

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FALLIBROOME HIGH SCHOOL**

Upton, Macclesfield

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111464

Headteacher: Mr P W Rubery

Reporting inspector: Dr Kenneth C Thomas  
3390

Dates of inspection: 18 - 21 November 2002

Inspection number: 249585

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 11 to 18 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Priory Lane  
Upton  
Macclesfield

Postcode: SK10 4AF

Telephone number: 01625 827898

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr R D Hipperson

Date of previous inspection: 22 September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities (sixth form)	Aspect responsibilities (sixth form)
3390	Kenneth Thomas	Registered inspector		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?
19343	Marion Howel	Lay inspector		How high are standards? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19399	Linda Aspland	Team inspector	Art	
20119	Tony Bell	Team inspector		
10905	Alan Brewerton	Team inspector	Chemistry Physics	
11746	Robin Coulthard	Team inspector	Music	
11838	Derek Cronin	Team inspector	French	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
19414	Janet Flisher	Team inspector	English Theatre studies	
15051	Lynne Kauffman	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology	
28101	Andrew Lagden	Team inspector	Business studies	
11548	David Lee	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well does the school care for its students?
12121	Jack Mallinson	Team inspector		
19152	Richard Merryfield	Team inspector	History Sociology	
21866	David Tracey	Team inspector		

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Fallibroome High School is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive school with roughly equal numbers of boys and girls. The school is larger than other secondary schools and the number of pupils (1427) has risen by almost 30 per cent since the last inspection. With the exception of Year 11, which is slightly smaller than other year groups, there is a broadly equal distribution of pupils across Years 7 to 11. The sixth form (263 students) is larger than other sixth forms and has risen by about 40 per cent since the last inspection. Females outnumber males in the sixth form by about 13 per cent. The school provides for pupils across the full attainment range. Attainment on entry has risen over the past four years and is now well above average, overall. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, at five per cent is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with statements (1.5 per cent). Many of the pupils with the highest level of need have physical difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties or specific learning difficulties (dyslexia). Less than two per cent of pupils have other than white United Kingdom backgrounds. These pupils have mainly Asian British or Black British backgrounds. Very few pupils are from homes where English is an additional language and there are none in the early stages of learning English.

The school community is very similar to the time of the last inspection. Pupils are drawn from over 30 primary schools and almost all enter the school at the usual time of first admission. The economic groups represented in the school are drawn from a wide spectrum as reflected by the range of housing in the catchment area. About 22 per cent of teachers either joined or left the school in the last two years. This reflects the increasing size of the school and difficulties in teacher recruitment in the area. The school is in the process of making bids for Arts College status and Training School status. It is designated a lead school in a National College Networked Learning Community project and in Cheshire LEAs inclusive education project.

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

This is an excellent school. Good teaching is promoting good achievement and standards that are well above average in National Curriculum tests and high in the GCSE examination. The leadership and management team of the school is highly effective, and very well supported by the governing body. They have successfully created a stimulating atmosphere for learning and one in which relationships are very good. The accommodation is well used to provide a purposeful environment in which to learn, although there are some significant deficiencies. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Students achieve well: results in tests and examinations are outstanding.
- Good teaching makes challenging demands on students and leads to good learning.
- Students' attitudes are very good: they are keen to learn and contribute well to the sense of community in the school.
- The curriculum is enhanced by strong links with primary schools and the wider community.
- Visionary leadership ensures that students are provided with a high quality education in a stimulating learning environment.
- Students' personal development is enhanced by very good support and guidance and a very good range of extra-curricular activities.

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

- Standards and the quality and range of opportunities provided in boys' physical education.
- The accommodation.

*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 1997, and has made good progress since that time. There is now more very good teaching, indicating the beneficial impact of monitoring, evaluation and

professional development on raising its quality. As a result, students' attainment at all ages has improved above the national rate and at levels that have been consistently well above national averages. The school made a vigorous response to the key issues of 1997. All National Curriculum requirements are met in Years 10 and 11 with regard to design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT) and modern foreign languages. The exchange of curricular information with the primary schools has been improved to the extent that it is now one of the many strengths of the school. The teaching week has been extended and all subjects in Years 7 to 11 now have enough teaching time. Enough time is also allocated to religious education in the sixth form. Support for pupils' spiritual development is now very good and support for their cultural development is now good. However, the school is still unable to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. Governors have taken the decision that curriculum provision in the sixth form will consist of Advanced Supplementary (AS) and Advanced level (A-level) courses, to complement the range of vocational courses offered by other post-16 providers in the area. This decision receives the strong support of parents. The school ethos is one in which both students and staff are enthusiastic learners. This gives the school exceptional capacity for continued improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 and sixth form students at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations. As A-level national comparative information was not available at the time of the inspection, the comparative grades are shown in brackets and refer to the three years from 1999 – 2001.

