

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CLEEVE PARK SCHOOL**

Sidcup, Kent

LEA area: Bexley

Unique reference number: 101471

Headteacher: Mrs L Karmock-Golds

Reporting inspector: Mr D B Evans  
1049

Dates of inspection: 21 - 25 October 2002

Inspection number: 249582

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Modern (non-selective)

School category: Community

Age range of students: 11 to 18 years

Gender of students: Mixed

School address: Bexley Lane  
Sidcup  
Kent

Postcode: DA14 4JN

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Clark

Date of previous inspection: 23 September 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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1049	Brian Evans	Registered inspector	English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are students taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11041	Marvyn Moore	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Students' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
31218	Thomas Allen	Team inspector	Geography Geography (sixth form)	
30911	John Barton	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages French (sixth form)	
28878	Andrew Blow	Team inspector	Mathematics	
25377	Lorna Brown	Team inspector	Art	
8361	Malcolm Burley	Team inspector	Science	
27411	Heather Butensky	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
30741	Paul Copping	Team inspector		How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
19026	Brian Downes	Team inspector	Educational inclusion	
4372	Ralph Fordham	Team inspector	Religious education	
10244	Roger Freeman	Team inspector	Mathematics (sixth form)	
10060	David Gutmann	Team inspector	Business education (sixth form) Leisure and tourism (sixth form)	

24026	Celia Holland	Team inspector	Music	
14490	Susan Jackson	Team inspector	Citizenship History History (sixth form)	
18950	Carmen Rodney	Team inspector	English English (sixth form)	
2183	Peter Thompson	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology Information and communication technology (sixth form)	
18755	Roger Whittaker	Team inspector	Physical education Physical education (sixth form)	

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London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Cleeve Park is a mixed non-selective community school on the outskirts of Sidcup, Kent. It is affiliated to the Technology Colleges Trust. There are 1245 students on roll from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, including a sixth form of 105 students; there are twice as many boys as girls. The student population is predominantly white; there are small numbers of Black, Asian and Chinese students. There are twelve students with English as an additional language. An above average number of students are on the special educational needs register; the majority have specific learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural problems. The number of students with statements of special educational needs is well above average. The school has facilities for providing physically disabled students with full access to the curriculum. Overall, students' attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 is below average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Cleeve Park is an effective school. Good leadership by the head is gradually raising students' achievement. The school effectively promotes good behaviour and positive attitudes and relationships. It is beginning to see the benefits of this approach in the standards achieved by students. Improved teaching has led to better attitudes to learning. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Students achieve well in science in Years 7 to 9 because teaching is good and students' attitudes to learning are good.
- The wide range of extra-curricular activities supports the personal and academic development of students well.
- The newly appointed headteacher gives clear leadership to staff on raising standards.
- The school's improvement plan is well structured and provides an effective base for raising achievement.

#### **What could be improved**

- Students' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are not applied in all subjects in line with National Curriculum requirements.
- Students' achievement in mathematics is unsatisfactory.
- There is a lack of consistency and teamwork between subject leaders and senior managers which adversely affects students' overall achievement.

*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 September 1996. Satisfactory progress has been made in relation to the key issues identified in the last report. Very good progress has been made in raising standards in science; students make very good progress in Years 7 to 11. In English, teaching and learning have improved but standards are still too low by the end of Year 11. There has been satisfactory progress in music since the last inspection but in geography standards have declined. Strategic planning has significantly improved under the leadership of the newly appointed headteacher and weaknesses in management are being effectively addressed although not yet rectified. Good practice in the use of assessment has led to good progress by students in number of subjects although this not consistently so across all areas of the curriculum. Differences in attainment between boys and girls have narrowed. Effective use is made of learning support mentors in the classroom. Provision for students' cultural development is satisfactory. The school's capacity to improve is good because there is a strong commitment from all staff to raise standards within a well-structured school development plan.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	C	D	D	C
A-levels/AS-levels			E	

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

By the end of Year 9, standards are below average. Students' results in Year 9 National Curriculum tests in 2001 were below average in English and mathematics and average in science. Results were below average in English when compared to non-selective modern schools, well below average for mathematics and well above average for science. Boys achieve much the same results compared with boys' national average for their age group as girls do compared with theirs but with variations from year to year. Improvements in national tests by the end of Year 9 over the past six years have been below the national trend. The inspection team judge students to be achieving higher standards than those indicated by the 2001 English tests because teaching and learning have improved and because of the positive impact of an effective literacy strategy. Students' mathematical skills remain well below average. Standards in science continue to be high. By the end of Year 11, standards are below average. The average points score for students entered for GCSE examinations has been below average over the past four years. In 2001, the GCSE average point score per student was average when compared with similar non-selective modern schools. The trend in the school's averages between 1996 and 2001 was broadly in line with the national trend. The school has not met its GCSE targets over the past two years. Current targets are realistic but challenging and based on more accurate assessment data. ICT skills develop well in ICT lessons and are close to the average for students' ages but students do not have enough opportunities to apply these skills in many subjects. In the sixth form, results gained by students entered have been consistently well below average. However, this is in the context of most A level, AS level and General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) students beginning courses with very modest GCSE grades.

In Years 7 to 11, students make very good progress in art and achieve well in science, history, modern foreign languages and religious education. They make satisfactory progress in English, design and technology, geography, ICT, physical education and citizenship. Progress in mathematics is unsatisfactory. Students with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily. The relatively few students who enter the school with little English make unsatisfactory progress because resources for supporting their language development are limited. Literacy and numeracy skills are below average on entry. Overall, they remain below average by the end of Year 11. The school has begun to implement effective school policies on raising standards in basic skills in Years 7 to 9. In work seen, there was no significant difference between attainment of the different ethnic minority groups.

## STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Students are generally enthusiastic about the school and this has a positive impact on students' achievement.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Behaviour is good in lessons but there are occasional lapses around the school. Most students are amenable and courteous to each other and to adults. Staff and students work well together in



	dealing effectively with any incidences of oppressive behaviour, sexism and racism.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Students of all levels of attainment mix well and respect each other's views. Relationships among students and between teachers and students are good.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average. Students are generally prompt in arriving at lessons.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is better than at the time of the previous inspection because senior staff have worked hard with staff to improve teaching and learning in all years in spite of recent difficulties the school has experienced in recruiting specialist staff. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Students' attitudes are good. Teaching is good in science, history, modern foreign languages and religious education. A particular strength in these subjects is that teachers have a good understanding of how students learn. As a result, students work at a good pace and have a good knowledge of their own learning. Teaching is satisfactory in English and in most other subjects and the majority of students make at least satisfactory gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills during lessons. However, it is unsatisfactory in mathematics in Years 7 to 11 and in geography in Years 7 to 9. In these subjects, teachers' expectations are low and the pace of learning is slow. Support for students with special educational needs is good. Most gifted and talented students make satisfactory progress. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory and includes an increasing variety of approaches and support for students' needs which is based on sound assessment data. The teaching of numeracy is generally satisfactory, although there is some inconsistency between subjects in applying students' numerical skills. Support for the very few students with English as an additional language is unsatisfactory because resources are limited.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Generally satisfactory. However, ICT provision does not meet National Curriculum requirements in all subjects. There is no daily act of collective worship. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. Close and useful links exist with the local community, which enrich the curriculum.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Good. There is a good partnership between support staff and teachers and students make at least satisfactory progress. Students with physical disabilities are integrated well into school life.
Provision for students with English as an additional language.	Unsatisfactory. Teachers have insufficient resources to meet the needs of the small number of students with English as an additional language.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual,	Satisfactory. Provision for moral and social development is good. It is satisfactory for spiritual and cultural development. Students' personal

moral, social and cultural development	development is enhanced by a good personal, social and health education programme.
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How well the school cares for its students	Satisfactory. Students are valued and good relationships are fostered. Guidance for students is good. Procedures for assessment are generally satisfactory. Child protection procedures are unsatisfactory because staff are not updated regularly on relevant issues. Attention to health and safety is satisfactory. Careers education and guidance are satisfactory. The school works hard to achieve satisfactory relationships with parents.
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## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership in the school. She is restructuring the team of senior managers to enable a more effective and consistent team approach. There is a clear focus on improving teaching and learning in order to raise achievement. The effectiveness of middle managers is satisfactory overall but varies from very good to unsatisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are slowly developing their roles in monitoring the school's performance.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The recent school self-evaluation provides the basis for a sound strategic development plan and priorities for curriculum development.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Specific grants are being used appropriately and well. 'Best value' principles are applied to academic success and spending. Difficulties in appointing suitably qualified staff have affected standards but currently the school is fully staffed. Learning resources and accommodation are adequate.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Their children make good progress.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school working more closely with parents.</li> <li>• Homework.</li> <li>• Information about how their children are getting on at school.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings support parents' positive views about the school. Inspectors found inconsistencies in the setting of homework between subjects and between teachers. The pastoral staff work closely with parents. Written reports on progress are at least satisfactory and often good. However, parents expressed their concerns with the arrangements for parents' evenings in which they met only with their son's or daughter's tutor to discuss progress. In the current academic year, meetings between parents and subject teachers have been re-instated.

## ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM

## CLEEVE PARK SCHOOL

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form currently has about 100 students on roll and there are significantly more students in Year 12 than in Year 13. Typically, around a third of Year 11 students join the sixth form annually; very few students join the sixth form from other schools. The school operates a policy of flexible and open access to the sixth form and is keen to include everyone. Many students embark on sixth form work having only achieved very modest results in their GCSE examinations. To cater for the diverse nature of its intake, a realistic curriculum has been developed, but the opportunities for out of lesson activities, and for students to seek responsibility, are limited. Numbers opting for vocational courses are growing and the school's development planning includes a priority on improving the range of vocational courses on offer.

### HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

Sixth form provision is satisfactory overall, though it is unsatisfactory in some key areas. There are positive aspects. Overall, standards are satisfactory and students make sound progress but there are variations from very good to unsatisfactory in students' achievements between subjects. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the commitment to developing the curriculum to make it more relevant to students' needs is strong. The cost effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory and the majority of students feel secure and appreciate the opportunities that are made available. The management of this part of the school's activities has recently been extensively revised and the head of sixth form has a good vision of how further improvements might be secured. Their development planning is detailed. At present, however, the management of the sixth form is merely satisfactory because improvement plans have only recently been compiled and at too early a stage to evaluate. Some aspects of the post-16 provision are unsatisfactory. Assessment data are available but not consistently used effectively to promote students' learning. Students' independent and research skills are not developed well in a number of subjects because there is an over emphasis in lessons on teacher led discussion.

#### Strengths

- The students are very supportive of the sixth form and appreciate the opportunities being offered.
- The sixth form is a harmonious community in which the students feel valued.
- The recent and continuing adjustments to the curriculum are meeting the needs of individual students more appropriately.

#### What could be improved

- Assessment data are not used rigorously enough to monitor the performance of each individual student.
- Students are not encouraged to encourage to develop their skills as independent learners.
- Procedures for monitoring students' attendance are unsatisfactory.

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

### THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Most students re-taking GCSE mathematics improve on their prior grades because of sound teaching. Arrangements for

GCSE	supporting students' revision programme are not rigorous.
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Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Business A level	<b>Good.</b> Excellent course retention rates help students to make progress. Teaching and learning enable students to achieve well.
ICT AVCE	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> In lessons where teaching is good, students learn well. Setting of targets for completion of units of work is not followed up rigorously.
Physical education – Community Sports Leadership award	<b>Good.</b> The good quality of teaching is helping all students to develop their independent learning skills and achieve well.
Leisure and Tourism GNVQ Intermediate	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Students achieve satisfactorily. In work seen, standards are below average. Teaching is satisfactory.
Geography A level	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Students do not make enough progress given their GCSE grades on entry to the course. The course has only recently been introduced and there is an over emphasis on teacher direction in the course which adversely affects students learning for themselves.
History A level	<b>Very good.</b> Students make good progress in lessons because teaching is very good and, at times, outstanding.
English A level	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Advanced level standards vary from average to below average. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is little evidence that students are reading widely and researching independently.
French A level	<b>Good.</b> Students make good progress although they find the course difficult. This is because the teaching is good and teachers have high expectations.

Work in some other sixth form subjects was sampled during the inspection. In all other lessons seen, teaching was always at least satisfactory. In most subjects of the sixth form curriculum the quality of teaching is helping students make satisfactory progress.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	The quality of careers education and guidance is satisfactory, but the monitoring and assessment of the performance of each individual student are unsatisfactory. Performance data are not used with sufficient rigour and consistency as part of a strategy to improve standards.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. Planning for improvements is good. However, too little time has elapsed for any assessment of how effective planning has been to be possible.

## 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"><li>• The encouragement and challenges offered by teachers in lessons.</li><li>• The levels of support teachers offer to students outside lesson times.</li><li>• The friendly and harmonious spirit that has been created.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The quality of support and guidance designed to improve individual attainment.</li><li>• The quality of careers advice and guidance.</li><li>• The opportunities sixth formers have for expressing their own views and ideas about the school.</li></ul>

Twenty students responded to the questionnaire; many other formal and informal discussions took place with students during the inspection week. The team shares the students' views of the strengths of the sixth form and also agrees with their views on highlighting the quality assessment and monitoring of progress as an area for improvement. However, inspectors found that the quality of careers education and guidance that is offered is satisfactory.

## COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and students' achievements**

1. Overall, the attainment of students on entry to Year 7 is below average. By the end of Year 11, standards remain below average. Students generally make satisfactory progress through the school. However, their achievement patterns vary between subjects in all years.

Inspection evidence shows that standards by the end of Year 9 are:

- above average in art;
- average in science, modern foreign languages and religious education;
- below average in English, citizenship, geography, history and music;
- well below average in mathematics, design and technology and ICT.

Students in Years 7 to 9 achieve:

- very well in art;
- well in science, history, modern foreign languages and religious education;
- satisfactorily in English, citizenship, design and technology, geography, ICT and music;
- unsatisfactorily in mathematics.

2. Achievement is very good in art in all years because the subject is led well and teachers have high expectations. Students respond enthusiastically within a creative learning environment. In mathematics, teachers are well-qualified but there are several weaknesses which adversely affects students' attainment. Lessons lack clear objectives and teachers' planning does not offer many opportunities for students to develop their independent learning skills. In design and technology and ICT, students enter the school with well below average skills but make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 9. The significant improvement in science standards in all years since the last inspection is based on good teaching, excellent monitoring procedures and students' positive attitudes to learning. In English, teachers have good subject knowledge and a firm commitment to raising standards. However, assessment and target-setting procedures are not sufficiently rigorous. Very good leadership and well-planned lessons in modern foreign languages, religious education and history enable students to achieve well. In all years, ICT is not integrated into the schemes of work of many subjects and thus students have limited opportunities to practise and develop their ICT skills.

Inspection evidence shows that standards in GCSE subjects are:

- well above average in art;
- above average in modern foreign languages and religious education;
- average in science, citizenship, history and physical education;
- below average in English, design and technology, geography and music;
- well below average in mathematics and ICT.

Students achieve:

- very well in art;
- well in science, history, modern foreign languages, religious education;
- satisfactorily in English, design and technology, geography, ICT, physical education, music;
- unsatisfactorily in mathematics.

3. The school improvement plan is addressing the need for a much greater consistency in attainment and achievement between subjects but at this early stage of the school year it is too early to evaluate its impact on the quality of students' learning. In many subjects, students do not remember earlier work well enough and this has a significant impact on their overall achievement.



4. The arrangements introduced for supporting students' literacy skills are good; for example, the display of key words are generally consistently displayed and referred to in lessons. However, many students enter the school with very low literacy skills. Senior staff give an appropriately high priority to meeting individual needs, particularly in reading and writing. Low literacy levels continue to be a barrier for many students in striving for higher test results and GCSE grades. Skills in numeracy are below average but improving.
5. Students with special educational needs make good progress in lessons. The small group of physically disabled students have good access to the curriculum and achieve well. In lessons where statemented students are withdrawn for one-to-one support with learning support assistants or teachers, they make at least good progress with reading. This progress is often accelerated by the use of a commercial independent learning programme, using computers that enable them to develop their keyboard skills further. The well-focused information and the clear charting of progress in literacy skills will assist all teachers to improve their awareness of the nature of, and provision for, students with special educational needs. Individual education plans incorporated in the assessment system sharpen the response to the needs of students. Many gifted and talented students achieve well, for example, through accelerated groups in some subjects, but there are no formal school procedures for identifying their needs across the curriculum. The wide range of extra-curricular activities involves a high proportion of students and provides them with excellent opportunities to develop their talents in the fields of music, drama and physical education.

