually speak with confidence. The progress made in the earlier years of language learning, in Year 7 and in Year 8 for the second language is particularly commendable. The strongest skills are writing and speaking, though, in those lessons where the teacher uses the target language effectively, students make good progress in

- developing listening skills. The progress made by students with special educational needs in developing writing skills is particularly noteworthy.
166. Standards of work in Years 10 and 11 are broadly average and this represents satisfactory progress for most students. Writing and speaking remain the strongest skills. Work seen in French represents the full range of attainment. One high attainer in Year 11, for example, produced a piece of extended writing about Christmas that contained very good variety of vocabulary and expression with complex sentence structures and a secure grasp of the three main tenses. Some low attaining students in Year 10 have poor knowledge of vocabulary which affects their ability to understand the spoken and written language. Work seen in German shows that high attaining students are confident orally and speak fluently and accurately, though they have limited opportunities to produce extended oral responses. When writing, they have a secure grasp of tenses but they do not produce work at the higher levels.
167. Students generally have a good attitude towards the subject and usually behave well. They often show that they have the ability to work independently. They remain on task and work well, for example, in groups and pairs. When they are inspired by the quality of the teaching they respond with enthusiasm. In a minority of lessons students demonstrated a lack of motivation.
168. Teaching is good overall. It is better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. All teachers have very good command of the target language. In most lessons they use it effectively and help students improve their listening skills. Lessons are usually well - planned. Most lessons have clear objectives and aim to improve knowledge of vocabulary as well as develop skills. Revision of vocabulary and the presentation of new material are nearly always done in a lively manner so that students concentrate well in this key part of the lesson. Learning is often supported by a good variety of teaching methods. In one Year 7 French lesson, games were used successfully to motivate students: in another, stimulating questioning, based on a good knowledge of students' strengths and weaknesses, ensured that all students were challenged. In most lessons the quality of support material is good. However teachers rarely state lesson objectives in terms of pupil outcomes and do not often review them effectively at the end, so that students often leave lessons unsure of what they have learnt. In the best lessons teachers have high expectations, and know, and relate to, students well. These lessons are characterised by challenging work and brisk pace. Where teaching is less effective, and some of these factors are missing, students are less well motivated and sometimes lack commitment.
169. The quality of assessment in the department is good. Students are regularly assessed and careful records kept. This information is used well to plan work. The faculty has clear procedures for involving students in assessment but these are not yet having as much impact as would be expected on students' knowledge of their own learning. Marking of students' work is thorough. When marking students' work teachers sometimes point out strengths and weaknesses and show students how they can improve the quality of their work but this good practice is not yet widespread. The faculty makes extensive provision for extra-curricular activities and use ICT very well. The faculty also makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
170. Curriculum provision, particularly in Years 8 and 9, is very good. Most students have the opportunity to learn a second modern foreign language and the amount of time allocated to languages is very generous. Most pupils take two languages in Years 8 and 9 but very small numbers continue with two in Years 10 and 11.
171. Leadership and management in the department are good. A skilled and experienced head of faculty has been appointed. She has made a very good start in tackling issues aimed at raising standards. This is a cohesive faculty that offers very good support for new teachers and shares a commitment to move forward. Procedures for monitoring the work of the department and the quality of teaching are very good but they are not completely successful in ensuring consistency of practice. Accommodation is very good. The school has been very successful in managing its difficulties with staffing. Resources are good. Departmental documentation is adequate but subject guidance does not yet give effective guidance to new teachers and is not yet successful in securing a consistent approach to teaching. The targets on the faculty development plan now need to prioritise further actions to continue to raise standards.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Standards and teaching are good in Years 10 and 11.
- There is very good provision for instrumental lessons.

Areas for improvement

- The provision for ICT is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9.

172. Attainment has been above average for the past two year. The 2001 GCSE examination results for pupils gaining A*-C grades were well above the national average. Out of 10 pupils, seven gained A grades. In 2002, of the nine pupils who took the examination, six gained A grades. There is a good take-up rate for the subject in the current Years 10 and 11.
173. At the end of Year 9, pupils achieve satisfactorily and standards are average. Standards have remained the same in Years 7 to 9 since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 9 listen to examples of Baroque music and identify the ground bass used in Pachelbel's *Cannon*. They show knowledge of some of the instruments associated with this period. They write a set of variations on a well-known melody and understand how chords are used in a twelve bar blues. They use treble clef notation satisfactorily and take care with the presentation of their written work. The weaknesses seen in the last inspection in pupils' attainment were not evident on this occasion. However, although pupils know some of the musical terms, they do not always make reference to them when describing their work.
174. At the end of Year 11, standards are very high. There has been an improvement in the standard of pupils' work since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 11 gain a good understanding of different styles of music from around the world. They write compositions for voices and instruments and perform these well. They make good progress in understanding the techniques used by some composers to create an effect. For example, in one lesson, pupils created their own tone row as part of their work on serialism.
175. Pupils' achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. They make satisfactory progress in understanding simple musical structures and in using these in short compositions. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve very well. Good progress is made in gaining confidence as performers and in developing musical ideas in composition tasks. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in lessons. The more musically able make good progress. Many pupils who receive instrumental lessons achieve success in external examinations.
176. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 generally show good attitudes toward the subject. Very occasionally however, a few pupils in Year 9 take a little time to settle down and this disrupts the learning of others. In the last inspection some poor behaviour was reported. None was seen this time.
177. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are satisfactory overall, with one good and one very good lesson seen. There was one unsatisfactory lesson due to some weak class management skills as the teacher was still getting to know the class. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are good or better. Teachers use their own musical skills well in all classes to aid pupils' learning. This was evident in a Year 7 lesson when the teacher's effective use of demonstration resulted in an improvement in pupils' vocal ability. Satisfactory provision is made for developing pupils' literacy skills in lessons. Homework is used satisfactorily to re-inforce pupils' understanding. The provision for pupils to use ICT to aid composition in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory. This is due to a shortage of computers for class use. The provision for ICT was found to be unsatisfactory in the last inspection. In Years 10 and 11 provision is satisfactory.
178. There is good provision for extra-curricular activities and pupils have the opportunity to perform in concerts both in and out of school. These have included performances at presentation evenings and at summer and Christmas concerts.

179. The leadership and management of the subject have been undertaken by members of the senior management team during staff changes. This has been done well. There is now a new acting head of department who is ably supported by two part-time colleagues. Assessment procedures are in place and have been improved since the last inspection.
180. Over 90 pupils receive instrumental lessons. These peripatetic teachers make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and enhance the provision. The accommodation and resources are good, but there is a shortage of computers in the department. Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
181. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The school has tackled most of the weakness previously highlighted, but the provision for ICT in Years 7 to 9 is still unsatisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Improving results in GCSE results in physical education and dance.
- Very good leadership and management.
- Extra-curricular provision and take up.
- Some excellent teaching of dance.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment as part of the learning process, so that pupils have a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and of how to improve.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of physical education and dance vocabulary.
- Assessment data for pupils on entry to the school.