### **Sixth form**

6. GCE A level results have been well below average in recent years and were very low in 2001. Many students find the A/AS courses difficult because they start from a base of a B or C grade in their GCSE examination in the subject chosen. The proportion of students achieving the higher A and B grades in 2001 A/AS examinations was very low. Overall, the proportion of grades A-E achieved were lower than in 2000. Retention rates for students completing courses are satisfactory.
7. In the reported subjects and courses, students are achieving in line with expectations based on target grades derived from students' GCSE performance. In September 2000, the AS level was introduced as a separate intermediate qualification leading the GCE Advanced level (A2). A number of students were under pressure to cope with the heavier workload of studying more subjects than previously and this adversely affected pass levels in some subjects. Levels of achievement are generally satisfactory because most have only modest GCSE results.

### **Students' attitudes, values and personal development**

8. Students' attitudes to the school are satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress as a result. Students enjoy coming to school and are supported well by staff. The parental questionnaire confirms these positive views. Students have satisfactory respect for the feelings, beliefs and values of others. Students in wheelchairs are supported well by other students. Students with special educational needs are supported well. Learning support mentors offer good support, help and encouragement and, as a result, students with learning and behavioural difficulties make good progress.
9. Behaviour around the school is satisfactory and often good. Most students know the high standard of behaviour expected of them and respond positively. For example, the dining room is very cramped but students use it without jostling. Students, teachers and support staff display a good level of co-operation and work well together. In most lessons students behave well, display enthusiasm and remain on task. A small number of students occasionally display antisocial behaviour and do not always treat their own property, other people's property and school property with the greatest care and respect.

10. Students confirm that incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour occur but that staff deal with them immediately and appropriately. The school has a relatively high number of exclusions but these are given for good reason and the correct procedures are always followed.
11. Relationships in the school are good. They are well supported and the school is a caring community. Students have opportunities to accept responsibility and are keen to accept it. Two students from each year group are elected to the school council. They debate matters of interest and make suggestions to senior management on improvements they feel should be made. However, there is a tendency for meetings of the school council to be dominated by teachers in discussions. Senior students act as prefects and many students work hard for local charities. A wide range of extra-curricular activities takes place at lunch time and after school. These are well supported by students.
12. Attendance is above the average and has improved since the previous inspection. The school uses well the electronic system of marking registers. A recently appointed attendance officer monitors and follows up quickly on first day absences. Most lessons start on time.

### **Sixth form**

13. Students have positive views about the help that the school provides for them. They receive a good level of support from teachers and their personal learning skills are enhanced as a result. Students receive good advice regarding their future careers but the lack of adequate study facilities and small library inhibits their learning.
14. Students display good attitudes to the school. They enjoy sixth form life and have well-developed study skills. Most students provide a good example and excellent role models for other students. Coursework and assignments are completed promptly. However, a small number are not well motivated and occasionally are immature in their approach to their work. Behaviour in sixth form lessons is generally good. Students are proud of their school and are anxious to develop their skills. For example, in an excellent sixth form induction evening for prospective students observed during the inspection week, students provided musical entertainment of a very high quality and made a valuable contribution to the evening.

### **HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

15. Overall, teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 11 and makes a positive contribution to effective learning and to the standards achieved. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 91 per cent of the lessons seen, good or better in 61 per cent, very good or excellent in 26 per cent. Seven per cent were unsatisfactory and two per cent poor. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection two years ago when 20 per cent of lessons seen were considered to be less than satisfactory and the most serious weakness identified was that too much learning was teacher directed. A much higher proportion of students is now making satisfactory or better progress in spite of the major difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff over the past three years. The improved quality of teaching and learning is recognised by the parents. No teaching in citizenship was programmed during the week of the inspection – the school has a fortnightly timetable.

#### Teaching is

- very good in ICT in Years 7 to 9 and in history in Years 10 and 11;
- good in science, modern foreign languages, religious education; it is good in design and technology and geography in Years 10 and 11 and in history in Years 7 to 9;
- satisfactory in English, ICT, music, physical education and in design and technology and geography in Years 7 to 9;
- unsatisfactory in mathematics mainly because expectations are low and mathematical concepts are not taught well.

16. The above analysis illustrates well the inconsistencies that exist in the quality of teaching and learning between departments, within departments and between year groups. These arise mainly from weaknesses in leadership and management skills of senior staff. Strategies in the school development plan focus on a more consistent quality of teaching and learning in all subjects. For example, the leadership group has placed a high priority on raising achievement more effectively through monitoring and support of classroom practice. However, at this stage of the school year, it is too early to evaluate the long-term effect of such initiatives. Most teachers have good knowledge and understanding of their subject. Overall, the teaching of basic skills is good. Classroom management is generally good and provides a positive environment for learning. Teachers do not always pitch the work to match students' needs because in many subjects where teaching is otherwise satisfactory the quality and use of ongoing assessment in lessons are unsatisfactory.
17. In the best lessons, for example in science, teachers have high expectations and use a variety of activities to maintain interest. In these lessons, students appreciate the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. Poor and unsatisfactory lessons, for example in mathematics, are characterised by objectives of the lesson not being made clear to students and where the teacher had not given sufficient thought to the steps the students need to go through in order to learn new work.
18. The quality of students' learning is satisfactory. Overall, students' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is satisfactory. In a significant proportion of lessons good attitudes to learning lead to a brisk pace when lessons are well-structured and include a variety of activities and teaching styles. The major weakness in a number of lessons is that students do not know how well they are achieving because teachers do not use assessment data to inform them effectively. Homework is used effectively in a few subjects to support students' learning. Overall, it is set satisfactorily but there are inconsistencies between teachers and between subjects. Marking of students' work is also sometimes good but again there is some inconsistency in practice.
19. Students with special educational needs benefit from satisfactory teaching. Through supported reading, spelling sessions and textual decoding lessons, they learn word attack and comprehension skills that improve their reading age. This enhances their self-confidence and eases their access to the wider National Curriculum. The teaching of numeracy and mathematical understanding is generally good, although there are inconsistencies within the department and across the school. Some subject teachers are more effective in developing these basic skills. A number of lessons have been positively influenced by the National Numeracy Strategy with activities that have built on earlier work in middle and primary schools. Teachers have not developed resources for the very few students for whom English is an additional language.

### **Sixth form**

20. The overall standard of teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory. In the 35 lessons and other work observed, over half of the teaching was good. In the best practice, lessons are planned well and teachers use their subject knowledge well to motivate students to explore their knowledge and understanding further. There were no unsatisfactory or poor lessons. On occasions, too much teacher-directed activity in a lesson stifles students' motivation and does not inspire them to work through their own hypotheses and ideas. Students do not get enough opportunity to develop their independent learning and research skills. Assessment data are not used rigorously enough to monitor the performance of each individual student.
21. Provision for the teaching of key skills is satisfactory but varies between teachers and departments. In English, communication skills are developed through discussions. Number skills are developed in a number of subjects, for example, in geography. However, opportunities to develop key skills in most subject areas are not well signposted, and co-ordination is not effective.

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

22. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are good in Years 7 to 11. The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides a relevant curricular experience for the majority of students. Not all statutory requirements are met because there is insufficient coverage of ICT across the curriculum, especially in mathematics. Students have opportunities to study drama and citizenship in Years 7 to 11, and higher attaining students can add a second modern foreign language in Year 8. The curriculum for geography is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 because of a lack of field work and insufficient use of ICT in the subject. The school does not provide an opportunity for students to share in a daily act of worship.
23. In Years 10 and 11, statutory requirements are met with the exception of provision for ICT across the curriculum, especially in mathematics. A range of extra courses is on offer such as business studies, drama, food technology and graphics. A small number of students have been withdrawn from the National Curriculum in Years 10 and 11. Where this has been done it has been to enhance students' learning opportunities as an alternative to exclusion or because of previous unsatisfactory attendance. This programme provides students with a relevant school curriculum, usually for three days a week, and a work experience placement for the other two. These courses are proving very beneficial to the students involved. Students in the early stage of learning English as an additional language do not have access to the full curriculum because of a lack of support in lessons.
24. Provision for extra-curricular activities and sport is very good. There is a good range of recreational and competitive sporting activities throughout the year and these broaden students' learning experiences. Participation in extra-curricular sport is good. Music, drama and other clubs such as the environment group and the gardening club are available and enhance students' personal and academic development. Students take part in a good Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. The range of subject-based clubs include science, languages and art.
25. Overall, the school makes satisfactory provision for students' personal, social and health education (PSHE.) It is important in enabling students to develop skills, attitudes, values and independence. The curriculum is well planned, broad and balanced and meets the needs of all students. The programme has good links with the recently developed citizenship course. Topics such as attitudes to bullying, sex and drugs education, ethical issues and human rights provide opportunities for students to develop attitudes and values. The limited amount of time available to the subject means that students receive a variable programme and not all students necessarily receive their full entitlement.
26. Overall, careers education and guidance are satisfactory. Students undertake a valuable fortnight's work experience in Year 10 and one week in Year 12. A good feature is that most students find their own placements thus developing good personal initiative. However, not all placements are consistently monitored by school staff as to health and safety requirements or students' progress. All Year 11 students receive a personal careers interview from the external careers adviser and are given an action plan for future careers possibilities. Prior to this year, careers lessons have not been formally timetabled, but elements of careers guidance have not been incorporated into citizenship lessons. The curriculum has been broadened to include more vocational subjects by offering the opportunity for students to study care and catering at a local further education college. Although brochures and prospectuses for further education are available, and school staff give students helpful support, the school's careers library is limited in scope, and is not easily accessible to students because it is based in a mathematics classroom.
27. The community makes a good contribution to students' learning. There is an active Parent-Teacher Association that contributes to many aspects of school life. The school is developing strong connections with local universities, especially with engineering departments, in preparation for the school's bid for engineering college status. Many elements of the Duke of Edinburgh's

Award Scheme involve people in the community. The school is involved in the Healthy Schools initiative as, for example, in the Safer Routes to School scheme.

28. Over 60 primary schools send students to the school and it is not possible for very strong links to be maintained with all of them. However, the school does have good links with its main partner primary schools and the transfer of information between schools is good. There are strong links with the local further education colleges.

### **Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

29. Overall, the school makes satisfactory provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for moral and social development is good; provision for cultural and spiritual development is satisfactory. There are several references to these aspects of students' personal development in the school's documentation, especially with regard to behaviour, equal opportunities and bullying. The PSHE programme is an important element in these aspects of the curriculum. However, provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not co-ordinated or evaluated well across the curriculum.
30. Provision for students' spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies do not always provide an opportunity for reflection. There is some evidence of planning in departments for spiritual development, but this is inconsistent and lacks structure. For example, the religious education curriculum makes a very good contribution. Students are encouraged to consider and respond to questions about the meaning and purpose of life. In English, teachers increase students' understanding of literary texts and link some to religious themes, thus enabling students to express empathy and compassion for others in their writing. In art and design, students are required to draw upon their own attitudes, values, beliefs and experiences of the world in their studies of great artists. However, opportunities in most subjects are missed to enhance this aspect of students' personal development.
31. Provision for moral development is good. It occurs mainly in the PSHE programme. Topics such as attitudes to bullying, sex education, drugs awareness, values & family life, equal opportunities, all provide a sound curriculum for discussion and the development of attitudes and values. Teaching styles that allow students to express their views, explore moral dilemmas and form judgements were evident in both PSHE and religious education. The school has clear expectations of students knowing right from wrong and students respond well when they are corrected. The headteacher and staff are good role models for students. Assemblies contribute well in this area. For example, the theme of 'helping others' explores a range of moral principles and values. In religious education, students are able to respond to aspects of morality using their knowledge of religious and ethical issues. In physical education, there is a clear awareness of the importance of playing by the rules. In English, students became increasingly aware of making moral judgements through consideration of literary texts and poetry. In drama, students looked at issues of homelessness and family relationships from different moral points of view. Several other subjects such as art and design, science, geography, history and music all provide opportunities for students to develop moral attitudes and values.
32. Provision for social development is also good. The school provides significant opportunities for students to take responsibility and develop social understanding. The PSHE programme provides many opportunities in this area. Discussion of rights and responsibilities, healthy environment, citizenship, and sex education all provide a valuable contribution to developing attitudes and fostering independent thinking. In addition, lunchtime clubs and sporting activities all help to develop skills of social interaction. Students show visitors around the school and help staff with a range of tasks. They act as receptionists and have a clearly defined job description. The schools council provides some opportunities for students to develop their communication skills and make important contributions to the life of the school. The council needs to develop further for it to influence change throughout the school. Work experience also provides significant opportunities for students to develop self-confidence and social skills. Most subjects contribute towards social development. For example, students work well together and many opportunities are provided for them to express their views in paired work, group work and general discussion. In physical

education, visits to other schools provide good opportunities for students to develop social skills and relationships.

33. Provision for students' cultural development is satisfactory. Well-supported trips and visits to theatres, art galleries, museums, together with visits to France, all provide opportunities for students to develop cultural awareness. In art, the study of artists from other cultures forms an important part of the curriculum. There are displays of African and Caribbean cultures, Indian pottery and Egyptian art and students also visit galleries in New York, Barcelona and Amsterdam. The religious education programme also makes a significant contribution, especially in terms of the study of different religions and the cultures that support them. Topics in PSHE and citizenship, such as respecting diversity, individual differences, tolerance and discrimination, extend students' cultural awareness. However, positive planning in all areas of the curriculum in order to prepare students for life in a multi-cultural Britain requires urgent development.
34. Since the previous inspection, there has been some improvement in opportunities for spiritual and cultural development, although the need to fully address the multi-cultural dimension remains. Provision for moral and social development continues to be good.

### **Sixth form**

35. The sixth form curriculum does not provide a sufficiently broad base on which students can select their sixth form courses. Key skills provision is satisfactory. There are limited vocational courses on offer and no foundation GNVQ courses available. In addition the options for A/S and A level are limited.
36. There are good enrichment opportunities available to sixth form students overall, but the range of sporting activities is unsatisfactory because of the structure of the timetable. Sixth form students take part in the local and regional Young Enterprise competition and are very successful. Sixth form students play an important part in the induction of Year 7 students and are attached to Year 7 and Year 8 tutor groups to provide general support. Sixth form students also administer the school bank. A range of social activities is planned and organised by students during the year.
37. Students have opportunities to talk to careers staff in the sixth form and are encouraged to make contacts with the local Connexions office. There is a range of information available in school but this is not all in one place and is therefore not as accessible as it should be. Education about the careers available is not yet fully built into the induction process or student reviews in the sixth form.
38. Provision for moral and social development in the sixth form is good; provision for cultural is satisfactory and provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory. The general studies and religious studies programme makes some contribution to spiritual development, but many opportunities are missed to enhance this aspects of students' personal development.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?**

39. Procedures to promote students' health, well-being and safety are satisfactory. The staff at the school have a caring and supporting approach to all its students. The pastoral system is effective and form tutors are readily available to give students additional advice and help if they require it. Tutors move up the school with their own tutor group and tutors know individual students well. Staff work hard to ensure that students receive good support in their academic and personal development. The views of the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that children are looked after well. Regular meetings are held to discuss individual students and their progress is enhanced as a result.
40. Only the recently appointed child protection officer has received training in procedures. The school has adopted the policy of the local education authority. Not all staff are fully aware of child protection procedures, although during the inspection week the school dealt well with a case of

alleged child abuse. Case studies are not centrally logged. The school referral system is currently under review. The school has satisfactory arrangements for first aid. There is an adequate number of first aiders, all of whom have appropriate qualifications. There is a first aid room and some records of accidents are kept but accidents are not recorded in a bound book and no details of treatment is given. The school has a health and safety officer and has a governor responsible for health and safety. Regular health and safety audits take place and all departments carry out risk assessments and supply regular reports. Fire drills are carried out regularly and recorded but tests of individual fire bell points are not carried out.