182. Attainment in physical education at the end of Year 9 is above average. The proportion of pupils following the dance GCSE course achieving A*-C grades in 2001 is above national averages. Predicted grades in dance GCSE for 2003 show a significant improvement. This would mean that the percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades would be well above national averages. In physical education, attainment at GCSE A*-C grades in 2001 was overall below national averages. Results in 2002 show improvement and predictions for 2003 show a continuation of this trend. This is due to the improved teaching and higher attaining pupils choosing physical education as one of their options. The work seen during the inspection supports the trend of improvement. Comparison of pupils' standards of achievement on entry to the course and the standards achieved in the GCSE examinations now shows that pupils make good progress through Years 10 and 11.
183. By the end of Year 9, pupils make good progress. In the course of the year, they develop competence in basic gymnastics and dance techniques. and some Their development of knowledge and understanding is enhanced by their ability to work co-operatively in pairs and small groups, when developing basic techniques through Years 7 to 9. However, activities do not always develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of physical education vocabulary. Nor do they allow pupils' to develop their observation and assessment skills, so that they are not always clear about what they can do and how to improve. By the end of Year 11, most pupils are now making good progress. Their continued good progress in the development of basic techniques, as in dance, enables them to transfer these basic movements into advanced sequences and solo performances. Where progress is not as good some pupils fail to transfer their ability to perform basic techniques to more advanced skill practices. A minority of pupils' progress is restricted by disruptive behaviour, which causes them to lose concentration and so move off task. While the learning of pupils with special educational needs is well planned for, the progress of some higher attaining pupils is restricted by a lack of consistency in setting challenging tasks and insufficient attention to their knowledge of what they can do well and what they need to do to improve.
184. The overall quality of teaching is good. In some dance lessons the teaching was excellent. The strengths of the teaching include good planning based on very good knowledge of the subject,

organisational skills, positive interaction with pupils and a commitment to their moral and social development. This means that pupils are able to learn through appropriate activities and in an environment which encourages learning. Although procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are in place, greater use should be made of assessment in the learning so that pupils are aware of what they can do and how to improve. There has been some improvement in the teaching of ICT as part of the physical education GCSE course. There is very good planning and provision for pupils with special needs. There is, however, a need for additional strategies to extend gifted and talented pupils. In lessons where teaching was not so good, learning was restricted by a loss of time at the beginning of lessons, pupils were moved onto tasks before they were ready to do so and strategies to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and use of physical education vocabulary were not part of learning. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. The vast majority enjoy physical education and participation levels are very good. There are good strategies for involving non-performers in learning. Pupils concentrate well and work hard. They are able to work as individuals, but also co-operate well when working in pairs and small groups. Behaviour is good. Pupils develop good relationships with other pupils and the teacher.

185. Leadership and management in physical education are very good. The department is making very good progress in improving standards in GCSE physical education and dance. The acting head of department has a clear vision for future development. This means that development planning is focused on raising standards. This commitment to raise standards is supported by a very good team of physical education specialist teachers. Currently, there are few opportunities for pupils to be involved in assessing their performance as part of learning. The teaching of specialist terminology to ensure that pupils have a vocabulary to discuss their work is inconsistent. Also, the department has little information about the attainment of pupils on entry to help judge the value that the department adds.
186. The department has made good progress in developing assessment procedures since the last inspection. The department has a philosophy of care for pupils, which emphasises social and moral development. Teachers are well organised and the subject handbook provides effective guidance for teaching, lesson planning and safety matters. In general, the quality of accommodation and resources has a positive effect on learning. The physical education curriculum meets statutory requirements. The department recognises the importance of extra-curricular activities, which enhance learning. The department has a philosophy of open access with elite teams and performers emerging in order to achieve good levels of results in inter-school matches and competitions. The department is making good progress in developing its links with feeder schools and the local community in order to raise standards.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of provision in religious education where it is taught as a subject is **good**.

Strengths

- Quality of teaching.
- Use of active and independent learning in all lessons.
- Contributions to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Strong relationships.

Areas for improvement

- The match of task to the learning needs of pupils.
- The range of opportunities for learning for gifted and talented pupils needs to be broadened.
- Linking set targets to the regular marking and assessment of pupils.
- Meeting statutory requirements in Years 10 and 11.

187. The inspection of pupils' work in their classes, discussion with pupils and the standard of their written work seen during the inspection confirm that attainment by the end of Year 9 is in line with the expectations of the Bromley Agreed Syllabus. Evidence of previous work confirms pupils are making good progress in learning about and from religion. In Year 7 pupils showed a knowledge and understanding of Christian symbols, and the difference between signs and symbols. In Year 8 pupils had gained a satisfactory knowledge of the early history of Judaism and the life of the

kings, linked with related moral issues, and were developing skills in the use of Bible sources. By Year 9 pupils were able to argue a range of moral issues in relation to today through their examination of Jesus' teachings. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, as do those who are gifted and talented. However there is a lack of appropriate materials and tasks for pupils with special educational needs and the most able.

188. In both Years 10 and 11 there are two full GCSE option groups. In 2001, attainment was average, although more pupils gained higher grades than nationally. Attainment in 2002 rose and looks to be above average, but this needs confirming. Religious education for all pupils is covered within cross curricular studies. Work seen and the lessons observed confirm that progress is very good. Written work is of a high standard. In lessons, pupils explore their ideas and values in relation to the concepts being examined, aided by the challenging questioning of teachers. For example, one Year 10 group examined abortion and different Christian views, a Year 11 group looked at pilgrimage in Judaism as well as its wider relevance and a Year 10 cross-curricular group examined Christian attitudes to money.
189. Pupils' literacy and oral skills development are helped by the recording of key words, use of technical language, the use of opportunities for pupils to read aloud and the challenging questioning seen across all years.
190. The pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They show an interest in the topics and are well motivated. This was seen in their willingness to answer questions, complete written work and discuss in pairs or groups. Behaviour is good and contributes to the pupils' achievement by enabling the pace of the lesson to be maintained. The relationship between teachers and pupils and among pupils underpins their attitudes and behaviour.
191. The overall quality of teaching is good with some very good teaching, although in Years 7 to 9, it is satisfactory, as non-specialist teachers, although skilled, do not have the specialist knowledge of the subject to answer questions in depth. However, non-specialist teachers receive very good support from the subject leader. Lessons are well planned; this ensured that pupils were aware of what they needed to do and as a result made progress. The pace of lessons usually maintains the pupils' interest and motivation. Specialist teachers' knowledge of their subject meant that the questioning of pupils reviewed previous work and throughout the lesson consolidated learning. The inclusion of active and independent learning within the planning fully involved the pupils in learning. The teachers' high expectations in all aspects of work and behaviour ensure that the pupils are constantly challenged to raise their levels. Homework is set regularly and involves a variety of tasks extending class work. Individual targets are set and reviewed half termly, and assessment of both learning about and learning from religion is carried out through the regular marking or work and testing,
192. Religious education makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Opportunities to explore individuals' personal beliefs, relationships and world issues of a moral nature and the exploration of the relationship of culture with religious practice are looked at sensitively. Examples of this were seen in the examination of abortion and Christian views on money in Year 10, the exploration of symbols in Year 7 and the examination of the teachings of Jesus in Year 9.
193. Religious education is part of the humanities faculty. The second in faculty has responsibility for the subject and is responsible for the day-to-day teaching, schemes of work and assessment. Very good leadership and management are provided for all staff who teach the subject and a clear vision is held for future improvements. Statutory requirements and the time identified in the Bromley Syllabus to provide religious education in Years 10 and 11 are not met. The rooms are well decorated and create a purposeful learning environment. The department is forward thinking and good progress has been made since the last report.