41. The school has satisfactory procedures for the monitoring and promoting of good behaviour and the elimination of oppressive behaviour. The reward and sanction system and the behaviour policy are understood by most students at the school. Parents fully support the school in the operation of sanctions and behaviour in the school is satisfactory. Sanctions are consistently applied when necessary and the majority of students respect school rules and adhere to them. The inspection team were impressed by the courtesy shown to them by many of the students who were eager to show them around the school, help them and explain their pride in school and their achievements. The school has satisfactory procedures for the monitoring and improving of attendance.
42. The school has an effective special educational needs department. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) works well with students and is careful to ensure that support staff have access to students' statements and identifies their needs. In lessons, staff are supported well by good quality individual education plans provided for students. Parents are invited to annual reviews to discuss with tutors target setting for the following year. Learning support assistants, together with teachers are involved in writing the individual plans. The school has satisfactory arrangements for the monitoring and academic development of students with special educational needs and the impact of their learning is positive. Good use is made of their plans and the school makes effective use of the learning support mentor, who offers high quality help and advice to a small minority of students whose behaviour or attendance is likely to seriously affect their learning.

### **Assessment**

43. Arrangements for assessment, including special educational needs assessment, are satisfactory overall. The school lacks a central database to inform overarching planning for students but there are examples of initiatives taken within individual departments that could provide a valuable model for other subject areas and, indeed, for the school as a whole. The school's written policy on assessment acknowledges the shortfalls in the current system. It describes necessary practice that is acknowledged by senior staff to be some way in advance of what is currently in place.
44. In science, art, modern foreign languages and business education/ICT, there are developments, some innovative, in accurate assessment and in the use of data to inform planning. Assessment in art is very good. This is also the case in science where spreadsheets are utilised to provide a detailed picture of student achievement and to register predictions that are well founded. The picture in modern foreign languages is less consistent but a concentration Years 10 and 11 as the first stage in a process of developing procedures has made real advances in the quality and usefulness of assessment in that area.
45. A pilot scheme in business education/ICT is able to identify those students under-achieving and to suggest remedial action. In a number of other subjects, the relationship of assessments to National Curriculum levels are insecure and even where assessment of good quality teaching is taking place it is not utilised to inform planning.
46. The position in mathematics is unsatisfactory: targets are not always set for students and, where they are, are not supported by a secure evidential base. Physical education and geography both show soundness in on-going assessment of students but a lack of any systems to organise this data and to employ it as a basis for planning.

## **Sixth form**

### ***Assessment***

47. Procedures for assessing and monitoring students' progress have some good features but are unsatisfactory overall. While work is marked regularly, and students feel they get good and helpful feedback to help them improve, they are not given enough information on the standards of their work in relation to examination grades. The school does not yet make use of any value-added measures to provide reliable predictions about students' performance and is not in a position to monitor students' progress against predictions in a systematic way. Progress reviews are useful, but as they are not held until after the first half term in Year 12, there is a long gap between the end of Year 11, and students are not fully aware of their overall progress. They do, however, work out their own predicted grades from GCSE points scores and are well supported by tutors, and this is good practice.



## **Advice, support and guidance**

48. The school offers satisfactory advice and support for students in the sixth form. Students in Year 11 receive a satisfactory introduction but the PHSE programme, which includes citizenship and study skills, is not sufficiently timetabled for students to receive maximum benefit from this area of school's work. The school has a good relationship and liaises well with external careers services which offers the students good advice. Careers are not separately timetabled by the school; the accommodation offered for careers advice is cramped and the resources are unsatisfactory.
49. A significant number of sixth form students who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, feel that the school does not give helpful and constructive advice and they were not advised about future options. In interview, sixth form students stated that they felt that the advice given to them was good but they felt the resources available to them could be improved and that the library was too small to enable them to carry out independent study as they would wish.
50. Attendance in the sixth form is unsatisfactory. This is due in part to the fact that the school allows all students in the sixth form to study at home if they do not have lessons timetabled and does not know, therefore, whether students should be present or absent when the register is taken. The school needs to improve its procedures for registration and monitoring of attendance of its sixth form students.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

51. A number of parents feel that they are not fully informed of students' progress and that the school does not work closely with them. Many of these comments refer to parents' evenings on students' progress when they were not able to speak to subject teachers. The school has this term reverted to the traditional subject based parents' evening this term. Overall, the school is making progress in listening and responding to parents' views. Parents are contacted promptly if the school has any cause for concern and any action taken by the school is reported to them. The headteacher and staff make themselves available to see parents without appointment if necessary and all parents are encouraged to visit the school at any time. The previous policy of parents being invited to a parents' evening each year and only being allowed to see the form tutor rather than subject teachers has now been discontinued. The school has now arranged one parents' evening each year for all year groups and two for Year 7, where parents can now see form tutors and all subject teachers to discuss with them their children's progress. In addition, academic tutoring days are arranged each year in the autumn term when parents meet with tutors and targets are set for attainment, attitudes and behaviour. Students attend both these evenings.
52. Students' contact books provide a good communication link between parents and the school. The information provided by the school for parents is of a good quality. The prospectus is well produced and attractively presented. In addition, a separate brochure is provided for parents of students about to enter the sixth form. The governors' annual report is fully detailed and contains all the statutory information that parents need. Reports on students' progress, however, are not detailed and do not give information on target setting or what they could do to improve.
53. The school has held two special parental consultation evenings to discuss proposals to change the school day from nine periods to five periods and has sent out a questionnaire to parents requesting their views on homework and subject changes. Regular newsletters are produced; they are well written and provide interesting information on school activities, staff information and students' achievements. In addition, the headteacher sends regular letters at the beginning of each term, giving her aspirations and views for the coming term. The Parent-Teachers Association has been recently re-established. It arranges a number of successful social activities such as Christmas raffles, barbecues, quiz evenings, fashion shows and discos.

54. The parents of students with special educational needs receive good help and information from the school. The school clearly explains arrangements for supporting such students and emphasises the need for their involvement in their children's education. Parents are fully involved in writing individual education plans and the school has a welcoming attitude to them which results in a positive response from parents. Open nights are very well supported.
55. Parents' views of the sixth form are positive overall. During the inspection week, the school held a very successful information evening where parents received good presentations on sixth form options and were well entertained. In the main, sixth form students are positive about what the school is able to offer them. Most students feel that they are given a good level of responsibility and are treated as adults. Students interviewed during the inspection week confirmed that they felt the sixth form worked well but felt that study facilities, such as the limited use they could make of the library and poor resources for careers, could be improved. The positive links with parents mentioned in the previous report have been maintained and the school has a welcoming and open attitude to parental involvement.
56. The school has a very large number of 64 partner primary schools. It has good links with a small group of them and information is shared well to enable all students to transfer smoothly into secondary school. There are very good links with further education establishments so that students' needs can continue to be met after leaving the school.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

57. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and key staff are satisfactory. The newly appointed headteacher is taking positive, purposeful and effective action to bring about many improvements and ensure that there is greater consistency between managers in raising students' achievement. She enjoys the trust of the governing body and is supported by the senior management team. She leads effectively and communicates a clear sense of purpose and educational direction to all members of staff. There are clear, key priorities for action. By making teaching and learning the main priorities, the head has focused staff on the need to raise standards. The restructuring of the leadership group is relevant to implementing the priority on raising achievement outlined in the well-structured school development plan. The school has made satisfactory improvements on the issues identified the last inspection report.
58. The school has a clear set of achievable aims and values. They are effective in promoting a positive environment where all students, including those with physical disability, feel secure. Positive relationships exist between the governing body and the senior management team. The governors are well aware of their roles and responsibilities and are at early stage of developing these more fully. The mechanisms for the appraisal of the head teacher are in place and effective. Governors receive reports from the finance manager which enable them to fulfil their overall responsibility for the school's financial arrangements.

Subject leadership and management is:

- very good in science, art, history, modern foreign languages and religious education;
  - good in design and technology and citizenship;
  - satisfactory in English, ICT, music and physical education;
  - unsatisfactory in mathematics and geography.
59. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are satisfactory. All senior staff and middle managers monitor performance. Self-evaluation underpins this development and there is a clear recognition by all staff of the need to do this. The school recognises that the quality of teaching and learning is a continuing priority.
  60. The school development plan is an effective working document. It is well costed, identifies areas of weakness and provides positive ways of rectifying them. The school has developed a good database and is in the process of developing its use to raise achievement. The analysis of

comparative assessment data does not yet benefit curriculum planning in all subjects. Financial management is very good and the school budget deficit is being cleared in agreement with the local education authority. The allocation of funds is increasingly targeted at the priorities stated in the school development plan. There are no significant outstanding issues from the last audit report. The administration uses appropriate systems for financial management. The school applies the principles of best value well. Overall, the school is effective and provides satisfactory value for money.

61. Accommodation and resources are adequate. The original school was built in the 1950s and has been much extended since that time. The accommodation for design and technology, English, science and modern languages is good. There are two areas where the accommodation has a detrimental effect on academic performance. Drama has only one studio which is inadequate for the variety of activities which takes place. The accommodation for history consists of two rooms in the older building which are too small for the size of groups that use them and one new room which is badly heated and ventilated. The main corridors are wide and allow students easy access to all parts of the school. Disabled students have access to all parts of the school and there is a lift to the second floor in the main building. Many corridors are in a poor state of decoration and very bare. They do not contribute to the ethos of the school. More signs are needed to direct students to teaching rooms.
62. The school was appropriately staffed at the start of the academic year. Procedures for monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are in place but there is some variation in practice across departments. Staff are on a clearly defined and managed programme of professional development. Good procedures are in place to support newly qualified teachers and those staff new to the school. The school has addressed the criticisms in the previous report.

## **Sixth form**

### ***Leadership and management***

63. The leadership and management provided in the sixth form are satisfactory. Development planning is good and a clear educational direction has already been established that suitably reflects the school's general aims and values, including a commitment to equality of opportunity. Insufficient time has elapsed, however, for new policies to have had an impact on standards.
64. There is an acceptance that hitherto the curriculum offered post-16 has not adequately met the needs of the students and many have gained disappointing results as a consequence. The present curriculum is more geared to offering vocational options that are deemed more relevant to the school's students. Further additions are planned to the vocational curriculum, but a significant obstacle facing the school is the quality of accommodation. For standards to rise further the arrangements for monitoring each student's performance need to be improved. Though much assessment data are collected, the setting of minimum target grades and regularly measuring performance against such targets is at an early stage of development. The use of assessment data as management tool lacks rigour. The sixth form is cost-effective but in some areas standards are lower than expected.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

65. In order to raise levels of attainment and improve the quality of education in the school, the governors, senior management team and teaching staff need to:
  - (1) ensure that students' ICT skills are applied in all subjects in line with National Curriculum requirements.  
*[Paragraphs 2, 22, 71, 81, 93, 100, 122, 135, 138, 141, 154]*
  - (2) raise students' achievement in mathematics.

*[Paragraphs 82-94]*

- (3) improve consistency and teamwork between subject leaders and senior managers in raising overall standards and achievement.

*[Paragraphs 1-3, 15-18, 57]*

**The school also needs to address the following issues:**

- improve resources and overall provision for the small number of students for whom English is an additional language.

*[Paragraph 23]*

- inform and train all staff regularly on child protection procedures.

*[Paragraph 40]*

**Sixth form**

- (1) Assessment data are not used rigorously enough to monitor the performance of each individual student.

*[Paragraph 47]*

- (2) Students are not encouraged to develop skills as independent learners.

*[Paragraph 20]*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7– 11	120
	Sixth form	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students		41

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Years 7 – 11</b>							
Number	3	28	42	36	9	2	0
Percentage	3	23	35	30	7	2	0
<b>Sixth form</b>							
Number	2	5	14	14	0	0	0
Percentage	6	14	40	40	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's students

<b>Students on the school's roll</b>	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	1140	105
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	131	N/a

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	54	3
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	179	3

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	12

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

Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving
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49
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## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	10.3
National comparative data	8.1

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.8
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 students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	152	82	234

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	98	97	110
	Girls	45	38	41
	Total	143	135	151
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	61 (69)	58 (60)	65 (51)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (69)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	17 (19)	30 (23)	29 (13)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	97	97	112
	Girls	62	41	55
	Total	159	138	167
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	68 (71)	60 (65)	72 (61)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	23 (17)	30 (21)	34 (15)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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



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

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	159	55	214

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	57	142	148
	Girls	18	47	47
	Total	75	189	195
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	35 (41)	88 (85)	91 (89)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per student	School	34.3
	National	39.0

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

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

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

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	13	10	23

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates			
	Average point score per candidate			
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.7	17.4

### ***Ethnic background of students***

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

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>No of students on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
1049	32	2
1	0	0
25	0	0
0	0	0
0	3	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
10	0	0
2	0	0
4	0	0
0	1	0
5	0	0
5	1	0
1	0	0
10	0	0
4	1	0
129	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	70.9
Number of students per qualified teacher	17.9

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	478

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	24.7
Key Stage 4	22.0

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001-02
	£
Total income	3,705,999
Total expenditure	3,820,763
Expenditure per student	3,277
Balance brought forward from previous year	-5,407
Balance carried forward to next year	-120,177

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	24
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	19
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	1245
Number of questionnaires returned	194

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	34	53	11	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	29	59	6	2	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	19	55	11	3	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	52	23	6	1
The teaching is good.	17	66	6	1	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	13	40	33	9	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	37	50	7	3	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	46	5	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	14	45	25	6	9
The school is well led and managed.	19	55	8	1	18
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	22	61	7	2	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	44	16	3	19

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

### ENGLISH

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

#### Strengths

- Teachers' knowledge of their subject and commitment to raising standards is good.
- Students have positive attitudes towards the subject.
- The subject makes a good contribution to students' overall development.

#### Areas for improvement

- Greater attention to reading and in particular writing skills in order to raise standards.
- Broaden curriculum planning to meet the needs of all students.
- Include target setting and the use of assessment data in the development plan to raise standards.

66. On entry to the school, students' attainment in English is below average. Over the last two years, standards by the end of Year 9 have remained below average. However, over three years, results in the National Curriculum tests for 14-year-olds have varied from average to below average. The 2002 test results were below average levels and well below for schools with a similar intake. Overall, boys achieve slightly better results than girls. When the low literacy skills of students joining the school are taken into consideration, their achievement at the end of Year 9 is satisfactory.
67. GCSE results over the last three years have been well below average, particularly in English literature. There was a slight improvement in the 2002 English results but they were much lower in literature. Girls' results are better than boys and in 2001, the percentage of girls achieving grades A\* or A was above the average for girls. When the standards reached at GCSE are compared with what these students achieved in Year 9, progress in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory. Overall, results in Years 9 and 11 were lower than those of science but slightly better than those of mathematics. Standards have not improved since the last inspection. The varied standards are partly accounted for by difficulties with recruitment and retention of staff, numerous split classes, which were taught by part-time and non-specialist teachers, and the irregular attendance of a number of disaffected Year 11 students.
68. The inspection evidence confirms students' achievements at the end of Years 9 and 11 to be in line with the above pattern. However, progress is improving because there is now a full complement of specialist teachers and the department has started to address underachievement in all areas of the curriculum.
69. Speaking skills are satisfactory throughout the school. Higher attainers in all year groups are competent in technical discussion and achieve above average oral skills. However, most students give brief responses, which they do not always develop. While they speak clearly, they use slang and colloquial phrases to express their ideas and rarely speak formally and at length to express their views. Boys are adept at responding very quickly and students with special educational needs participate well during speaking and listening sessions. Year 11 high attaining students demonstrate good control of language when expressing their ideas. For example, students, and in particular boys, discussed at length the economic and cultural background of Steinbeck's *'Of Mice and Men'*, well. Listening skills are satisfactory but few concentrate or listen well for lengthy periods.
70. Standards in reading are average for most students but there is a small but significant number who are still three years or more behind their chronological reading age by the end of Years 10 and 11. Students understand the themes of texts and use discussion to work out the meaning that is implied. They show good engagement with literary texts and display confidence when discussing the use of language. For example, Year 9 middle attaining students discussed with

understanding the use of language in Ray Bradbury's *'The House Began to Die'*. The teacher had identified specific areas for development and worked in partnership with students on explaining descriptive language before setting them a target to write an imaginative postcard using figurative language. By the end of Year 9, the higher attaining students begin to write analytically, as seen in their comparative essay on 'The Time Machine' and 'War of the Worlds'. Their comprehension work is detailed, as is the Year 8 book reviews. High attaining Year 11 students read critically and give personal response and textual grasp and appreciation are generally good. Whilst most students understand themes, they retell rather than give critical comments. Wide reading is not well promoted and students do not read enough in order to tackle difficulties when writing about texts. The department is presently reviewing reading practice.