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

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

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

GCE A-level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	10	100	87	60	43	6.60	5.80
Biology	7	100	88	43	34	6.29	5.25
Chemistry	5	100	90	40	43	6.00	5.90
Physics	2	100	88	50	40	7.00	5.67
Art and Design	5	100	96	0	46	4.40	6.57
Design Technology	5	100	91	80	30	8.40	5.38
Business Studies	10	90	92	20	32	5.00	5.50
Sports/PE Studies	5	100	92	40	25	6.00	5.09
Geography	23	96	92	52	38	6.35	5.74
History	18	61	88	17	35	3.11	5.45
Religious Studies	6	100	92	0	38	4.67	5.84
Sociology	11	100	86	64	35	7.64	5.32
English Language	12	92	91	17	30	4.17	5.27
English Literature	32	100	95	28	37	5.94	5.91
French	4	75	89	0	38	2.50	5.59
German	2	50	91	0	40	2.00	5.81
Spanish	3	100	89	33	39	5.33	5.70

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business	5	40		40		40	
Health and Social Care	3			33		0	

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

Mathematics and biology were the focus of inspection in the sixth form. Chemistry and physics are also taught at AS and A2 but not reported; however, it was possible to observe some teaching of these subjects in the sixth form. There is improvement in examination success and, in the lessons observed during the inspection, the teaching was good and levels of attainment are satisfactory or good in these subjects. Biology is taught to AS level in Year 12 and to A2 level in Year 13. There is one teaching group in each year, currently with 21 students in Year 12 and eight students in Year 13. The A2 group contains one boy. The staying on rate is good and most students successfully complete the course.

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

Strengths

- High achievement by A-level students.
- The quality of teaching.
- Effective student/teacher support.

Areas for improvement

- Recruitment and retention, allied to raising attainment at GCSE in the higher grades.
- Encouragement for students to develop an increasingly independent approach to their studies.

194. The GCE A-level results in 2001 were well above average. Six of the ten students gained A-B grades and all students gained pass grades. This represents a significant improvement over the last four years. In the unconfirmed 2002 results three of the six students entered gained A-B grades and all six students gained pass grades. The current continuation rate of students is slightly more than half. The department operates a policy where the course requirement for AS and A2 mathematics is a grade B or above at GCSE in the higher syllabus. Students have not entered AS levels in recent years. The current progress of the six students in Year 13 in their module tests suggests that three are currently meeting the target for grades A-B. Four students took GCSE results in 2001, of whom two gained A*-C grades.
195. Standards in lessons and in work seen broadly reflect the improved pattern of recent results. In one A-level lesson in Year 13 students preparing for their next module test attempted an examination question based upon trigonometry. Students worked both individually and collectively with many good contributions. In another lesson, a student securely gave an explanation on frictional forces; good use was made of vocabulary and other students offered some contributions. Students were able to effectively recall previous work and speak with some certainty about the binomial expansion and one student spoke confidently about divergent and convergent series. However it was clear that there were varying degrees of understanding and all students suggested that the sheer quantity of work related to the course was particularly demanding.
196. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into their course, but are achieving much as expected. Students studying AS mathematics increased in confidence as the lesson developed when introduced to factor and remainder theorems. Most students were able to understand and use the function notation and at the conclusion of the lesson some were able to deduce the properties of the two theorems. In AS statistics in Year 12, many students by the end of the lesson were able to appreciate how previously taught skills in Year 11 linked with the topic of the binomial theorem.
197. Teaching is good overall and in some instances very good. This is reflected in the confident and experienced presentation, with appropriate pitch and pace of lessons being a sensitive recognition of some of the difficulties students understandably experience. Students' written work is well organised with appropriate note taking; it is well marked with suggestions on how to improve. Homework is appropriately linked to the work in class and provides a source for class discussion in future lessons. The students appreciate the commitment of their teachers and their readiness to assist at times outside lessons. A good rapport exists and patience is displayed by teachers. In some instances the teaching is of a higher standard than the learning. This suggests that an appropriate balance between good teacher/student support and independent learning needs to be achieved. These features of teaching are in many respects a direct reflection of the recruitment

and retention issue, in that the department has yet to secure attainment in GCSE during Year 11 at the higher-grade levels.

198. The subject is very well managed in the sixth form with a suitable range of provision, including A-level mathematics, AS statistics and GCSE. A very good booklet is produced by the department to provide for the students a bridge between GCSE and the onset of the AS level course. Teachers outside the department teach the numeracy element of key skills; in the lesson observed, students worked in the absence of a teacher with a commendable degree of initiative. Some timetable lesson arrangements appear to require amendment to more effectively serve the needs of the students.
199. The more recent results suggest an overall improving trend and the increased take up in Year 12 indicates the increasing popularity of the subject.

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

Strengths

- The management of students is good and resources are used effectively.
- Accommodation and resources are very good.
- Teachers' specialist knowledge and understanding of biology are very good.

Areas for improvement.

- Assist students to take greater responsibility for their own learning.
- Continue to monitor and evaluate teaching to improve lesson preparation and documentation.
- Improve standards, particularly in the attainment of higher grades.