71. Standards in writing are below average and impede students' progress in gaining the higher GCSE grades. However, narrative writing is a strength and most students produce interesting and creative stories. The work of higher attaining students is often above average. Technical errors, including incorrect grammatical features, persist in the work of virtually all students and even though many use ICT extensively, they do not use the spell check to correct errors. While students use the initial process of writing well, they do not edit and proofread their work and there is an over-reliance on teachers to correct their work. Lower attaining students write at length when they use ICT and writing frames. Students use ICT well to manipulate images and experiment with fonts for different styles of writing. Handwriting, though legible, is at times scrappy; some do not finish their work and pride is not always taken in presentation. The small number of students with very weak literacy skills can barely construct a simple sentence and their handwriting is undeveloped.
72. The quality of teaching in the inspection was satisfactory overall with some good and, occasionally very good, features. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen. Teachers know their subject very well and plan structured lessons with a sharp focus on improving literacy skill which contributes to them writing imaginatively. They link lesson objectives to resources and methods to ensure that students understand the work. They use paired work and questioning effectively to develop students' ideas. Most lessons provide sufficient challenge and interesting work. Assistants give good support to students but there are not enough to meet their needs.
73. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, there is insufficient challenge for the higher attaining students, pace is slower than expected, not all students are fully stretched and there is insufficient support for students with a special educational need. The unsatisfactory lesson was inadequate because learning objectives were not clear, tasks were not linked to resources and time was not used well. Teachers' marking is very thorough with detailed comments to help students improve their work.
74. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory but high staff turnover and the use of non-specialist teachers have affected forward planning. Teachers work well together, receive good support and training and are committed to helping students improve their work. The schemes of work reflect the statutory curriculum but schemes of work do not reflect the needs of different groups of students or literature from other cultures. Steps have been taken to introduce the Certificate of Achievement for students with learning difficulties. The development plan rightly reflects the needs of the department but it does not have a strategic overview and targets for action and success lack precision. There are no extra-curricular activities and although the department is beginning to analyse assessment data it is at the early stage of using data rigorously to track progress.
75. Since the last inspection, progress within the English department has been satisfactory in some areas of work. Teaching is now sound or better and students exhibit greater independence when researching and planning their work. They also express their ideas clearly and virtually all students take the GCSE examinations. Standards have not improved, particularly at the end of Year 11. The department is very much aware of the shortcomings and is well placed to address the downward trend. The head of department has responded to a thorough review of the department's work and is aware of his management responsibilities in raising standards.

## Literacy

76. Literacy skills, taken as a whole are satisfactory in the school. There are, however, strengths and weaknesses. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced and is well embedded in some parts of the curriculum. In lessons, most students are able to access the taught curriculum because they have a satisfactory level of literacy, but some students arrive at the school with poor writing skills, in particular, and this hinders their progress. Spelling, handwriting and general presentation are a problem for some. In mathematics, teachers rely heavily on whole-class teaching and do not provide enough opportunities for students to talk to each other about their work. Here, as in many subjects, key words are taught, but too many staff limit their responsibility for literacy to providing students with technical vocabulary. This is generally the case in music and physical education.

## DRAMA

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

### Strengths

- Teachers know their subject very well and use their expertise to stimulate students' imagination.
- Students enjoy the subject.
- There is good provision for students with special educational needs.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards in the GCSE examinations are well below average.
- The accommodation is inadequate for the needs of the curriculum.

77. The subject is taught as an option in Years 10 and 11 and was introduced in September to all students in Years 7 to 9. Standards in the 2001 GCSE examinations were well below average and were a significant decline on the previous results. There was a slight improvement in the 2002 results. The decline in standards is partly explained by the unusual circumstances with inadequate staffing and the resulting change of syllabus to maximise students' results.
78. Students enjoy drama and whilst it is too early to evaluate standards in Years 7 and 9 as they are new to the subject, the Year 8 students observed during the inspection displayed very good achievement when engaging in role play. Although students are at the early stage of acquiring skills of co-operation and concentration they contribute well to whole class drama work.
79. By Year 11, students attach the importance required to their work for the GCSE performance. They make good use of the Internet and use other source materials to research and develop playscripts. Higher attaining students, notably a small group of girls, reach good standards in planning, writing, evaluating and performing their work. They work well collaboratively and display good evaluative skills when discussing their performance and show an increasing awareness of identifying areas for improvement in their work.
80. Teaching is good. Teachers know their subject very well and plan interesting and stimulating lessons for students. For example, in an inspiring Year 8 lesson, the teacher, after exploring the theme of space with the class, gave them the opportunity to develop their ideas in a whole-class drama. This resulted in students taking full control of their learning as they confidently used a range of drama techniques before critically evaluating their work. Planning is good and includes a clear introduction with a strong framework for developing drama skills and motivating students. Expectations are high and teachers ensure that students with special needs are involved in all activities. Teachers end lessons well to revise skills and develop students' evaluative skills. They deploy learning assistants well to work with students with specific needs.
81. The department is well led and teachers who are non-specialists receive good support. The handbook provides a good reference document for all teachers. Although new schemes of work

are in place for Years 7 to 9 students, there is scope for more detailed planning which identifies the needs of all students including the gifted and talented. Good attention is given to literacy. The department makes a valuable contribution to students overall development. There is arrangement for extra-curricular activities and the department is planning to extend this to include a drama club. Since the last inspection, the department now has a dedicated drama studio. However, the accommodation is still inadequate, as there is insufficient suitable accommodation for all year groups. The subject provides opportunities for students from minority ethnic groups and those with specific difficulties to achieve well.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths

- Staff are well qualified to teach mathematics.
- The students generally co-operate well with the teachers and make a good effort to learn.

### Areas for Improvement

- Standards are not high enough.
- Strategies for raising achievement are unclear.
- The quality of planning at all levels does not include clear learning objectives.
- Teachers use a narrow range of teaching strategies, which does not develop students as independent learners.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning lacks rigour.
- ICT is not integrated into the teaching of mathematics.

82. In mathematics, by the end of Year 11, students generally underachieve compared to their progress in other subjects. Results in National Curriculum tests of Year 9 for 2001 were well below the national average for secondary modern schools. However, there has been a small, consistent improvement since 1999 and this improvement has been continued in 2002. However, results in mathematics are still lower than in English and science. By the end of Year 9 students make satisfactory progress in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.
83. The level of attainment of students by the end of Year 11 has fallen since 1999 and is now well below that of non-selective modern schools nationally. In 2001, under a third of all students achieved a grade in the A\*-C range in GCSE examinations, and in 2002 this fell to just under a quarter. This decline is relative to students' attainment at the end of Year 9 and is most noticeable in the proportion of students obtaining grades better than C. In contrast, the number of students obtaining at least a grade G is better than similar schools. In Years 7 to 9, girls have consistently underachieved compared to boys since 1998. In 2001, by the end of Year 11 this pattern was reversed, with a higher percentage of girls than boys achieving A\*-C grades and all the girls achieving at least a grade G.
84. The work seen in lessons and in students' books reflects the results at the end of Years 9 and 11. In Year 7, students are able to calculate simple averages, but are dependent upon calculators to evaluate the final value of the mean. The mental skills they have acquired in their primary schools are underused and not further developed. The work seen in books of higher attaining students, for example, calculation of perimeters and areas using whole numbers is not markedly different from that of lower attaining students. All books show evidence of work copied from the board or text books. In some lower attaining groups, for some students this represents the bulk of work done in lessons. In general the quantity of work demanded from students in the lessons is insufficient, and the amount of homework varies considerably. In the accelerated groups in Year 8, the work shows higher expectation in terms of the amount done, but the students are expected to repeat work at a lower level before exploring new concepts, for example



in probability. In the Year 8 accelerated groups, the students are able to calculate square roots and find the  $n$ th term in sequences.

85. An improved level of performance was seen in the higher attaining sets in Year 9 where, for example, students handle direct proportion. A Year 9 top set working on equations was another example of the teacher reverting to the level of work of the previous lesson for the classwork exercises rather than develop the challenge of harder examples. The level of attainment seen in algebra was lower than in data handling. In all of Years 7, 8 and 9, students are not confident with fractions and the four rules with number and turn to calculators as a first resort rather than attempt a mental solution to arithmetical problems and equations. In Years 7 to 9 students with special needs make satisfactory progress, especially when supported by classroom assistants.
86. In Years 10 and 11 the quantity and quality of the work completed by students are inconsistent, with students producing amounts of work different from that of students in other, similar sets. Middle set Year 10 students can calculate square roots and work with index numbers, and students at all levels are competent with data handling, for example frequency distributions which are extended to grouped frequency. In this aspect of mathematics students are able to produce carefully drawn graphs, whereas graphs drawn from algebraic functions are often inaccurate and poorly produced and interpreted. Students in a top set in Year 11 were seen solving simultaneous equations, but not all were secure in the interpretation of  $y = mx + c$ . In another Year 11 upper set students were carrying out an investigation, but did not have methodical strategies to effectively tackle this type of problem and do themselves justice. In general students in top sets were seen working at a level likely to generate grade D or C rather than higher grades at GCSE. The work seen in lower attaining sets is appropriate and demonstrates why a high proportion of students obtain at least grade G at GCSE.
87. Overall, the standard of teaching is unsatisfactory. In Years 7 to 11 the teaching was satisfactory or better in only just over half the lessons: one fifth of lessons was good. Most of the unsatisfactory lessons were seen in Years 7 to 9. Strengths of the teaching are the commitment of the teachers of mathematics to the development of their students and, in the good lessons, the quality of the relationship between the teacher and the class and the work ethos which this generated. In a Year 7 lesson on probability, a teacher used a series of short, focused experiments interspersed with discussion and the exploration of ideas. This teacher used mental methods to gain estimates rather than get involved in distracting decimal calculations. As a consequence, the key learning objectives were kept at the forefront of the students' work. In such lessons, teachers use good questioning and discussion with students as individuals, groups, or the whole class. This generates a good pace of working and sustained interest and concentration. The teacher has clear objectives and expectations are at an appropriate level. Books are marked up to date with constructive comments.
88. Where teaching is less effective, pace is slow and expectations are low. Poor lessons are characterised by a lack of clear intention which is often the result of the objectives being in terms of what the teacher would be doing rather than what the students would be learning. Another weakness is where the teacher's not giving has not given sufficient thought to the steps the students need to go through in order to learn the new work. An example of this was a Year 8 class learning to expand brackets. The teacher introduced negative numbers without securing either the expansion of brackets with plus signs, or the rules of negative numbers. As a consequence, students were experiencing algebra as a series of difficulties and failures rather than learning how to build upon success. Another example was in a Year 10 top set where the teacher started to teach how to draw the graph of a parabola using the function  $y = x^2 + 2x - 18$  without exploring the graph of  $y = x^2$  first and developing from that. Consequently, the teacher was expecting the students to learn an isolated trick rather than develop a concept and understanding. The amount of time students spent on productive work in these lessons was low and the quantity and level of the work produced were low.
89. Students' response to their lessons is at least satisfactory and in most cases good, and consequently this makes a significantly positive contribution to learning even in those lessons which were judged unsatisfactory. Analysis of students' work shows a lack of continuity of work,

inconsistency in the amount of classwork and homework done, and the inconsistent application of the marking policy, and provides further evidence of unsatisfactory planning and teaching over time.

90. The teaching in Years 7 to 9 has benefited from the application of the National Numeracy Strategy. The curriculum framework has provided the teachers with a scheme of work which contains learning outcomes for students and clear levels of expectations. The framework has yet to be consistently translated into an effective series of lesson plans which will deliver these expectations in practice. Most teachers are attempting to use the three-part lesson framework, but this is being applied using a narrow range of teaching styles which inhibits its success. In addition, poor timekeeping, causing lessons to over-run, detracts from the value of the plenary part of the lesson. With more guidance, support and direction, including widening the repertoire of teaching and learning styles used, the teachers will be able to further improve the impact of the Strategy.
91. There is no evidence of the benefits of the Numeracy Strategy being transferred into teaching in Years 10 and 11. The scheme of work for these years is based on the examination syllabus and supported by appropriate textbooks. It does not provide teachers with sufficient guidance in terms of learning outcomes or precise success criteria for students for the teachers to be able to create effective lesson plans and sequences of lessons to ensure continuity and progression of learning. Consequently, assessment is not used effectively for tracking students' progress and setting targets for individual students. The existing time gap between module tests in January and feedback to students in October is too long to be of value, and students in Year 11 are not aware of their level of attainment, their target grades and what they need to do to improve. This contributes to low performance at GCSE.
92. The department has an existing tracking system using standardised tests, national test results and other tests, but the data are not effectively used to inform planning and grades predicted by tests early in the student's career in the school are used as the targets for later success. This contributes to low expectations. The subject leader has carried out analysis of data relating to the differences in boys' and girls' performance, but this has not yet been translated into an effective strategy. The current arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and providing support for teachers are not sufficient to provide an effective platform to inform the performance management of teachers and departmental development. At present there are no departmental job descriptions that define the responsibilities needed to carry the department forward.
93. The curriculum is not meeting national requirements in terms of ICT provision in the teaching of mathematics, but there are plans to rectify this. The issues raised in the previous inspection, (use of time, insufficiently high standards of presentation, insufficient homework in Years 7 to 9, assessment not being used to inform planning) have not yet been addressed and the department has not improved since the last inspection.

## **Numeracy**

94. The school has a draft numeracy policy which addresses the issues of numeracy across the curriculum. Subjects have their own numeracy policies to describe the role of mathematics in the learning of their subject. Examples of this are science and music where, for example, mathematical significance in symbolic representation, relative note values and rhythm patterns are mentioned. Students use mathematics in a range of subjects where it is appropriate; for example, they use spreadsheets in business studies, and graphical representation in a range of subjects, and levels of numeracy do not generally hinder access to the curriculum in Years 7 to 11. In science and geography, however, lack of mathematical facility hinders access to higher work, for example in the use of formulae in science, although sixth form students were seen being taught Spearman's Rank Correlation in geography.

## SCIENCE

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

### Strengths

- Students achieve very well because the quality of teaching is good and they have positive attitudes to learning.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Staff work well together and are committed to raising standards.
- The quality of schemes of work and the documentation for assessment is excellent.
- Relationships with students are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Use marking to inform students what they have got wrong and what they need to do in order to improve the standard of their work.
- Improve access to facilities for the use of ICT.

95. In the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 the school's performance in science was close to the national average for all schools and better than that in the two previous years. When compared with non-selective modern schools, however, the school's performance was well above the national average. Results were better than those in mathematics and English. The attainment of boys was better than that of girls. Value was added to the performance of the majority of students relative to their standards of attainment on entry to the school. The unconfirmed results for 2002 indicate that performance was similar to that of the previous year.
96. In the 2001 GCSE examination in double award science, the proportion of students obtaining grades A\* to C was in line with the national average for all schools. These results are similar to those for the two previous years. When compared with secondary modern schools the schools performance was well above the national average. Results in science were better than those in mathematics and English. GCSE A\* grades were obtained by more students in science than any other subject. Good value was added to the majority of students in relation to their prior attainment and in this respect the achievement of girls was better than that of boys. The unconfirmed results for 2002 indicate that performance was similar to that in 2001
97. Inspection evidence shows that standards toward the end of Year 9 are consistent with nationally expected levels. Students enter the school with levels of attainment that are below the national average but they make good progress during Years 7 to 9. Through carrying out competently an investigation into the use of sacrificial metals students in a Year 9 group extended their previous knowledge of rusting and the ways of preventing it. Middle and higher attaining students were able to relate the results of this experiment to the order of metals in the activity series. A Year 8 class demonstrated a sound understanding of the way in which pairs of muscles work together to move the limbs. In an interesting lesson which included a quiz, a self evaluation exercise, discussion and a worksheet, a Year 7 class showed that they were familiar with the properties of solids liquids and gases.
98. Towards the end of Year 11 the highest attaining students have developed a good understanding of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Most students reach levels that are consistent with national expectation but the highest attainers reach levels which exceed it. This supports the high grades obtained by a proportion of students in GCSE examinations in previous years. A high attaining Year 11 class demonstrated a good understanding of atomic structure, radioactivity and the significance of the half life of radioactive materials. Another group worked very hard and developed a sound understanding of the mole concept although some had difficulty handling the requisite mathematics.
99. The written work of higher and middle attaining students is usually satisfactory and often good. For many lower attaining students the standard of presentation is unsatisfactory. Work is sometimes unfinished and diagrams and tables are produced without the use of a ruler. Most students show an adequate grasp of the numerical skills needed for the level of work they meet. Students in Years 10 and 11 find difficulty with some of the more difficult mathematical processes which are at times required. For example, some have difficulty rearranging formulae. Most students are competent in both drawing and interpreting graphs.
100. Students make good use of ICT resources that are available. Data-logging equipment is frequently used in demonstrations and graphs are generated for students to analyse and discuss. They are encouraged to use computers at home or in the library to research scientific topics. The department's relationship with Heinemann press allows students access to a valuable web site. Unfortunately, the department's use of ICT to support teaching and learning is limited by the lack of access to sufficient suitable computers and to an absence of an Internet link.