200. AS results for 2002 were not supplied by the school. However, in 2001 the proportion of candidates gaining the higher grades at AS was broadly average. In the past, the proportion of students attaining the higher grades in A-level biology has been well above average. In 2002, the proportion of students gaining grades A-B is broadly in line with the national average and progress is good, although this has yet to be confirmed.
201. The standard of work seen during the inspection was largely good, and students' levels of achievement were generally high. In the lesson seen, students in Year 12 had a reasonable understanding of the structure of proteins and can analyse their previous work on the concentration of glucose. However, some students have poor recall of earlier work and almost all have yet to develop their skills in making and taking notes at an appropriate level, as it is early in their course. In contrast, students in Year 13 cope very well with the considerable demands of the A2 course, including the taking and making of notes. Communication skills are well developed and there is some spontaneity and experience of cogent discussion and debate. In another Year 13 lesson, students were able to review their earlier work on photosynthesis and the pigments in chloroplasts and increase their knowledge and understanding of light dependent reactions.
202. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the lessons seen there was one example of very good practice and the remainder were satisfactory. Teachers' expectations are high, and students work hard to meet these. Post-16 biology is taught by the head of department and two other specialist teachers, all of whom show excellent subject knowledge and understanding; however, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching in biology is not well developed. Relationships with students and the use of time and resources are effective and this results in sound learning. Students are attentive and work productively in lessons. In Year 13, there is a general air of increased maturity and responsibility, and students are quick to benefit and make good progress. Pace and challenge are generally good, although lesson preparation and documentation vary. The regular assessment of work is helpful and students feel well informed and that their learning needs are well supported.
203. In the lessons observed, the quality of students' work is good. They take a keen interest in scientific investigations and generally enjoy the subject. Assessed practical work and projects show well developed skills and include those of practical investigation, the competent handling of apparatus and equipment, confidence in written work and the ability to follow detailed instructions. Students generally show good understanding and their files and the recording of practical work are

properly organised and written work is largely well presented and up to date. The standard of work in lessons is in line with national standards and students make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. The careful guidance and advice from teachers are effective and some students, in Year 13 particularly, take considerable pride in and responsibility for their own learning.

204. Leadership and management of the subject are good and there is clear direction to the department's development. The head of biology, recently appointed, is successful in her role and organisation. She supports staff and students well and there is a direct effect on the successful learning of students. The routines for successful teaching, and the mechanisms for regular assessment, recording and reporting are secure and effective. In addition, there have been a number of changes since the last inspection which include improved documentation to embody aspects of ICT, an ongoing review of schemes of work and increased teamwork. There has been a poor history of the proper use of ICT by students in biology; however, with new accommodation and equipment, the use of sensors, data logging and the handling of information by students have improved. The use of laptop computers and the successful radio link to internet search engines is impressive.
205. With some good teaching and technician support, the organisation and management of biology at AS and Advanced Level is effective and supportive.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

Design and technology is taught to A-level along with textiles. All aspects of design and technology within the sixth form were considered as part of the inspection and particular attention was paid to textiles. Students generally enter the courses in the sixth form with good grades in their respective subjects at GCSE. The courses in Years 10 and 11 provide a very useful preparation for the A-level course and most students have a good range of basic skills in design methodology as well as the practical ones.

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

Strengths

- The standards achieved in A-level design and technology.
- The relationships between students and staff.
- The exemplary record keeping by staff.

Areas for improvement

- Improved provision for completing graphical design work.

206. Standards in design and technology at A-level are very high. In the examinations held in 2001 students achieved grades that are very high when compared with other schools nationally. In the past three years since this examination course has been taught at the school, no student has failed to get a grade between A and E in any year. This is a consistent and creditable achievement. The high level of achievement gained in 2001 where five students took the course showed that 80 per cent of those entered achieved an A or B grade. These achievements are also very good when compared with other faculties of the school, the average points gained by students in this subject being as high as any. Evidence gained from the inspection reveals that students are working at a high level.
207. Teaching is of a consistently good standard. The inter-personal relationships between students and staff are very good and, with the small group sizes, students receive much individual tuition. Teachers are confident in their work and they understand their subjects well. Some of the teaching of these groups takes place after the end of the normal school day and it was clear that several of the students and staff were tired after such a long teaching session. This points to a curriculum and timetabling issue that needs further consideration.
208. Students learn effectively within the sixth form, principally through a mixture of project work and taught theory sessions. The balance of this is appropriate. The use of computer aided design and manufacture supports development of project work. Students generally show independence in

their work and are self-motivated; they make suitable intellectual, physical and creative efforts in producing their work. Students make good progress overall in Years 12 and 13. Much time beyond the classroom teaching time is spent completing project work, design folders or general research and this time is well spent.

209. The leadership of the faculty is very good and directs the work in the sixth form quite strategically. The management has put all necessary plans in place to allow the new faculty to be run very effectively.

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

Strengths

- Good prior attainment in textiles and art GCSE.
- Very good teaching and learning.

Areas for improvement

- Development of satisfactory study skills including ICT.

210. One lesson was inspected in art textiles because of the timetable arrangements. However opportunities to discuss the course with Year 12 and 13 students, scrutinise their portfolios and observe standards of work in the two art/textiles rooms, confirmed judgements. This was further qualified by discussion with the two inspectors covering main school art and design and technology. The course is challenging, combining the aesthetic qualities of art forms with the design and making techniques of textile production. The course is modularised making it more flexible. AS units explore the process approach to art/textiles. Students refine the processes of their GCSE design and technology and develop their art skills in visual research. A2 extends critical awareness.

211. Course entry requires students to have good results in design and technology and art. GCSE results in 2001 were above the national average in textiles and in line in art. Attainment has fluctuated but in 2001 AS results showed improvement but from a very small cohort. The AS students did not continue to A2 at that time, but went on to foundation courses in art and design plus fashion design at college and university. Retention rates, for this reason, are low but the present Y13 are not only enjoying their course and achieving well, but 75 per cent of the group are going on to higher education in this discipline, because of the excellent advice they are given about career development.

212. Attainment in art textiles is very good and students' achievement is also very good in relation to their prior attainment. Small group sizes, very individualised teaching and creative planning to meet individual needs, ensure they reach their potential. Teaching and learning in art textiles are very good. Teachers plan well and their personal interest and commitment to their subject are infectious. Students are inspired by the opportunities to work with crafts people and artists from a range of backgrounds. The recent visit from a textiles artist was very productive. The workshop helped students to develop silk designs: a very good example of transfer of specialist skills. Students went on to produce their own fabric. They combined the emotion and aesthetics of leaves and butterflies from the natural world into their designs.

213. Teachers have nurtured personal investigation and the independence of personal study, resulting in students selecting creative areas to investigate, for example, the study on hats. Portfolios are very good because assessment, record keeping and teachers' evaluation against examination course criteria are very good. Students show very good research into textiles history. Limited use of digital images to record research from visits to museums and galleries restricts portfolios. Students explained with pride and enthusiasm their work on 16th century style features and observational drawings that led to exquisite embroidery. In addition they had a sensitive understanding of the available materials and craft skills of that time, but they are not capitalising on the skill of lively annotation to highlight features, preferring to give detailed text explanations. A school display capitalised on sharing the students' work as exemplars to encourage other students to continue their textiles artwork to A-level standard.

214. Management of the department including development planning is very good because it is enthusiastic and dynamic. The staff team work collaboratively, including making good use of ITT

students with expertise. Monitoring and evaluation are strong features and improve standards of work. Staff development is very good; for example training in using the computer programme 'Speed Step'. The art/textiles department is housed in a series of art studios that lack some basic safety features for example a 'stop button' to control the power to the whole room. As numbers grow, the accommodation limits independent learning because circulation and independent access to equipment and materials are impeded. The department makes very good use of the learning resource centre, but access to computers is limited. This impacts on achieving higher grades because manipulation of visual image is an important part of art/ textiles and there is no dedicated textiles access for A-level students.

BUSINESS

Provision consists of AVCE (Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education) and AS/A-level business studies courses. There are no longer any intermediate GNVQ students.

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

Strengths

- Students achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Students' attitude and motivation are very good.
- Teachers and students have good relationships.

Areas for improvement.

- AS/A2 students do not use ICT enough.
- Links with local business and industry are underdeveloped.
- More challenge for higher attainers.

215. Attainment in A-Level in 2001 was average, although the percentage of A and B grades was below the national average. Results were in line with teachers' expectations based on students' GCSE points scores on entry. In 2002, all but one of the 12 students entered passed, with one student gaining a B grade. Results, below national expectations, were down from the good results in previous years, and were seriously affected by staff shortages. Based on students' entry standards, however, results show good achievement for students of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs. No students in the group were identified as gifted and talented.
216. Results in the new AS examination in 2002 were very encouraging. The 13 students entered all passed, with four students obtaining the top A/B grades, which is above average. This reflects the more settled recent staffing position, and most students have progressed on to the second year A2 course. These results are awaiting confirmation.
217. In 2001, results in the AVCE examination were high and well above average for the highest grades. Of the five students entered, two obtained distinction and two merit grades. In 2002 the three students entered passed, but with low grades reflecting relatively low GCSE points on entry. This nevertheless represented very good progress for students, who were very well supported. Seven of the eight GNVQ intermediate students passed, but at below average levels, reflecting low starting points and the serious lack of continuous staffing. On all courses, students achieve well over time, and sometimes very well, particularly in AVCE at the low grade levels, where some students might previously have entered at intermediate level, which has not been run this year.
218. In lessons and work seen, students on all advanced business courses were working at average levels and making good progress. In a very good Year 13 AVCE lesson, students showed a lot of initiative in brainstorming ideas for organising their own event, and developed very good team skills when negotiating business roles for each other. Students in a very good Year 12 AS lesson developed a very good understanding of share movements through independently tracking prices on spreadsheets, and drawing graphs of their results – a good use of ICT. Students gained a very good knowledge of break-even through several case study examples where they had to draw and interpret graphs, and they developed a good understanding of the limitations of break-even analysis.

219. Teaching and learning are good and much is very good. Teachers' very good relationships with students keep them well motivated, involved, and interested in their tasks. Where teachers note problems in students' understanding of financial concepts, they alter lesson plans to reinforce key terms. In a good Year 13 lesson on working capital and cash flow, students' previous learning about differences between capital and revenue expenditure was not good enough, because they had missed some teaching when the previous teacher left and could not be immediately replaced. Teachers gave students extra examples, and, though not all students were clear about ways liquidity could be applied to a business, with a limited number of actual business examples discussed, the teacher planned further reinforcement. AVCE lessons tend to keep all students fully involved because students have to participate in team presentations and use work placements in local businesses to enrich their coursework. In AS/A2 a small number of students are content to let others answer questions in class. Lower attaining students, and those with special educational needs are well stretched, though there are fewer opportunities for the few higher attaining students to extend their learning.
220. The leadership and management of courses are good, and improving now that staffing is more settled, after a period in which long term sickness adversely affected students' results in financial modules. Extra lessons after school are being provided to help students catch up. The past difficulties in availability of ICT rooms have been resolved, and though this is beginning to be reflected in AS/A2 students' work, ICT availability is still limited. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been good, and the department has good capacity for further improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

An A-level programme was introduced in 2000-2001. For other students, ICT is offered as part of a key skills programme. Lessons were observed in Year 12 and 13 AS and A-level programmes, and in the Year 12 ICT component of the school's key skills programme.

Overall, the quality of provision in the A level course ICT is **good**.

Strengths

- Well prepared lessons and very good teaching.
- Coherent course structure.
- Strong start in A Level results for the first cohorts.

Areas for improvement

- Scope of provision, particularly in vocational programmes.
- Attendance at key skills lessons.

221. From a relatively recent start, numbers taking the subject are growing. Entry levels are variable (the school encourages ambition in all its students) so the standards of students' work and attainment reflect good teaching, well prepared course materials and a coherent course structure.
222. Attainment in ICT in 2001 was below average. There are no results yet for 2002. The inspection found that attainment this year is average and students make satisfactory progress. In AS level, students make sophisticated use of spreadsheets, and in all subjects (including modern languages and religious education) there is extensive use of the internet in research and of word processing in the production of text and coursework. There is excellent use of CAD/CAM equipment in A-level product design, wedding skill to imagination.
223. The very good teaching and learning result from work in the subject being well led and managed.
224. ICT is well planned for in the key skills course. Although attendance in the key skills lessons was low (around 50 per cent) this was ascribed to administrative issues rather than internal truancy. The school plans to remedy the present dearth of accredited vocational provision in the Sixth form with skills based courses using either the RSA CLAIT programme or the European Computer Driving Licence.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus was physical education, where attainment in 2001 was above average and students did as well as predicted. Dance was also sampled and students are making good progress and attaining highly.

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

Strengths

- Extra-curricular provision.
- Enhancement programme.
- Leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- Timing of some A level lessons.
- Room allocation for some A level dance lessons.