101. Students enter the school with a standard of attainment below the national average. They make good progress in Years 7 to 9 and their performance at the end of Year 9 is close to the national average. Further progress in Years 10 and 11 means that the performance of many students is in line with the national average and some it exceed it. The department has developed strategies to improve girls' standards. These ensure that girls are fully included in all activities. The achievement of girls is better than that of boys.
102. The achievement of students with special educational needs is at least satisfactory and often good. Liaison between learning assistants and teachers is good and their help contributes to the good progress which these students make. In some lessons not enough use is made of resources such as worksheets which have been specially modified to meet their needs or of resources designed to challenge and extend higher attaining students.
103. Teaching is good. This is a considerable improvement over the last inspection. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives. These objectives are shared with students, usually orally, but are most effective when they are displayed on the board so that students can monitor their progress through the lesson. Relationships with students are very good. Praise, which helps to raise students self-esteem, is a feature of many lessons.
104. In the best lessons expectations are high and teachers use a variety of activities to maintain interest. In a lesson on the carbon cycle the teacher and students explored the relationship between the equations for photosynthesis and respiration. Initially about half of the group were familiar with the words but not the formulae of the materials involved. Students completed a worksheet, predicted the outcome of an experiment on the respiration of soil organisms and viewed a short video program. The pace was good, expectation was high and learning was good as a result.
105. Students appreciate the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. They are afforded frequent opportunities to learn through practical work. This they carry out confidently and competently. A large class of middle attaining Year 9 students investigated the effect of heat on a range of carbonates. They collected and assembled the appropriate apparatus in a responsible way and carried out the experiment safely. They demonstrated a very responsible approach
106. The department has a very good assessment policy and information is used well to monitor progress and set targets. The work of some students is not marked frequently enough and teachers sometimes fail to let students know what they have got wrong and what the need to do to improve. Students do not always fully understand the grades that they are awarded. The head of department provides strong imaginative leadership. Staff work well together and are committed to raising standards. Teaching is well supported by four laboratory technicians. The department's documentation, especially schemes of work, is exemplary. The department has made very good progress since the previous inspection.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- There is very effective planning and assessment, which ensures continuous progress.
- There is a commitment to high standards of work and behaviour, which motivates students to learn.
- Students benefit from a stimulating and visually attractive environment.
- Students benefit from very good leadership and reflective teachers.

### Areas for improvement

- Reduction of the number of classes which are split between two teachers, to improve continuity in

learning.

- Provision of more opportunities for artistic independence in Years 7 to 9.

107. Standards in the department have improved steadily over the past few years. An increasing number of students opt for art in Year 10 and the proportion of students who gained A\*-C grades in GCSE examination in 2001 was above the national average. Unconfirmed results in Year 2002 show that there was further improvement, with three quarters of all students gaining A\*-C grades. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.
108. Students arrive at the school with overall skill levels generally below national expectations for Year 7. A well-planned curriculum ensures that they quickly learn and build on their basic skills and by the age of 14 they make very good progress and work above the national standards. Students in Year 7 explore tone using a wide range of pencils and are able to complete tone bars and draw silhouette figures of people, or practise colour blending when drawing still-life compositions of autumn leaves. Their compositions are then further developed in silk-screen printing. They also explore a range of materials including multi-media, wire, print and ceramics. Students in Year 8 continue to develop their drawing skills and all produced some very good pen and ink drawings using cross-hatching. Observation and line drawing continued to be developed together with water-colour painting techniques, using secondary and tertiary colour mixing based upon the work of Georgia O'Keefe. Tissue paper and wothy sculptures of insects and three-dimensional skeletons enabled students to exercise their imagination and produce work involving colour and texture based upon the styles of a variety of artists and sculptors such as Matisse or Henry Moore. Year 9 students showed a very good understanding of artists and artistic techniques when creating Cubist compositions of glass bottles. The confidence with which they used their skills was clear when another group of Year 9 students were able to rapidly produce a range of still-life drawings of students modelling various poses drawn with the ends of twigs using black ink.
109. All Year 11 students demonstrate their research skills and individuality when they selected a topic from a range of subjects for their personal projects. Their wide variety of responses, from thoughtful surreal self-portraits influenced by Francis Bacon to ceramic Art Deco teapots or contemporary landscapes influenced by the work of Escher, showed the confidence and knowledge that they had gained throughout the course. There is no difference between the achievement of students with special educational needs or between boys and girls. Those students selecting to study art post-16 maintain very good standards. While some students use textiles and mixed media to create a collage, others create triptychs and use religious imagery of Renaissance painters to illustrate how the media creates contemporary icons in our society.
110. The quality of teaching and learning are very good overall. Teaching styles vary appropriately with the ages of the students and students. Although the teaching observed during the inspection in Years 7 to 9 varied from good to very good, the very good progress made by the students as shown from a scrutiny of the work and discussions with them confirms this judgement and justifies the department's decision to ensure that the students learn the basic skills well. The very good quality of day-to-day assessment, which takes account of prior learning, is a major factor in contributing to the students' progress. Teaching is also very good in Years 10 and 11. A well planned scheme of work involving regular assessment gives students progressive and wide ranging experiences of two- and three-dimensional work in a variety of media from which they are able to select and use well to develop their own ideas: a Year 11 student who used a computer and manipulated digital camera images to create a zoetrope which, when spun round, revealed a figure walking down a flight of stairs. The very good relationships between staff and students and their very capable management of students ensure that they are enthusiastic, well motivated and keen to learn. Students acquire an extensive knowledge of art history from the considerable expertise of each of their teachers, and effective teaching of literacy in all classes ensure that students are able to talk informatively about art and artistic techniques using appropriate terminology. Careful questioning ensures that students develop the ability to think about their subject. They speak confidently about their work. One Year 11 student spoke very knowledgeably about the influence of Escher upon his work while another talked of why she was using two mirrors to help her to create a surreal portrait of herself. Students are given the confidence to develop their own ideas.

111. While the more formal, structured approach taken with younger students is effective, the school recognises that there may be additional opportunities for these students to benefit from increased levels of independent work. Similarly, the school turns the necessity for split classes to its advantage, but recognises that students might benefit from the stability resulting from being taught art by only one teacher.
112. The art department is very well led and the staff work together harmoniously with a commitment to excellence and the success of every student. The staff are well supported within the department and provide a reflective climate analysing their progress and setting very good targets including the raising number of students opting for GCSE and A2 levels and the continuing raising of levels of achievement. Staff participate in regular training and work closely with Goldsmith's College in the training of future teachers. Work is assessed well by both students and staff each half term. Records are up to date and thoroughly kept. Portfolios of exemplar material are available at every level so that work can accurately marked and moderated. Students have learning partners to enable them to support each other. Social, moral and spiritual education is good. Cultural education is very good. The seating in each class is arranged around a focal point with a still life display incorporating Aztec, Aboriginal or Caribbean culture. Students know about the lives and cultures of artists and there is a project to link up with the school meals service to celebrate the art, culture and food of various countries. Every student works in an vibrant and stimulating environment which celebrates students' work. These rooms are available after school to enable students to research and do their homework or additional projects. Resources made by staff are professional and of high quality. The departmental reference library is extensive. Visiting artists and speakers enthuse the students and there are regular visits to local art galleries as well as galleries in Barcelona, New York and Amsterdam.
113. Since the last inspection, there has been a good improvement. Ceramic work continues to be a strength but the increased emphasis on basic drawing and painting skills has contributed to an improvement in the students' ability to develop their talents at higher levels at a later stage. Students' levels of motivation and concentration have significantly improved since the last inspection and assessment and teachers' planning and assessment is more focussed. The art department is a strength of the school.

## CITIZENSHIP

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

114. Overall, students in Year 9 are reaching standards which are below national expectations for all maintained schools, rising to standards which are broadly in line with national expectations by Year 11. Based on the evidence available – the inspection took place during the second week of a fortnightly timetable when no citizenship lessons were programmed – students are showing a good enthusiasm for their work and achieving satisfactorily.
115. From observation of tutor group sessions, where topics introduced in discrete lessons are reviewed, it is clear that students are beginning to be aware of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society. Many students show this in discussion with one another and their teachers. Most can justify their opinions about social issues orally and in writing. Students from Year 8 were seen planning activities for a community project and evaluating the intrinsic worth of their fund raising proposals. Although all students had the opportunity to present ideas for change, girls were observed to settle to the task more quickly than boys.
116. The citizenship curriculum in Years 11-16 is well planned overall and meets National Curriculum requirements. Although the co-ordinator has not yet carried out an audit of citizenship provision across the school, it is clear that other National Curriculum subjects are making explicit provision for the teaching of aspects of citizenship. For example, history plays a significant part in developing knowledge and understanding of socio-political factors. In a study of the Nazi regime,

Year 10 students were seen to assess how different forms of action – in this instance the Reichstag fire - bring about change and how to analyse the control exercised by central and local government. An ICT lesson provided the opportunity for students to consider the importance of upholding intellectual property rights and maintaining data security.

117. Opportunities for developing numeracy and literacy are highlighted in schemes of work. The use of ICT is also written into schemes of work and includes the use of the Internet and access to CD-ROMs specifically designed for the development of political literacy. Other high quality resources have been acquired by the department, including appropriate textbooks which are accessible to all learners. Care is taken to ensure that citizenship courses are fully inclusive.
118. During the year the school organises events to promote citizenship - for example, National Holocaust Memorial Day and World Aids Day. In 2001, a mock general election was held. Future projects are planned to broaden understanding of key political issues. These include school-wide referendums on the Euro, and on congestion charging in London. An active school council, potentially open to all, provides an opportunity for decision-making on behalf of others. Some student councillors are currently working with staff and highways consultants on the 'Safer Routes to School Project'. Links also exist with other outside agencies such as the Police.
119. The department assesses students' work well. Marking takes place every month. At the initial stage, not enough attention has been paid to correcting errors in literacy. Marking, though constructive in tone, is, in some instances, shallow in content. Plans for monitoring and tracking students' progress are currently underway. The department intends to produce an annual report for parents, which will conform to the school model.
120. Through effective leadership, the subject co-ordinator has developed a well-planned programme for citizenship which draws on the strengths of work already undertaken in the schools' PSHE course. When required to do so, the co-ordinator supports the form tutors who have responsibility for teaching citizenship. There are plans to monitor teaching and audit exercise books to ensure that standards are consistent.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Teachers' knowledge of the subject and the teaching of designing and making skills in Years 7 to 9 are very good.
- Management and behaviour of students in lessons are very good.
- The leadership of the department and the school's priorities for the development of the subject are very good.

### Areas for improvement

- Improve standards in all years.
- Improve assessment procedures in Years 7 to 9.
- Improve opportunities for students to use ICT in Year 7 to 9.

121. Standards on entry to Year 7 are well below average. In work seen, standards by the end of Year 9 standards remain well below the national average. However, students achieve satisfactorily. Students' GCSE performance is well below average. In 2001, four out of ten students obtaining the higher A\* -C grades in 2001; the proportion obtaining A\*-G grades was a little above the national average. The results in 2002 were better. The results are best in the graphic products and resistant materials examinations. The performance of boys and girls varies from year to year with no obvious overall trend. Achievement is satisfactory. About one in 15 students take the GNVQ (now vocational GCSE) course in manufacturing, While some units have been completed none has so far been examined. Students with special educational needs are well integrated in



lessons and make satisfactory progress. Gifted and talented students make unsatisfactory progress in the early years.

122. The overall standard of learning is satisfactory; it is good in Years 10 and 11. Students learn to design and make a good range of products using wood, plastic, metal, textile and food materials in Years 7 to 9. They learn to use simple mechanisms, electronics, structures and control satisfactorily. Students learn by undertaking a good range of assignments in which they work from a design brief, research topics, produce a number of design ideas, select the best design, make a product and evaluate their work. In a very good food lesson in Year 7 students were seen developing design ideas for a soft-drink cocktail which they later intended to make and evaluate. There is good emphasis on accurate drawing and making - in a very good lesson in Year 8 students were seen drilling and tapping a hole in their product. All students learn the basic principles of safety and hygiene well. Students learn key words and routinely use dimensions and quantities in their work satisfactorily. Teachers miss opportunities to use ICT - in a satisfactory lesson in Year 8 students could have designed and made the handle for their mechanical 'quick and pick' device using the school's new computer drawing facilities. Students' work shows that they could learn to improve the presentation of their work more effectively if ICT were used.
123. Most students continue to learn well in GCSE courses based on their chosen material - resistant or food - or in graphic products. They learn either in skills-based lessons or by undertaking extended coursework firmly based on the design and make cycle. In a lesson in Year 10 students were seen learning to use drawing boards and instruments to create a three-dimensional drawing of a package for a camera effectively. In another in the same year, students were seen marking out and making dovetail joints in a wooden frame of a clock with considerable accuracy and success. Students' work shows that they have designed and made special diets for a major food chain satisfactorily in Year 11. Others students continue learning less satisfactorily in the vocational GCSE in manufacturing by undertaking units on the application of technology in manufacture, working with a design brief and manufacturing products. In an unsuccessful lesson in Year 11, students made slow progress in their learning about quality control and undertaking work on their designs for either a toy or snow board.
124. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and often good in Years 10 and 11. All specialist teachers have secure knowledge of their subject and manage students very well in lessons. The teaching of designing and making skills is particularly good in resistant materials and graphic products. All teachers introduce tasks well and motivate students by asking probing questions as the work progresses. They are confident and relaxed and as a result students' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good. Teachers use course materials well and are very effective in helping students revise for examinations. The procedure for assessing students' attainment in terms of National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9 is inaccurate and needs further development. In the early years teachers require all students to undertake the same range of work, which does not give gifted students the opportunities they need to demonstrate and practise their talents. Supply teachers are not given enough guidance on what is expected of them in lessons.
125. The department is effectively led by an experienced teacher who is well supported by his colleagues. The school has been successful in becoming an affiliate of the Technical College Trust and is actively planning to apply for special status in engineering. The accommodation and learning resources are good, particularly the new computer software facilities, and enhance learning well. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. Students' good attitudes and the quality of the teaching have been maintained and facilities improved.

## GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths
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- Relationships are good.
- Behaviour is generally good and enhances students' learning.

#### Areas for improvement

- Work is not matched to students' attainment levels.
- ICT skills are not integrated into schemes of work.
- The fieldwork programme is limited and adversely affects students' achievement in Years 7 to 9.

126. The proportion of A\* to C grade GCSE grades in the 2001 examinations were below the national average, continuing the downward trend since the last inspection. The results for 2002 show a further decline over the previous year. The standard of work seen for students at the end of Years 10 and 11 during the inspection is below average. Teacher assessments for students at the end of Year 9 show an improvement over the previous year but standards are below national expectations. The standard of work seen during the inspection were also below expectations nationally. However, students make satisfactory progress from a low start on entry to the school and by the end of Year 9 they have acquired a sound foundation in some areas of the subject. They continue to make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 11, when the proportion of candidates who achieve at least a G grade in the GCSE examinations is in line with the national average. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress when support is provided and generally achieve well.
127. The students have a positive attitude to the subject and their behaviour is good overall. Relationships among students are good and with staff are generally satisfactory. They work co-operatively in pairs or groups and show enthusiasm for the subject when their interest is stimulated. However, a number of students in the lower school show less motivation when they perceive that lesson content is not seen to be particularly relevant to them. They show consideration for others when dealing with cultural differences in different parts of the world.
128. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed during the inspection in spite of staff illness and reliance on temporary supply cover on a daily basis. The work is well planned so that the students have a clear understanding of what is to be achieved by the end of the session. When good use is made of time during lessons, the students' interest and concentration are maintained and satisfactory learning takes place. Good questioning and discussion at the start of each lesson help to consolidate prior learning before moving on to the next stage in learning. Students generally have written exercises to undertake in each lesson, but expectations for productivity and good quality literacy are not high enough and depresses the standard of work. Where students are given opportunities to discuss and make decisions as, for example, in a Year 8 lesson on flood control, they show independent thinking and respect for the opinions of others. Homework is regularly set and marked but the amount and quality of work are often undemanding. Teachers make use of opportunities for the development of students' moral, social and cultural development. Examples include the moral dilemma in exploiting the rainforest of Brazil, recognising cultural differences when studying population changes in India and China, working together in groups, social responsibilities while taking part in residential fieldwork in Year 10. Planning, however, does not include sufficient opportunities for spiritual development in the many topics which lend themselves admirably to that purpose.
129. The department is managed by a hardworking subject leader. However, improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Standards have declined steadily and little progress has been made towards using ICT in the subject. Fieldwork experience is provided for students preparing for GCSE examinations but not for younger students. The monitoring of teaching and students' work is weak and analysis of data is not effectively done and used to guide planning. Although some attention is paid to literacy and numeracy skills, these are not consistently developed as part of a whole school policy. Encouragingly, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.