225. In 2001, A-level physical education results were above national average. This is true for both the proportion of students obtaining at least a pass grade (A-E and the proportion obtaining a higher grade pass (A or B).
226. Inspection evidence shows that students currently in Years 12 and 13, studying sports/PE studies and dance, are producing work which is of above average standard. Students across all ability levels in Year 13 are making good progress. Students' use of relevant vocabulary demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of appropriate physical education terminology. They showed good planning in preparing presentations, which demonstrates their good knowledge and understanding of the Industrial Revolution and its effect on recreational activities. They are able to support their opinions with additional information when responding to more challenging questioning.
227. All students in Year 12 have made good progress since they started the course and they are achieving well. Students show a good understanding of a range of choreographic skills and different cultural styles and forms in dance. Students in both sports/PE studies and dance demonstrate confidence and very good technique when performing and demonstrating. The highest attainers have good understanding and use of technical vocabulary, which they apply accurately and effectively in both written and oral presentations. The least competent students show weaknesses in their prior knowledge of the subject and in their learning skills of research and analysis. Most students demonstrated good use of presentations skills, some using ICT.
228. Students in Year 12 are able to work towards the community sports leadership award. Take up by students is good and standards of work are good.
229. Students have a responsible attitude to their work and are enthusiastic about physical education and dance. Most students are able to express themselves clearly in conversation and discussions, for example when discussing the moral issues raised during discussions about the various sporting activities taken up by different social classes. Students take every opportunity to develop their own personal performance through school productions, inter school matches and competitions and through linking with local companies and clubs.
230. Teaching in the sixth form is, overall, good. The most effective teaching involves high expectations and a good pace to lessons. Teachers ensure that students understand the intended outcomes of the lesson so that they know what they are expected to learn. Gifted and talented students are sometimes insufficiently challenged by their work. Students' skills in ICT are inconsistently developed.
231. The leadership and management of sixth form physical education and dance are very good. There is a determination to improve further the teaching and the standards attained. A review of the timing of lessons and allocation of teaching spaces in AS and A2 sports/PE studies and dance would help to raise standards more quickly. The department offers a good range of timetabled enhancement lessons to all sixth form students as well as extensive extra-curricular provision.

Many sixth form students take leading roles in school dance productions and gain selection to school and representative teams and competitions. This contributes to developing students' confidence and skills in their chosen activities.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The focus of the inspection was health and social care and lessons were sampled in advanced and intermediate level. Attainment has improved over the past two years from being well below average and, in 2002, the small cohort that took the examination in Year 13 attained highly. Students achieve well.

Overall, the quality of provision in health and social care is **good**.

Strengths

- Students learn good personal skills from visits and work placements.
- Teachers have very good relationships with students which keeps students well motivated.
- AVCE meets the needs of students wishing to enter the health care profession.
- Students achieve well and often very well from their GCSE starting points.

Areas for improvement

- Students do not use ICT enough.
- In some AVCE lessons there are not enough opportunities for students to choose their own ways of working.

232. Standards are average. Results in the advanced level vocational certificate of education (AVCE) in 2001 were in line with the national average for course completion and the number of higher grades. In 2002, results were above school expectations, and all of the six students entered passed, with four obtaining top A/B grades. After being well below the national average in previous years, standards have risen significantly. Students' achievement from their GCSE average points scores, which tend to be lower than for students taking other sixth form subjects, was very good for the majority, especially considering that this is a new subject for students. Several students from the very committed groups have gone into careers in health and social care.
233. GNVQ (General National Vocational Qualifications) intermediate standards in 2001 were in line with the national average for course completion and three of the seven students who passed (eight were entered) obtained a merit grade. In 2002 four of the seven students entered passed, with three students obtaining merit and distinction grades. Students achieved well, although small numbers on the course make it invalid to compare national trends from one year to another.
234. In lessons and work seen during the inspection, standards were in line with national expectations at Advanced level, but below expectations in intermediate level although, as this inspection was early in the new course, students have not yet had the opportunity to produce written work at appropriate depth. AVCE students developed a good knowledge and understanding of the digestive process through practical experiments to analyse different foods in a number of laboratory solutions, recording their results well in tabular form. Intermediate students, including those with special needs, had a good general understanding of the main stages of adulthood. They engaged in a good level of debate to bring in their own family experiences, but showed little knowledge of HRT or osteoporosis. Students' written evaluations and reports were often too brief, and their folders showed insufficient examples of practice exercises to calculate energy intake. Students make little use of ICT to word process notes and drafts, or to present and analyse data through graphical means.
235. Teaching and learning are good, and often very good. Teachers' relationships with students were very supportive, and this helped keep students, some of whom had been disaffected at GCSE, well motivated to persevere with their tasks. Teachers organise visits to local care settings, and two-week work placements very effectively to build up students' practical experience of health and social care issues, including moral and ethical issues related to confidentiality and clients' case histories. Students were made well aware of the views of different religious and cultural groups towards some medical conditions. Prompt and constructive marking of students' assignments enables students to learn from their mistakes and improve their work to get higher grades. The

quality of teachers' marking is confirmed by external moderators' reports, which praise the consistency of assessment procedures.

236. The committed staff team have worked well together to make the best use of school resources limited by past difficulties in the availability of ICT for students' use and the recent sudden departure of the subject leader due to ill health. Teachers monitor their own teaching and marking, and students' overall progress against predictions well. The subject area is well managed overall, and has good capacity for further improvement. It is not possible to gauge improvement since the last inspection as the subject was not reported on.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Music was inspected. Numbers are too small to report on attainment but last year students did as well as was expected. There are three students in the current Year 13 and seven in Year 12.

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

Strengths

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and a good understanding of the syllabus requirements.
- Good support is provided for individual students.

Areas for improvement

- There is some inconsistency in the marking of students' work.

237. Standards in Year 13 are broadly average and have remained so since the last inspection. Students in Year 13 have good performing skills and show a good awareness of different musical styles. They identify key features in musical extracts and show some knowledge of different chord structures. However, their knowledge of chromatic chords is occasionally limited. In a lesson, Year 12 students named the Baroque characteristics found in a Handel anthem. They showed a good knowledge of musical vocabulary and used this well in their discussions. Students in both years achieve well. They make good progress in musical analysis and in extending their understanding of compositional techniques.
238. Students in both years have good attitudes. They concentrate on tasks and ask and answer questions with interest. They communicate well both with teachers and each other and show a positive attitude towards improving their own learning and performance. They gain confidence when expressing their own ideas and show evidence of satisfactory independent learning during composition tasks. They make a good contribution to the wider life of the school. They take part in extra-curricular activities and respond well to the opportunity to perform to other pupils in assemblies and in concerts.
239. Teaching and learning are good. The standard of teaching has remained the same since the last inspection. The positive relationships and good support that teachers provide to individual students are a key factor in their good learning. Teachers are good at combining the analysis of musical excerpts with listening skills. For example, in a Year 13 lesson, students listened to part of the second movement of a Shostakovich string quartet. The teacher questioned the students about each section and asked them to explain how the composer had created the effect. As a result, students made good progress in their understanding of different musical techniques. Three teachers are involved in teaching the A-level course. Although they mark students' work satisfactorily, it is not always clear that the same criteria for marking are being used. ICT is available for students and is used by them to aid their learning. The good provision for extra-curricular activities enables students to develop further their performing skills.
240. Good leadership and management have been provided by the senior management team during staff changes. There is now a stable staff and a new acting head of department.
241. The satisfactory use of on-going assessment during lessons enables students' progress to be carefully monitored and identifies any weaknesses in provision.

242. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, with standards and teaching remaining the same.

HUMANITIES

The focus of the inspection was geography and sociology and lessons were seen in Years 12 and 13. Attainment was above average in A level geography in 2001 and students made very good progress. Results are not confirmed for 2002, but the students who were predicted to attain A to C grades all achieved them. In sociology, attainment is improving and is well above average. Students make very good progress.

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- There are very good relationships between students and with staff.
- Access to computers is very good.
- Examination results at GCSE 'A' Level A-B grades in 2001 are above the national average.
- Good provision for fieldwork.

Areas for improvement

- A review of the timetable

243. The results achieved in the 2001 Advanced Level GCE examinations were above the national average at both the higher grades A and B, and in average point scores. All candidates who took the examinations achieved a pass. This also was above the national average. Analysis of results indicates a high value added and hence very good progress over the past years. The standard of work seen for students at the end of Years 12 and Year 13 is above average.
244. Students in Years 12 and 13 consolidate the work of previous years to acquire more detailed knowledge and understanding of topics ranging from river systems and drainage basins to industrial globalisation. They produce work of a high quality which shows in depth analysis and relevance to an understanding of the world in which we live.
245. The quality of teaching is good overall with examples of very good teaching. Lessons are well planned so that the students have a clear understanding of what is to be achieved by the end of the lesson. The good pace maintained throughout lessons and the very good use made of time hold the students' interest and concentration, which results in high productivity and work of above average standard. A range of teaching strategies including note taking, letter writing, defining technical terms and essay writing, reinforces the whole school policy for literacy skills across the curriculum.
246. Leadership and management by the head of faculty are very good. There is a clear vision for development, shared by all staff, with commitment to achieve high standards. Relationships among staff are very good, with teachers sharing ideas and supporting one another. The students speak highly of the range and quality of fieldwork experience offered, including visits to a theme park and the residential trip to the Isle of Wight. Excellent documentation and implementation of whole school policies reflect the aims of the school.
247. Very good improvements have been made since the last inspection. Attainment has risen from 33 per cent pass at the higher grades A and B in GCE advanced level to over 50 per cent in 2001, which is above the national average. The quality of teaching has improved and professional development by members of staff has contributed to the achievement of high standards. Teaching is regularly monitored by the head of department and senior management team, with feedback aimed at improving standards. Carefully planned lessons clearly identify what is to be achieved by the end of the lesson and homework is regularly set and marked. Resources have been updated and increased and teachers' professional development has contributed to improving standards of attainment. Assessment procedures have been introduced with target setting, which enables the monitoring of students' progress.

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are very good, leading to high standards
- Students make very good progress from GCSE starting points.
- Teachers have very good relationships with students, which keeps students well motivated.
- Teachers' marking is regular, detailed and constructive so students know how to improve.
- Students show good levels of critical understanding of sociological concepts.

Areas for improvement

- ICT is not easily available for use in lessons.
- Students' use of industry and the community is underdeveloped.
- Students do not read widely enough.

AS and A2 level sociology is a popular sixth form option, with increasing numbers.

248. A-level sociology results in 2001 were well above the national average for the proportion of students achieving a pass and the top grades of A and B. This maintains the very high trend from previous years, with all 11 students entered passing, and 7 gaining the top grades – twice the national average. Students' achievement from their GCSE points scores in this subject that was new for them was very good, and better than for most school subjects. In 2002 the 8 students entered all passed but gained a lower proportion of the top grades, indicating lower GCSE entry levels. Their achievement over time was very good.
249. Results in the new AS examination in 2002 for Year 12 students were very high, and well above national expectations, with 12 of the 24 students entered gaining A/B grades, an outstanding achievement that was well above teachers' predictions based on students' attainment on entry to a subject of which they had no previous experience.
250. In lessons and work seen, standards are above and sometimes well above national expectations, reflecting very good and excellent teaching. One of the three Y12/13 lessons seen was excellent, where, with skilful guidance, students developed very good critical evaluation skills and consolidated conflict theory very well through being allowed to voice their own viewpoints, well grounded in theory, before working in small groups to draft their own definitions. The teacher's excellent planning of the use of active role play in getting Year 12 students to act out an income parade to illustrate inequalities of income made the subject come alive and helped students' maintain interest and involvement. The teacher helped them gain a rapid understanding of the key features of Marxist ideology, and students were set a challenging homework to research their own examples. Other features of the very good teaching and learning seen included well marked essays with constructive comments to help develop critical understanding of concepts, and teachers' very good use of textbook case studies and topical magazine articles. Students do not find and analyse enough of their own examples of current sociological issues in the press, or use ICT (information and communications technology) enough to search the web, present work or explore and model statistical data, for example on sources and distribution of income. Teachers provide many opportunities for students to debate moral, social and cultural issues, and in a very good Year 13 lesson, students were able to develop good knowledge and understanding of the nature and distribution of power through a critical analysis of Weberian concepts of legal-rational power and bureaucracy. At this time of the year, it was not possible to see completed Year 13 coursework projects, but subjects chosen to date cover a very interesting range, well related to students' own personal interests. Students have prepared their drafts after very focused guidance on methodology from teachers.
251. The subject is very well led and managed within the humanities department, and staff teaching the subject are well qualified specialists who are well organised and highly committed to their students of all levels of attainment, including those identified as gifted and talented, who are fully stretched by the activities. Students' progress over time is very well monitored. Although it is not possible to gauge improvement from the last inspection because the subject was not reported on, the subject has good capacity for further improvement.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus was on English language, English literature and French, but media studies and theatre studies were also sampled. In both media studies and drama, examination results were above average in 2000 and students did as expected considering their GCSE results. One lesson of each was observed. Both were at least good. In the theatre studies lesson, good teaching helped the student to explore the challenging play 'Our Country's Good'. This led to her gaining a secure understanding of the dramatic impact of the first scenes and appreciation of the social issues that the play explores. The effectiveness of this was adversely affected by the fact that only one student takes the course, however. She has no-one in her own year with whom to share ideas and enact scenes from the text. Arrangements are being made for her to work with Year 12 students. In the media studies lesson, very good teaching - brisk, well-organised and motivating - enabled students to appreciate how the structure of narrative can be used in sports and news broadcasts to make a television programme interesting and give it structure. Another focus was French but one Year 12 German lesson and one Year 12 Spanish lesson were sampled. Teaching in all three subjects is good, and attainment in French in 2002 has risen from being consistently below to broadly average.

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

Strengths

- Results in 2001 were above average in English literature, though below average in English language.
- Teaching is energetic and effective, employing a range of teaching and learning styles.
- Teachers mark work carefully, with clear indications of how students could improve their performance.
- Students show enjoyment and confidence, and work willingly together to build on their knowledge and understanding.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities are sometimes missed to extend higher attaining students and so they do not always make the progress that they should.