## HISTORY

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

**Strengths**

- The quality of teaching is very good.
- The department has a clear commitment to raise standards.
- Teachers have high expectations of their students' ability to achieve.

#### Areas for Improvement

- Targets for individual students have yet to be set.
- Students do not benefit from a broader programme of outside visits to enrich the curriculum.
- Students are not making enough use of ICT.

130. In 2001, GCSE results were marginally below the national average for all maintained schools, below average for boys and significantly below average for girls. However, they were above the national average for secondary modern schools. In terms of relative performance, students reached higher standards in history than they did in all other subjects in the school. In relative terms, history was the strongest subject in the school. In 2002 the percentage of students gaining A\*-C grades at GCSE rose by six points.
131. Inspection evidence shows that at the end of Year 9 many students have not yet reached nationally expected levels of attainment. However, they are achieving well in terms of their attainment levels on entry. Overall, students have a basic knowledge and understanding of the major historical events and personalities they are studying. They can describe characteristic features of different societies from the past and make links between them, as was seen in a Year 8 lesson where students assessed the style of fighting used during the English Civil War and drew on previous knowledge to compare earlier military techniques. Students appreciate that history is based on evidence. All, including those with special educational needs, can extract information from a variety of written and pictorial sources. The more able students recognise bias and can analyse different historical interpretations. They are aware that ideas and attitudes are often related to circumstances, and can explain the importance of different causes and consequences. The majority of students have good oral and listening skills, but their writing skills are less assured. Lower attaining students can write in simple sentences to describe historical events but their work is frequently flawed by poor sentence construction and spelling errors. Higher attaining students write more extensively and with greater fluency. Presentation is generally good across the ability range. Most students show a developing sense of chronology and can use historical terms appropriately.
132. At the end of Year 11, overall attainment is broadly in line with the nationally expected level. Students' historical knowledge and understanding have deepened. Higher attaining students show independence in following lines of enquiry. They analyse evidence critically to produce reasoned arguments. Lower attaining students use sources to support their narratives and can draw simple unstructured conclusions. Writing skills are variable, and for a minority of students are below the expected standard. Presentation is of a high standard in the main. Students listen very attentively and participate conscientiously in class discussions, demonstrating good levels of recall. Although diligent in their approach, most students continue to depend on their teachers for their learning.
133. Students arrive at the school with below average levels of literacy and few skills in the subject. They make good progress over time due to the highly focused teaching of basic skills. Lower attaining students, and those with special educational needs, make similar rates of progress as their peers because of individual support which they receive from their teachers and mentors, and careful planning on the part of teachers, which ensures that all lessons are accessible. There is no significant variation in the standards of work produced by students of different ethnic backgrounds.
134. The quality of teaching is a strength of the department. Teachers are very secure in their subject knowledge, which they impart with style and confidence. They have uniformly high expectations of their students and give them a sense of importance as young historians. Lessons are clearly structured, purposeful and very well paced. Minimal time is lost in delivery in teaching, as control is firm throughout. Students know what is required of them and conform to generally good standards of behaviour. Teachers provide appropriate challenges and share learning outcomes with students at the start of each lesson. Good quality resources, including a wide range of worksheets, are used to stimulate interest and help understanding. Exposition is always clear and skilful questioning is used to encourage students to think critically. Consistent use of praise

is used to advantage. History is a popular subject with students and many show their interest by opting to continue to study the subject at GCSE.

135. The department acknowledges the importance of skills development in lesson planning. Programmes of study provide opportunities for the development of skills in literacy, and also in numeracy. For example, students from Year 11 were seen to calculate levels of prosperity in the USA during the 1950s by reference to a range of statistical tables. As yet the subject offers few opportunities to develop ICT skills. This is due to pressures on a limited number of school computers and the lack of dedicated workstations in the history teaching rooms.
136. Overall, leadership of the subject is very good. The department is well managed by an exigent head of department. There is a strong commitment to raise standards and students' progress. Monitoring and assessment procedures are well developed, but there are some inconsistencies in assessment practices. Teachers vary in their approach to correcting errors in literacy and the quality of diagnostic feedback they give to students. Developments are underway to improve record keeping and upgrade data analysis, leading to improved tracking of student progress. The department also intends to set individual targets, which will be shared with students. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and appropriate schemes of work are in place. However, more could be done to enrich the curriculum through a programme of outside visits. Topics of study help towards the teaching of citizenship, and the development of moral, cultural, spiritual and social understanding. Standards of teaching, learning and achievement remain in line with those recorded at the last inspection.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- The teaching of basic ICT skills in Years 7 to 9 is good.
- There is a good scheme of work in Years 7 to 9.

### Areas for improvement

- Overall standards are not high enough.
- There are limited opportunities for gifted students to demonstrate and practise their talents in Years 7 to 9.
- Units in the GNVQ course are not consistently completed on time by all students.

137. Standards on entry are variable and overall well below the national average. By the time students reach the end of Year 9, standards remain well below the national average with about one-half of students obtaining the expected standard. Boys and girls perform equally. This is a satisfactory achievement. At the end of Year 11, standards remain well below the national average, with a little under one-third of students obtaining the higher GCSE A\*-C grades and under nine out of ten obtaining A\* - G grades in the GCSE examinations in 2001. The results for 2002 are better but remain well below the national average. The performance of boys and girls varies from year to year with no overall trend. Over one quarter of students, mainly boys, opt to take the recently introduced GNVQ course in ICT. The course has not as yet been examined.
138. The standards of ICT in other subjects are variable. They are satisfactory or better in art, business studies, English, modern languages, religious education and science but unsatisfactory in design and technology, geography, history, mathematics, music and physical education. In a number of subjects ICT does not meet the statutory requirements. However, overall, achievement is broadly satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress with extra help from teachers and learning assistants in some lessons. The progress made by gifted and talented students is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9.

139. The overall standard of learning is satisfactory. It is very good in Years 7 to 9. In a well- planned series of discrete lessons in Years 7 to 9 students learn a very good range of ICT skills including the use of word processing, graphics, desktop publishing, spreadsheets, databases and the internet. In Year 7, students made good progress in learning about company identities and in creating a leaflet with text and images effectively. In a Year 8 lesson, students drew graphs excellently from complex stored data on environmental conditions in a room. In another excellent and imaginative lesson in Year 9, students created the background to a racing game and transferred the design to a software program to insert the control sequences for a car. In the GCSE course, students learn to apply their ICT skills to more complex applications and about the social impact of ICT in society. In two good lessons in Year 10, students gained an understanding about the advantages and disadvantages of ICT in the home, at work and elsewhere. In a Year 11 lesson, students applied their knowledge to handling computer-aided design software satisfactorily. In the GNVQ course, students satisfactorily present and handle information about hardware and software. In an unsatisfactory lesson in Year 11 students had difficulty in answering questions about the Internet on line. Word processing skills are good.
140. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and very good when taught by specialist teachers in Years 7 to 9. The recently appointed teachers are having significant and beneficial effects on both teaching and learning. All teachers introduce topics well and give good help and guidance to students in lessons, particularly to those students with special educational needs. Lessons are planned well and are effective. Teachers' knowledge and ability to teach the basic ICT skills are good. They frequently ask students questions as the work progresses in order to involve them more fully in learning. Teachers are confident and most are relaxed and, as a result, students' relationships, attitudes and behaviour in lessons are generally good. In Years 7 to 9, a good start has been made to introduce the national teaching strategy in ICT. While the pace of lessons is generally good more needs to be done to help students complete units on time in the GNVQ course - lack of success on this course is a factor leading to low morale for some students.
141. The able head of business studies and ICT is well supported by specialist teachers. No teacher is currently responsible for the co-ordination of the teaching of ICT in other subjects. The department has had difficulty in recruiting specialist teachers during the past eighteen months. New computing facilities have recently been installed and are beginning to improve access and reliability. Changes since the last inspection are satisfactory; new courses have been introduced, standards maintained and computing facilities improved.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

### Strengths

- GCSE results have improved since the last inspection.
- Subject leadership and management of the department are very good.
- Teaching is good and has a positive impact on students' learning skills.

### Areas for development

- Assessment of students' work in Years 7 to 9 is not rigorous enough to pinpoint areas for improvement.
- There are not enough opportunities for high attaining students to use language independently.

142. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2001 show that attainment was below average. However, there has been an improving trend since the last inspection and in work seen during the inspection in Years 7 to 9 standards are close to national averages. Students enter the school with attainment that is below average, so students make good progress up to the end of Year 9. Students make particularly good progress in developing their oral and writing skills. In general, students speak with confidence, fluency and good pronunciation. This is because students are given many opportunities to speak French and German in lessons and because oral practice of

new vocabulary is thorough. In the best lessons students are encouraged to use the foreign language to communicate with the teacher. All students write accurately and develop good knowledge of vocabulary and structures. They are encouraged to record vocabulary on a regular basis and learn key words which allow them to improve the range and quality of their writing. High attaining students in Year 9 are able to write using complex sentences and to express opinions. Average and below average students are given many opportunities to produce pieces of extended writing. They write accurately in paragraphs, giving personal details. In those lessons where teachers use French and German extensively, students develop good listening skills. Students with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and make good progress

143. Results of GCSE examinations in French in 2001 were close to national averages. The proportion of students achieving A\*-C results was below the national averages but that of students achieving A\*-G results were in line with national expectations. The proportion of students achieving the higher grades was below average. Girls achieved better than boys but the difference was not as great as is the case nationally. Students who were entered for the short course in French performed below national averages. Results in 2002 in both French and German show a great improvement. Two thirds of students entered for the examination gained A\*-C and this is particularly commendable because the school is entering an increasing number of students for GCSE examination. The trend since the last inspection is, therefore, one of considerable improvement.
144. From work seen during the inspection, in Years 10 and 11 standards are above national averages and students make good progress. Students continue to develop good speaking and writing skills. In writing they develop good knowledge of vocabulary and structures at all levels. High attaining students demonstrate a good grasp of the main tenses. Average students produce extended written responses, using a good variety of vocabulary and expression. Students following the Certificate of Achievement course can write about themselves with a level of accuracy that is above expectation. However, while high attaining students are able to adapt models of good language supplied by the teacher they do not develop the skills to use language independently. In speaking, all students, at all levels, continue to speak with relative confidence and good pronunciation. High attaining students in Year 11 learn to extend their oral responses to give extra detail, using a variety of tenses and to express opinions. In all lessons students' attitudes to their work are good. They listen well to the teacher and to each other and always remain on task when working in pairs and groups. In most lessons they join in well.
145. Learning and teaching are good overall. There are examples of very good teaching. There are minor inconsistencies which affect learning. Learning is good because lessons are well planned. Lessons have clear objectives relating to what students are expected to achieve. The introduction of new vocabulary is always done in a lively manner using good visual material. This motivates students in this key part of the lesson. Most lessons plan to develop a full range of skills. Students develop good oral skills in most lessons because pronunciation practice is thorough and teachers use a variety of teaching methods to ensure maximum student involvement in lessons. In the small number of lessons which lack this variety students do not concentrate as well. Although objectives of lessons are clear, in many lessons teachers do not review learning at the end of lessons effectively. Students concentrate well because teachers have good relationships with students. This invariably creates a good working atmosphere in lessons. Students learn well because, in most lessons, teachers have high expectations and set challenging work. In a small number of lessons where the pace of lessons is slow and there is less challenge students' progress is not as good. All teachers have at least a good command of the languages they are teaching and, in many lessons, use the foreign language effectively so that students develop good listening skills. In the best lessons students are encouraged to use it themselves for communication with the teacher and this helps develop oral confidence. In a small number of lessons the target language is not used effectively. When teaching students in Years 10 and 11 teachers have a very clear understanding of GCSE criteria and regularly communicate them to students so that they are always clear about their level of achievement and what they need to do to improve their performance. In Years 7 to 9, however, teachers do not have the same clear understanding of National Curriculum levels. As a result, students are not clear about what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. Teachers mark students' work

conscientiously and follow the school's marking policy. Many teachers point out to students the strengths and weaknesses of their work and indicate to them how to improve. However this is not done consistently by all teachers. The department makes a good contribution to the school's programme of extra-curricular activities and to the development of students' literacy skills. The department has detailed plans for the development of students' ICT skills but lack of access to computers is affecting progress.



146. Leadership and management in the department are very good, with the potential to be excellent. The department has a clear sense of direction. There has been a strong and successful emphasis on improving examination results and increasing the proportion of students entered for the examination since the arrival of the head of department two years ago. The department works very well as a team and teachers support each other very well. The monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department are very effective. The careful analysis of examination results leads to an action plan for improvement. The monitoring of teaching goes beyond whole-school requirements. Departmental documentation is detailed and helpful. Staffing, accommodation and resources are good.
147. The department has made good progress since the last inspection.

## MUSIC

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

### Strengths

- Teachers have a good knowledge and enthusiasm for their subject and encourage the same in their students.
- Teaching is satisfactory in all year groups and students enjoy their lessons and make satisfactory progress. Numbers of students studying music Years 10 and 11 is in line with national averages.
- The criticisms in the previous report have all been addressed.

### Areas for development

- New schemes of work have been devised. Further development is needed to define the learning objectives of some lesson plans and to relate these more closely to National Curriculum levels of assessment. The head of department has already started work on this. A better ability to track students' progress across the key stages will result.
- New ICT equipment has arrived recently. Instruction sheets and worksheets are needed for the various schemes of practical work to integrate music technology into the lessons.
- More extension tasks are needed in some lessons for the higher attaining students to ensure that they always make appropriate progress.

148. By the end of Year 9, standards are below the national standard. Achievement is satisfactory. Students at the start of Year 7 are below national standards and the musical experiences of at least half of them are limited, particularly in terms of opportunities to play instruments. In performances heard during the inspection, about one third of students are achieving the expected level in terms of accuracy and ensemble skills. Those below the standard play single lines on the keyboard with some difficulty in fingering techniques. Equipment for music technology has only been in place since the beginning of term and students' skills are below the expected level. This lack of technology has restricted the development of composing skills as students have been limited by their performing skills. In work heard, students demonstrated the ability to compose in various styles with some control over simple melody, harmony and rhythm. Some can also improvise. Standards in the listening element are in line with national levels for most. Students recognise the musical elements and different styles but not all can use the correct terminology to describe them. Students of all levels of ability make progress; in some lessons the higher attaining students need extension tasks to encourage them forward. There is no apparent difference between the progress of boys and girls.
149. GCSE results in recent examinations have been well below national standards. Standards seen during the inspection were higher. They remain below the national levels but are close to the school's targets for the subject. Approximately half the students in the option group have instrumental lessons and the performances of most of these are broadly in line with national standards. Satisfactory performances were heard on a variety of instruments and vocally with students demonstrating accuracy and musical control. In composing, some students are achieving the national standard but most are below. Those that achieve the standard demonstrate

satisfactory control of melody, harmony, rhythm and structure alongside the ability to work in a chosen style. Weaker work has less successful control of the elements and is usually shorter and less well developed. Until this term students' access to music technology was limited to one computer with the result that their composing skills have been defined by their performing skills. In the listening element the student folders demonstrate adequate knowledge of musical styles and techniques but some test papers suggest that they are less good at using correct musical terminology to describe the musical example. The head of department believes that the new examination will suit the students better. Achievement across the key stage is average. Recordings of student performances and compositions at various stages of development show development of practical skills. Knowledge and understanding have also deepened. For sixty percent of the course students work individually. Boys and girls of all levels of ability and those with special educational needs make equal progress. Musically gifted and talented students at all key stages have opportunities to develop skills in the extra-curricular music.

150. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Several good lessons were observed but there was also one unsatisfactory lesson. Teachers have a good subject knowledge and their enthusiasm for the subject ensures that students enjoy their lessons and work well. Lessons are planned with a variety of tasks, which helps to maintain students' interest in their work. When tasks are timed progress is good but the pace of the lesson slows when students have too much time to complete their work and, in some lessons the higher attaining students need more extension tasks to encourage independent learning. Teachers use questioning well to check prior knowledge and to extend learning. All students are included and their answers are valued. They are given confidence and develop their speaking skills. In a few lessons the tasks need clearer explanation, with more clearly defined learning goals in the practical tasks. In a Year 10 lesson, a wider range of tasks was needed to cater for the very wide range of performing skills in the group. Teachers are friendly and encouraging; their expectations for standards of behaviour are clear, which in most lessons are good.
151. Management of the department is satisfactory. Following criticism in the last report the curriculum has been redesigned. More clearly defined learning goals are needed in the practical element of some of these new schemes of work. Teachers regularly assess the work of their students but the head of department recognises the need for a new scheme of assessment to match the new curriculum and has already started work on this. This assessment scheme must be more closely linked to the national curriculum levels than the present scheme. Lack of music technology to support the development of practical skills was criticised in the previous report. This was dealt with at the start of term and there are now 12 workstations in the department. Instructions and work sheets linked to the curriculum are needed to integrate music technology into the lessons, as is necessary training for the teachers. Other resources are good and the music rooms are well set up for whole-class work and paired keyboard work. It is more difficult to organise small group ensemble activities as there are not enough separate small areas in which students can hear their own work clearly. The overspill of noise from group to group impedes progress. Extra-curricular activities and opportunities to perform in the school and in the community are organised by the department to support the development both of students' skills and of their confidence. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- There is an ethos of care for the students and students have a positive attitude to learning.
- Social and moral development is good and supports achievement.
- Extra-curricular provision and participation rates are good.

### Areas for improvement

- Assessment procedures are inadequate.

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is not well developed.</li><li>• Students' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are not given sufficient emphasis in the scheme of work.</li></ul> |
|--|

152. Standards of attainment in physical education at the end of Year 9 are in line with national expectations. The percentage of students gaining GCSE A\*-C grades in 2002 was just below average. These are the first students to complete a two year physical education course, during Years 10 and 11, at the school. Inspection evidence confirmed that standards are as indicated by the GCSE results last year. Comparison of students' standards of achievement on entry to the course and the standards achieved in the GCSE examinations shows that students make satisfactory progress through Years 10 and 11. Students, in core physical education lessons, reach standards in line with national expectations. Students through Years 7 to 11 make satisfactory progress.
153. By the end of Year 9, students make satisfactory progress. In the course of the year they develop competence in basic passing and control in soccer and passing and catching in netball. A number of students transfer these techniques into the game situation through good decision-making. 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 students' knowledge and understanding of physical education vocabulary, nor do they allow students' to develop their observation and assessment skills. As a result, they are not always clear about what they can do and how to improve. A significant number of students are unable to catch or control a ball when put under any pressure of time or space. By the end of Year 11, most students are making satisfactory progress. The continued progress in the development of basic techniques, in badminton, for example, enables them to transfer these basic techniques into competitive game situations when they are able to create and attack space around the court. Where progress is not as good, some students fail to transfer their ability to perform basic techniques to more advanced skill practices through a lack of control of direction in striking or passing. This took place in a basketball lesson where students' inability to perform a basic lay up shot restricted their development in the game situation. For a minority of students progress is restricted by disruptive behaviour, which causes them to lose concentration. While the learning of students with special educational needs is well planned for, the progress of some higher attaining students 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.
154. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The strengths of the teachers include good knowledge of the subject, good management of space and resources, positive interaction with students and the development of students' moral and social skills. There is good planning for students with special educational needs, which means that they are able to learn at the same pace as other groups of students. However, strategies to extend the more able students are still inadequate. Assessment procedures for monitoring students' progress are in place. There is now a need to develop the use of assessment as part of learning so that students are aware of what they can do and how to improve through observation, evaluation and assessment skills. Students' progress is restricted by a lack of opportunities to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills within the physical education context. In lessons where teaching was not so good, learning was restricted by a loss of time at the beginning of lessons, teacher intervention that was not focused on the intended learning outcomes of the students and the ineffective management of some poor behaviour. Students' attitudes to learning are good. The vast majority enjoy physical education and the department now has strategies to increase participation levels. Most students concentrate well. They are able to work as individuals, but also co-operate well when working in pairs and small groups. The behaviour of most students is good. Students develop good relationships with other students and the teacher.
155. Leadership and management in physical education are satisfactory, with some good aspects. There is a need to review development plans so that they focus on learning. More planned opportunities for students to be involved in assessing their performance as part of learning, consistent strategies to improve students' knowledge, understanding and use of physical education terminology and secure data on students' attainment on entry to the school and on

entry to the GCSE course would raise standards faster. There is a need for the head of department to monitor teaching and learning to ensure a secure knowledge of how the curriculum is being delivered. This would help him identify areas that need support. The department has made some progress in developing assessment procedures since the last inspection. Further development is needed in order for teachers to collect on going evidence on which to base judgements about students attainment at the end of each unit of work. The department has a philosophy of care for students, which emphasises social and moral development. Teachers are well organised and the subject handbook provides effective guidance on schemes of work, lesson planning and safety matters. The department now recognises the importance of consistently referring to safety procedures for students. In general, the quality of accommodation has a satisfactory effect on learning. However, some learning areas are in urgent need of general upkeep so that students can use them more effectively for learning. The quality and use of resources are good. 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 results in inter-school matches and competitions. The department is making good progress in developing its links with the local community in order to raise standards.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

### Strengths.

- Very good teaching has a very positive effect on achievement.
- Management of students is very good.
- The curriculum for all year groups is good.
- Contributions towards the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students are very good.
- Standards are high in Years 10 and 11.
- Departmental management is very good.

### Areas for improvement.

- The use of levels of attainment and the setting of detailed targets against which students' progress can be identified and sharing these with students.
- The systematic use of data on assessment to guide curricular planning.

156. Standards at the end of Year 9 are in line with expectations for 14 year olds in relation to the Bexley LEA Agreed syllabus. At the end of Year 11, standards are above national expectations in the GCSE short course. In 2002, results were well above expectations.

157. From evidence gained during the inspection, attainment at the end of Year 9 is consistent with expected levels. There are some good examples of students developing their knowledge and understanding of religious language, principles and concepts. In Year 7, through a well-directed question and answer session by the teacher, students made good gains in knowledge and understanding of religious symbols and their importance in Christian and Jewish rituals. In Year 8, students were provided with an insight into several approaches to research. They demonstrated good computer skills, and, using the Internet, they were able to collect useful information about the scientific view of creation. In Year 9, students develop a good understanding of the origins and development of the Jewish Passover and its Christian significance. The teacher's variety of approaches enabled students to form their own views, while respecting the different attitudes of others. Students with special educational needs make good progress. The use of key words, technical language and good discussion work were useful aids to improve speaking and listening skills. Overall, learning is good.

158. Attainment, from inspection findings, at the end of Year 11 is above expectations. In Year 10, students' achievement is good and their attainment is above national expectations. They show a

clear understanding of moral issues within a religious context. As a result of a very good question and answer session by the teacher, students were able to explore their views about moral codes and their relationship to the expectations of Christian and Jewish religions. They are good at linking Christian principles to life experiences. In Year 11, attainment is also above national expectations in the GCSE short course. As a result of a good illustration by the teacher, students were able to express their views and feelings about the characteristics of God as they apply to the problem of suffering. Their ability to analyse material in order to form judgements is well developed. Overall, learning is very good. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls or between different ethnic backgrounds. Students with special educational needs, and those who are gifted or talented make good progress.

159. Overall, students' attitudes to learning are very good. They behave very well, are extremely well motivated and apply themselves to the work. They collaborate very well with each other and work at a productive pace. The relationship between teachers and students is excellent, and teachers support individuals both academically and personally. Student behaviour makes a very good contribution to student achievement and progress.
160. Teaching is always good, occasionally very good and with some excellent features. It has a significant impact on students' achievement. Planning is very good. Lesson aims were shared with students in all the lessons observed. Teachers make very good use of questioning to consolidate current learning and to review previous work. They use a suitable range of styles such as discussion, question and answer and worksheets that match the needs of individual students. This enables students to *learn from* as well as *learn about* religion, and assists them to maintain their interest and develop understanding of religious principles and concepts. Teachers manage students' behaviour extremely well, contributing to a very good climate for learning. Extension work and homework are used to good effect in allowing students to reflect on the information they have gained in class. Teachers have clear expectations of students and challenge them to succeed, and these are effective in contributing to student achievement.
161. Assessment of students' work is generally satisfactory and helpful comments are made in exercise books. The current procedures provide a sound basis for assessing what students know and understand. Marking of students' work is good and consistent but the grading system needs to be improved. The department does not use levels of attainment nor does it set targets for students. Consequently, students are unclear about the standards they are reaching and what they need to do to improve. This is recognised as an area for development.
162. Departmental management is very good. The head of department approaches the task with great enthusiasm and deep commitment to the students. There is excellent support from two other specialist staff. The departmental development plan addresses current issues and forms a good basis for development. The monitoring of students' work is good and enables the department to have a clear view of the development of its work. Students are provided with a rich diet of religious education. The quality of classroom display is very high and celebrates student achievement.
163. Since the time of the previous inspection, standards, the quality of teaching and student management have all improved. There has been good improvement in the contribution religious education now makes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. Overall, the improvements since the last inspection have had a good impact on standards, students' achievement and their progress.

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

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

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

### ***GCE AS level courses***

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Accounting	2	100	n/a	0	n/a	2.5	n/a
Product design	7	86	n/a	0	n/a	1.9	n/a
Business education	23	70	n/a	9	n/a	1.7	n/a
Art	6	100	n/a	33	n/a	3.5	n/a
Media studies	13	100	n/a	38	n/a	2.7	n/a
Geography	9	67	n/a	0	n/a	1.3	n/a
History	23	100	n/a	26	n/a	2.9	n/a
Law	22	77	n/a	9	n/a	1.8	n/a
English	18	100	n/a	28	n/a	2.8	n/a
French	1	100	n/a	0	n/a	3.0	n/a

### ***GCE A level and AVCE courses***

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Accounting	1	100	n/a	100	n/a	8.0	n/a
Product design	2	100	n/a	0	n/a	8.0	n/a
Business education	5	100	n/a	0	n/a	3.2	n/a
Information and communication technology	7	100	n/a	14.3	n/a	4.0	n/a
Art	2	100	n/a	50	n/a	8.0	n/a
History	10	100	n/a	0	n/a	4.0	n/a
Law	7	100	n/a	0	n/a	2.7	n/a
English	5	100	n/a	20	n/a	4.8	n/a
French	1	100	n/a	0	n/a	4.0	n/a

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

### MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

164. The focus was on the GCSE re-sit course in mathematics. There were no entries for AS/A level/VCE in science and mathematics.

#### Mathematics

Overall, the provision for students re-sitting GCSE mathematics is **satisfactory**.

##### Strengths

- GCSE re-sit results have improved since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is good and consequently students are motivated and work hard.
- Students have been given more responsibility for their own learning.

##### Areas for improvement

- Monitoring of the students' progress on their own revision.
- Planning for the period between the early re-sit and the publication of results.
- Mathematical support for students wishing to extend their knowledge and understanding of the subject.

165. The mathematics department provides well for its sixth form GCSE re-sit students. While the number of students entered since the previous inspection has risen, the figures are too small to make comparison with national averages. Results have improved since the previous inspection. Over the last two years, 16 of the 23 students entered for GCSE have gained either B or C grades. This represents good achievement, given the GCSE grades that they achieved in Year 11. The standard of work seen in lessons and in students' exercise books confirms that the improvement is being maintained.
166. All students make good progress. They demonstrate a good understanding of the need to balance algebraic equations when trying to solve them. Students' written work is neat and detailed, enabling all to see the clear thought processes that lead to successful solutions. A few, however, lack confidence when dealing with negative or fractional values. Students are also successful when applying memory joggers to help them identify the appropriate trigonometrical ratio to calculate the length of a side in a right-angled triangle.
167. The teaching of the GCSE groups is good. The teacher's planning is effective and identifies the major gaps in students' knowledge. The teaching enables students to build upon their previous knowledge, to be successful while solving problems and hence gain in confidence. The students initiate their own revision programmes using revision manuals. However, this is not monitored systematically by the teacher. Relationships are good, students and teacher work in partnership. Most students have accepted the responsibility for marking their own work and adopt a reflective approach to the tasks set. Teaching is enthusiastic and, as a result, students seek help and guidance not just in lessons but during free moments in the week.
168. Two years ago, the department stipulated that only those students attaining GCSE grades D or E may start the course. This strategy, while providing the opportunity for these students to gain entry to higher education or employment, does not provide opportunities or support for those who have yet to meet these standards. The department does not offer courses for students who have achieved a GCSE mathematics grade in the A\*-C range to further their mathematical education.

### ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

169. The inspection focus was on business studies and ICT. Art was sampled. The trend towards more students taking art at post-16 level is continuing, with 90 per cent of students gaining higher

grades at AS and A2 levels in 2001, and all students gaining the highest grades in 2002. In Years 12 and 13 art lessons, teachers vary their teaching styles and smaller groups to encourage students to work more independently. Consequently, they speak maturely and with considerable understanding about their individual assignments on social issues such as the cohesive nature of the family.

170. Design and technology (product and design) was sampled; the quality of provision is satisfactory. Small numbers, mainly boys take the A level in product design. In 2001, two students out of the five, including the only girl, obtained A and B grades and all passed with a minimum D grade. The proportion obtaining the higher grades in 2002 was lower. Teaching and learning are very good because the subject is very well led and has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Standards have been maintained. In 2002, six students took the Computer Learning and Assessment in Information Technology (CLAIT) competence tests in word processing, spreadsheets and databases and all passed.

## BUSINESS

### Business studies

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

#### Strengths

- Teachers have very good relationships with students.
- There is a very positive working atmosphere in lessons leading to good achievement.
- Some students take part in the very successful Young Enterprise companies which enhances their learning.
- Some students make good use of part-time jobs to enrich their work.

#### Areas for improvement

- Students do not apply their ICT skills enough.
- A number of students are unsuited to the AS/A2 courses and do not achieve well.
- Links with industry and work placements are underdeveloped.

171. Business studies is a popular subject in the sixth form, where the AS/A2 course builds well from GCSE. The AS course is open to those without a GCSE in business and attracts students with a wide range of ability. No intermediate GNVQ business course is offered.
172. Results in A level business studies in 2001 were below the national average but in line with the school average, and 2002 results are similar but show a rising trend. Small entries makes national comparison invalid. In the new AS examination in 2002, attainment, though similar to the previous A level, was in line with the school's average and expectations. Seven of the 23 students who took the examination were ungraded and were possibly more suited to a vocational course. Overall achievement was good, and a small number achieved higher standards than expected.
173. Students' attainment was satisfactory and female and male students made good progress. The improving standard is largely due to a better syllabus and a more stable teaching staff. In a good Year 13 lesson, students showed a good understanding of marketing strategies and developed good skills in drawing critical path diagrams. In work seen, students used ICT well to present their ideas but did not use spreadsheets enough to model investment appraisals. Insufficient Year 13 completed coursework projects show good analyses of local business opportunities. Two higher attaining students used ICT effectively to draw graphs to analyse their market research. Students analyse numerical data satisfactorily.
174. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very good relationships with students and support individuals well, which helps students to develop a good mature attitude to their work. Lessons



are well planned with clear aims and end with appropriate reviews. Teachers employ a good variety of case studies but students contribute few topical examples themselves. Their communication and ICT skills are not always given sufficient focus in lessons; they are not always challenged to draft definitions of key concepts to help their examination techniques.

175. The subject is led and managed well. It is well staffed by an experienced team of committed specialist teachers. Schemes of work are appropriate but would benefit from further expansion to incorporate key skills and more use of local business and industry. Teachers are developing multimedia materials and a new computerised tracking system to identify student targets and possible underachievement. The range of sixth form vocational courses is limited. Students are making progress in forming their companies in the Young Enterprise course and the base room features excellent displays of their products. Overall, the subject has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and has a very good capacity to improve further.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

### Information and Communication Technology

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

#### Strengths

- Assessment of students' work.

#### Areas for improvement

- Many students underachieve in examinations.
- Retention of students on the AVCE course.
- Many students fail to meet the deadlines set for completion of work, which adversely affects their attainment.