252. Standards in English are slightly above average. GCE A-level examination results in English literature for 2001 were above the national average, with almost a third of candidates gaining grade A or B. They were an improvement on the year before. Results in English language were slightly below average. Seventeen per cent gained level B, but no candidate attained an A grade. This was unusual; over recent years, results in this examination have been above the national average.
253. Students' achievement in English is good. Most begin the GCE A-level course with a GCSE grade C or above. Very few students fail to complete the course or to gain a pass grade, and most achieve well in relation to their GCSE results. In the first year of the Advanced Supplementary examination, students achieved satisfactorily in their module tests.
254. In English literature work seen during the inspection standards are slightly above average overall. Students clearly show a steadily increasing understanding of the demands of the subject. They learn how to balance analysis and response, and become more independent and confident in their learning as a result of well-structured and lively teaching. From the beginning of the course, they are taught to use specialist vocabulary accurately, both in lessons and in written work.
255. Texts are studied in depth and the students' commentaries on them are informed and sensitive. The best candidates show originality of analysis and interpretation, always rooted firmly in understanding of the text they are studying. Their responses are mature and intellectual, showing a knowledge of other work by the same author and of contemporary literature and issues. One candidate, in her analysis of *Hard Times*, introduced a wide range of references to the writings of Carlyle and William Blake that extended her analysis of the society, social conditions and moral philosophy of the time, greatly enhancing her own understanding and writing. The higher attaining students use the technical language of literary criticism confidently and accurately to illustrate the points they make and show excellent understanding of the ways in which authors use stylistic devices to influence the reader.

256. Mid and lower attaining students are also perceptive and sensitive readers of literature. They write showing a good understanding of personalities, emotions and relationships of characters in literature. Their range of reading is narrower than that of the higher attainers. Their own writing is technically less competent and their expression less fluent.
257. Overall in English language, standards are above average. The higher attaining candidates understand linguistic terminology and use it very well to inform their analysis of texts. They have a good understanding and knowledge of the ways that language has changed over time - for example, the introduction of new words as a result of technological advances and the influence of other cultures on English. They have a very good understanding of the ways in which language and syntax are adapted to meet the needs of differing purposes and audiences - in the case of advertising, for example, how words are chosen to persuade a targeted group of people that they should buy a particular product.
258. All students recognise different types of language, such as archaisms or colloquialisms. They are able to describe and discuss linguistic features such as structure and layout. The lower attaining students tend to answer with less detail and understanding than the higher attainers and their own use of language is less confident and competent.
259. GCE AS and A level students work enthusiastically in lessons and organise their written work and course materials efficiently. They always have a very positive attitude in lessons. They respond equally well to whole-class teaching and to working in groups. Teaching is good overall and some of it is very good. Five lessons were seen and the teaching was never less than good. Teachers know their subject well and convey enthusiasm for it. They are very successful in helping students to share this enthusiasm. The lessons are characterised by a stimulating pace, a good rapport with students and a willingness to challenge them. This was used effectively on several occasions to encourage students to develop and support an initial answer or opinion. Students commented favourably on the contrasting styles and teaching strategies they experience and saw how this contributed to their growing mastery of the subject. In one lesson, students considered individually, then in gradually larger groups, what their modern versions of the Seven Deadly Sins would be, prior to a piece of written work. They said how helpful this had been, describing how their ideas and opinions had developed and evolved as a result of discussions with their peers. Teachers are careful to maintain a balance between stimulating interest and enjoyment in individual lessons and reminding students of the specific demands of each module.
260. The A-level teachers are a strong team and the management of the subject is very good indeed. There are regular team meetings and a truly collegiate feel – with daily discussions between teachers on teaching successes and materials that are sharing and raising expertise. The work of the department is monitored excellently. English is taught in a suite of adjacent rooms, and posters and displays help to raise the profile of the subject, both for the students themselves and for younger pupils. Both the literature and the language courses are well resourced with photocopied materials.
261. Standards in English at A-level are improving. The department has, in the recent past, held master classes for its highest attaining students, but the new sixth form timetabling arrangements have made it difficult for these to continue. There are missed opportunities for challenging the most able students, both in class and in extra-curricular activities and, if the proportion of high grades gained in A and AS level examinations is to rise, the department needs to consider how to extend these students even further.

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

Strengths

- Students develop good writing skills.
- Teaching, overall, is good.
- There has been a considerable increase in the number of students studying French in Year 12 in 2002.

Areas for improvement

- The spontaneous use of oral language by students.

262. Since the last inspection low numbers of students have been entered for A-level French. Results have varied but, in general, all attain A to E grades. In 2001, no student achieved the higher grades and in 2002, only one student attained a higher grade.
263. The evidence from work seen in lessons and in students' files during the inspection shows that standards are close to average and that students make satisfactory progress and some make good progress. Year 13 students are developing good writing skills, especially lower attaining students. An example is a student who, by the end of Year 13 was able to present opinions and argue a point of view. Mistakes in grammar were still present but they no longer affected communication. A more able student had improved the quality and range of her language, though there was little evidence that she was using the more complex structures and grammar necessary to achieve the higher grades. Students in Year 13 have developed good strategies for coping with difficult reading texts. Oral skills are not as well developed as writing skills. Students do not respond readily to relatively simple questions and are reluctant to use French in the lesson.
264. Students in Year 12 represent a wide range of ability. Most speak confidently, though they are reluctant to use French for basic communication in the classroom. In the lesson seen most were able to form and use the imperfect tense, though a minority had only a basic understanding of it.
265. Teaching in the sixth form is good overall. All lessons are characterised by very good relationships between teachers and students. Teachers are supportive and use praise well to motivate students. In the best lessons they maintain a good balance between supporting students and maintaining the level of challenge. Lessons are well-planned to practise a variety of skills. In one lesson, for example, the teacher used a challenging listening comprehension to present information about the role of the police. The text was then examined for key vocabulary and expressions which the students were able to use to write their own presentations. In most lessons teachers use target language effectively to improve students' listening skills, though this does not happen in less effective lessons. Teachers do not insist that students use the target language for basic communication in the classroom. Most of the work undertaken in lessons is challenging but, in one lesson with a wide range of ability, the teacher found it difficult to support the less able and to maintain the level of challenge for the more able. ICT is used well.
266. Students are positive and show an interest in the subject. Their files are well organised, they work conscientiously in lessons and show a strong desire to succeed.
267. Leadership and management in the subject are good and a skilled and experienced head of faculty has just been appointed. There are clear targets for the subject and the head of faculty evaluates performance of students effectively. Systems for monitoring work in the subject and the quality of teaching are very good but they are not yet having an effective impact on standards. There remain inconsistencies in teaching and the development of students' skills is uneven.