176. Standards are well below average at the end of Year 13 and students do not achieve as well as they should given their attainment on entry to the course. About one in three students take the recently introduced AVCE course in ICT. In 2001, 21 students were entered for the AS examinations; no students obtained the higher A or B grades and only just over half achieved a grade. The preliminary results in 2002 are better. However, only one-third of those students who took the examination in 2001 continued into the second year. The preliminary results for the AVCE examination in 2002, the first time it has been taken by students from the school, show that one of the seven students obtained a B grade and the others obtained D and E grade passes. Retention rates for students completing the course have been below average.
177. For current students, the quality of learning is satisfactory. Students learn by taking units on presenting information, ICT serving organizations and spreadsheet design in Year 12 and three other interesting units from a list of options in Year 13. Students learn satisfactorily about e-commerce and working in groups to consider the advantages of e-mail, computer aided design and ICT applications in commerce in Year 12. In a Year 12 lesson, students worked through the awarding body's pre-release material as preparation of their examination. In a Year 13 lesson, students worked satisfactorily to complete their work on databases; in another Year 13 lesson, students researched the data protection act, copyright and patents on the Internet as a part of their work on ICT in society.
178. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. New teachers have been appointed and are beginning to have a beneficial impact on learning. All teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and give good introductions to tasks in lessons. They give students satisfactory help and guidance in practical lessons. Teachers provide satisfactory revision for examinations. However, some do not plan lessons well and on occasions make poor use of time. They need to do more to help students complete units on time in the AVCE course - the inability to complete work on time is causing a lack of confidence and leads to underachievement for a number of students.

179. The head of business studies and ICT is responsible for the sixth form and is well supported by the principal teacher of ICT and other recently appointed colleagues. The department has had difficulty in recruiting specialist teachers in the past. New computing facilities have been recently installed and are beginning to improve access and reliability. There was no sixth form ICT course at the time of the last inspection and so no comparisons can be made.

## HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

### Physical Education – Community Sports Leadership Award (CSLA)

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

#### Strengths

- Good teaching enhances learning and students' motivation.
- Students show a good attitude and commitment to the course.

#### Areas for improvement

- Developing students' ICT skills.
- Strategies to extend the more able students.

180. In 2001, all students who started the CSLA course completed and passed the award. From inspection evidence, students in Years 12 are producing work which is of the required standard for them to receive the award. Students of all ability levels are making good progress. Their use of relevant vocabulary demonstrates a good knowledge and understanding of appropriate terminology. Students showed good planning in the organisation of a 5-a-side soccer tournament for Year 7 students. They are able to support their opinions with additional information when responding to challenging questioning.
181. Students have a good understanding of a range of issues related to working with young people in a variety of sporting situations. They are confident when organising young people and explain and demonstrate well the activities and tasks that they set for them. Higher attainers have good organisational skills, good strategic use of resources and perform well both as leaders and as members of a team. Occasionally, they do not achieve well because the work is not demanding enough. Lower attainers are less thorough in their preparation work and lack confidence when leading and instructing young people. Overall, students do not have enough opportunity to apply their ICT skills when presenting pieces of work or materials for use with young people. The number of students following the community sports leadership award course has reduced significantly.
182. Teaching is generally good. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations and there is a good pace in lessons. They ensure that students understand the objectives of the lesson so that they know what they are expected to learn. Students have a responsible attitude to their work and are enthusiastic about sport. Most students express themselves clearly in conversation and discussions; for example, when discussing the health and safety requirements when planning a tournament for Year 7 students. They take every opportunity to develop their own personal performance through attendance at optional sixth form physical education lessons, attending extra-curricular activities and through their membership of local clubs.
183. Leadership and management are good. The head of physical education department manages the course and two other physical education teachers teach the lessons. Students gain selection for school and representative teams. This contributes well to developing students' confidence and skills in their chosen activities.

### Leisure and Tourism

Overall, the quality of provision in leisure and tourism is **satisfactory**.

#### Strengths

- Teachers have very good relationships with students, who have good attitudes to learning.
- Students gain good knowledge of leisure and tourism from visits and work placements.
- Students are encouraged to work independently.

#### Areas for improvement

- Students do not apply their ICT skills enough in lessons.
- Lessons do not provide enough challenge or variety.

184. Leisure and tourism is currently available at GCSE (Year 10), GNVQ Part One (Year 11) and GNVQ intermediate (Year 12). There are currently no advanced (AVCE) courses.
185. A shortage of teachers and students' low entry standards led to very poor results in the Intermediate course in 2002. Nevertheless, the majority of students benefited much from the GNVQ course: two students went on to AS level business courses, and three gained modern apprenticeships.
186. Students are making satisfactory progress. They are likely to attain below average results but in line with teacher's expectations and their initial GCSE grades. Because of the teacher's good subject knowledge, students show a good awareness of the impact of recent world events on tourism and understand how tourist attractions need to appeal to particular groups of people. Students use the web effectively in the library to independently research chosen tourist destinations and get good individual guidance. Overall, achievement of girls and boys is satisfactory.
187. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and have several good features. The subject teacher, an experienced deputy head, has a very good relationship with his students. At this early stage of the course, their skills of choosing their own way of working were limited but they are encouraged to work independently and in groups. This has helped them to develop good attitudes and an interest in their work. Brief group presentations of tourist destinations in a lesson worked well and enhanced students' understanding of the main issues involved in this topic. However, teaching methods lack variety; most consist of teacher-led discussion that does not always fully engage students. In one lesson, an analysis of statistics related to tourism was too hard for students to understand. While lesson plans are appropriate, opportunities for students to develop written work by drafting ideas from paired or group work are too infrequent. The use of ICT is not planned to analyse data or produce graphs of trends in the leisure industry. The room used for leisure and tourism has only recently been decorated and lacks display boards, study materials and computers, and this affects the quality of learning. Higher attaining students make good use of their own experience in work placements or from family holidays to broaden their understanding.
188. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily overall but attainment in the past few years has been adversely affected by a lack of suitably qualified staff. The newly appointed staff team's plans for raising achievement are sound. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and the subject has a good capacity for further improvement.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

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

#### Strengths

- Fieldwork enhances students' knowledge and understanding.
- Students have a very positive attitude and a desire to succeed.
- Staff-student relationships are good.

#### Areas for improvement

- Students' achievement is unsatisfactory.
- There are too few opportunities for students to apply their ICT skills.
- Students' research and independent learning skills are below average.
- Staffing is inadequate.

189. An A level GCE course was introduced in 2001, with the first candidates entering the AS examinations in 2002. Of the nine candidates entered, six gained a pass but none of these was in the higher grades A or B. Five students continue for the A level course. Twelve students have embarked on the AS course this year.
190. According to inspection findings, attainment is below average in the topics of physical environment, environmental and social issues and in an independent investigation of a geographical topic such as tourism in a region of Great Britain. Overall, students make unsatisfactory progress because their research and independent learning skills are not well developed.
191. The students have a very positive attitude to the subject and speak highly of the advantages which the subject contributes to their personal development. They acknowledge the benefits derived from fieldwork and its contribution to social development as well as preparation for community involvement in shaping their environment. In most lessons they show a mature approach to their work and make determined efforts to complete their tasks. Students have a positive attitude to the subject and express satisfaction with the opportunities offered.
192. Teaching is satisfactory. Relationships are generally good and create a good environment for learning. However, there are a number of weaknesses. Some lessons are over structured and do not allow time for students to enhance their understanding through discussion. The course is well planned but in many instances the tasks are not sufficiently challenging. There is a tendency to overteach rather than to provide guidance for independent learning. Not enough use is made of computers in class because provision in the department is inadequate.
193. The management of the sixth form is unsatisfactory. Only two of the four members of the teaching staff are trained geographers and have limited experience of teaching the course. General teaching commitments do not allow enough time to devote to the demands of A level teaching. Recruitment and retention of students is below average.

## History

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

#### Strengths

- Teaching is very well planned and reflects both strength of teachers' subject knowledge and an excellent understanding of the way students learn.
- The subject is well led and managed.

#### Areas for Improvement

- The planned provision of external visits and university links
- Students are not making enough use of ICT because resources are insufficient.

194. In 2001, results were below the national average but students achieved well in history when their results were compared with their previous GCSE grades. All students achieved grades at AS level. Results in 2002 were again good, with all students achieving a grade at both A and AS level and, as in 2001, students achieved well when compared with their prior attainment and when compared with other subjects offered by the school. All students who started sixth form courses completed them satisfactorily in 2002.

195. Students make good progress in lessons. Much of this progress is a consequence of the structured teaching style adopted by the department. Careful evaluation of class and homework helps students to focus on individual weaknesses. The exceptionally high level of support provided by teachers enables students to acquire confidence in extended writing and to look critically at evidence in order to challenge the assumptions implied in historical interpretation. In lessons and work seen, students displayed skills of analysis, interpretation and synthesis. They have good knowledge of the topics studied and show understanding and a sense of historical enquiry. Students demonstrate respect for their teachers and listen well in class. Teachers make every effort to engage students in class discussions, but many still lack confidence in articulating their views and require prompting before entering a debate.
196. Teaching is very good. Teachers are confident in their subject expertise and perceptive in their approach. They select a range of well-structured learning tasks to challenge students. Learning objectives are clearly stated at the beginning of lessons and assessed in plenary reviews. Teaching is very tightly planned so that students confront issues surrounding evidence and the significance of historical controversies in a progressive manner. Through skilful questioning and interventions, teachers check on individual learning during lessons and reinforce basic skills, such as note taking. Students respond well to this approach, making good increases in the range of their knowledge and the depth of their understanding. Discussion with students indicates that they appreciate that they are being well taught and feel secure in the requirements of the course. They are aware of their present levels of achievement and their targets for improvement. There is evidence that students are reading to support their historical understanding and that they are making reference to the views of different historians.
197. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Sixth form teachers work together closely and have a coherent style. Departmental learning resources are good. Library resources are satisfactory. However, there is limited access to ICT in lesson time, owing to the lack of workstations in the history teaching rooms. Opportunities are lost to promote the subject and enhance understanding as external visits and university links are largely overlooked. In other respects, the head of department has a very clear view of the priorities for the subject and is strongly committed to the further improvement of the standards established in recent years.

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

198. The inspection focus was on English and French. GCSE English re-sit course was sampled and, overall, students improve their grade. The Spanish F.L.A.W (Foreign Languages At Work) course was sampled and students achieve well.

### English

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

#### Strengths

- Teachers know their subject very well and help students to achieve well.
- Marking is thorough and students receive helpful feedback.
- Students have positive attitudes.

#### Areas for improvement

- Developing wide reading.
- Skills in independent learning and critical thinking.

199. The inspection covered the A level and AS level courses in English literature offered by the school. Over the three years, A level results have varied from average to below average. Results of GCE examinations in 2001 were below the national average whereas in 2000 the average points score was average. The 2002 results showed an overall improvement, with more students gaining a grade B. Girls have consistently performed better than boys. However, no student has gained

the higher grade over the last three years. Six students completed the AS level course in 2001 with half gaining B and C grades and the rest D or E grades. In 2002, the AS results showed a significant improvement on the previous year. Over the last two years, there has been a consistent 100 per cent pass rate in the AS level examination. The number of students opting for the courses, though small, is rising and results are also improving each year. Given, students' prior GCSE grades, their achievement is better than expected and the high attaining students achieve well.

200. Work seen during the inspection confirms the above results. In English literature, attainments in speaking and listening are satisfactory for the middle and lower attaining students but good for the higher attaining students. Whereas higher attaining students, mainly girls, readily engage in discussion and use skills of debate and analysis, most are mainly passive recipients rarely contributing to discussions. As a result, discussion is muted, but by Year 13 they use group work constructively to share and develop their ideas. Students are encouraged to read widely but most are not well informed, as they do not read beyond the literary texts they are studying. This stifles debate and independent critical thought particularly in Year 12 when students are still adjusting to the transition from Year 11. By Year 13, there is a significant improvement in textual grasp and appreciation. They use critical terms and concepts to demonstrate their awareness of the subtlety of language. They structure their essays well, but there are weaknesses in punctuation, spelling and the quality of expression in the work of Year 12 students.
201. The teaching of A level English is satisfactory and occasionally good. Teachers know their subject very well and reinforce the use and application of background materials to broaden students' understanding of literary texts. They encourage enquiry and push students to pursue their own private studies, as demonstrated in lessons where they discussed the cultural and historical information influencing Walker's 'The Colour Purple' and Shakespeare's 'Antony and Cleopatra'. Good use is made of direct questioning to reinforce learning; however, students do not always engage with their teachers and as a result, teachers have to work very hard to develop their contributions. Teachers use the seminar and group approach well to develop students' interpretation of texts and this encourages them to take responsibility for their learning. Teachers use the time well to reinforce language skills and review basic information particularly in the re-sit GCSE and Year 12 AS-lessons.
202. Students work well together and Year 13 show more awareness of taking responsibility for their work than in Year 12. They share their teacher's enthusiasm for the subject and are attracted to the course because they find it 'thought provoking'. Discussion with students indicates that they value their teachers' support and the detailed marking, which helps them to improve their work. However, they are unaware of their target grade. Although interested in the courses, there is little evidence that students are reading widely, making detailed notes from their research or making reference to the views of literary critics.
203. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Resources are sufficient and staff have access to professional development training for the courses. Courses are reviewed to ensure that the most appropriate is chosen for students. However, there are shortcomings in the provision. There is not an enrichment or induction programme, development planning does not reflect the department's intention for the sixth form and the assessment procedures are not used to set targets for students.

## French

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

### Strengths

- The number of students choosing French in Year 12 is increasing.
- Good teaching enhances students' learning.
- Good progress is made by students in Year 12.

Areas for development

- Improve the quality of advice and guidance given to students at the start of the course.
- Improve the schemes of work.
- Improve the monitoring of students' progress.

204. The numbers of students entering A level examinations over the past few years has been very low and there are no students in Year 13. Standards in Year 12 are below average. There is a wide range of ability in the group, to judge from their attainment in GCSE examinations. All are finding the transition to A level work difficult but most are making good progress with the exception of those students whose attendance at lessons has been poor. At the start of the course students have limited ability to manipulate language. They find it difficult to use verbs accurately and they make basic mistakes. They do not have an adequate grasp of the structure of French sentences and do not use dictionaries well. However, by the time of the inspection they were beginning to master the main tenses of verbs, through sustained practice, and were developing a structured approach to building language by learning, for example, how to use verbs with a following infinitive. They find extended speech difficult and lack oral confidence but they respond well in structured oral exercises, which result in increasing self-confidence, and they are beginning to express, and in some cases, to justify opinions. They also benefit from

regular oral practice with the French assistant. Students respond well in lessons. They do not have the confidence to take the initiative but they are capable of sustained intellectual effort in lessons. They take part willingly, often with enthusiasm.

205. Learning and teaching are good. Teachers have high expectations of students. Lessons are always conducted at a brisk pace and the level of work is challenging. Teachers know the students well and achieve a good balance between work that challenges students and develops their skills, on the one hand, and support that maintains their motivation and commitment, on the other. Teachers use French almost exclusively in lessons so that students develop good listening skills. Expectations in terms of use of French by students are, however, inconsistent. Students learn well because lessons are well planned to build self-confidence as well as skills. In one lesson, for example, which aimed to improve oral skills, students had prepared their responses for homework. The teacher had prepared a structured exercise which was designed to increase the level of challenge from the communication of basic information to the expression and justification of opinions. As a result of good planning students were able to express themselves with confidence and to deepen the quality of their responses. Teachers ensure good concentration and commitment by students by using a variety of strategies designed to maximize students' involvement. Students make good progress because teachers have clear objectives which are allowing students to bridge the gap between GCSE and A-level work.

206. Leadership and management in the subject are good. There are clear long-term objectives for the development of languages. The introduction of the F.L.A.W. course in Spanish is evidence of a desire to widen the scope of languages in the sixth form. Numbers of students in the sixth form are increasing because students have a successful experience of language learning in the main school. There is good co-ordination between the two teachers of French in the sixth form. Schemes of work indicate good overall planning but need to be more detailed if they are to help teachers achieve consistency. Teachers support students well but need to develop more rigorous systems for monitoring student progress based on clear targets for improvement. There needs to be better co-ordination between the management of the sixth form and the department over advice and guidance for students at the start of the course. Some students in Year 12 do not fulfill the department's entry criteria. The quality of guidance is often inadequate. There is little discussion, for example, about students' prospects of success in the A/S and A-level examination. The result is that some students who achieved lower grades in the CCSE examination are already showing poor commitment to the A-level course.