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

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

*\*National comparison data for AS/A level results in 2002 are not yet available*

From entry to the school in Year 7, girls and boys of all social groups and academic potential make very good progress and achieve well. In the National Curriculum tests, they have consistently attained well above average standards in the three subjects tested, English, mathematics and science, in comparison with all schools and with similar schools. This was the result in 2002.

Achievement is very good through Years 10 and 11 and this is reflected in the results of GCSE examinations taken at the end of Year 11. Students regularly attain standards that are well above the average of all schools and of similar schools. In 2002, students attained well above average standards in the attainment of five or more grades A\* to C. Almost all attain at least five or more grades A\* to G and the GCSE average point score, which reflects attainment across the whole grade range, places the school in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Girls attain higher standards than boys, the difference in results being close to that observed nationally. The rate of improvement in boys' and girls' performance over the past three years was about the same. Students with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds make good progress and achieve well. The 2002 results were above or well above average in almost all subjects. Results in German were close to average.

Inspection evidence shows the standards of work of students presently in Years 7 to 11 to be well above average and consistent with the results obtained in external tests and examinations.

In the sixth form, students attain well above average standards and this is seen in the results of the A-level examinations. In 2001, as in all recent years, these were well above average, with the female students' results being in the highest five per cent nationally. Students of all attainment levels achieve well and results are generally above those predicted on entry to the sixth form. In 2001, results were



well above average in biology, chemistry, ICT, English language and literature, French, design and technology, and mathematics. There was a rise in almost all subjects in the percentage of students achieving the highest A or B grades in 2002 compared with 2001, and results in the few subjects where there was no rise in this percentage remained above average. Year 12 students achieved well in AS level examinations in 2001. Almost all passed the examination and nearly half gained grades A or B. Students were able to continue to study at A-level with confidence.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Students' attitudes to learning are very good. They are keen to learn and participate well in extra-curricular activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Students are helpful and considerate to others. There are few instances of inappropriate behaviour and exclusions are well below average for a school of this size.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Students develop a very good capacity to work independently, take initiative and show responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance is very good in comparison with national averages.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good and much is of very good quality in Years 7 to 11. In the sixth form, it is very good, overall, with a significant proportion of lessons that are excellent. The school provides very well for the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the few from ethnic minority backgrounds. It ensures that students learn successfully and achieve well. The teaching of mathematics and science is good and that of English is very good. Literacy and numeracy are well taught with appropriate emphasis in all subjects. Teachers expect students to achieve their best and they do so, by responding very well to the good teaching, and much very good teaching, that they receive. Teachers manage their classes very well with the help of the respect that arises from very positive relationships. However, weaknesses in class management contributed to unsatisfactory teaching in one science and one boys' physical education lesson. Students learn successfully by working hard, concentrating in class and consulting their teachers freely when they need help.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Students have good choice of subjects at all ages. The range of extra-curricular opportunities is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Effective support enables students to achieve well. Support for students with physical disabilities is very good.
Provision for pupils with	The very few pupils with English as an additional language have no

English as an additional language	language difficulties that require additional support.
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Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Opportunities for spiritual, moral and social development are very good, and for cultural development they are good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is very caring. The rigorous use of assessment helps to ensure that students of all ages and backgrounds are well supported to achieve their best.

The school provides a good range of subjects for its students and they achieve well. Curriculum provision is enhanced by access to a very good range of resources. Particularly effective use is made of assessment information to identify students in need of additional support. The wide range of extra-curricular activities enriches students' educational experiences and increases their achievement opportunities. The school is beginning to examine ways of extending the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 to provide alternative programmes for students not well suited to GCSE courses. Curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs and in particular those with physical disabilities is good. They receive good support and achieve well. Despite the best efforts of governors and senior managers the school is unable to comply with the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, with very good support from the senior leadership team, provides a clear vision for the future development of the school. Together they manage the school very well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very effective. Governors work closely with the school. They ensure there is a clear sense of direction and that there is a climate in which all can achieve.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school applies rigorous systems to evaluate its performance. As a result senior managers and governors have an excellent picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. All results are carefully analysed and used to set targets for further improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used very well. The school seeks best value when making spending decisions and the educational outcomes of such decisions are evaluated.

Leadership of the school is highly effective and staff at all levels have a strong commitment to the school and its pupils. Rigorous monitoring of the school's work has brought about sustained improvement since the last inspection. The school is developing well as a self-evaluating organization and the enthusiasm of both staff and students for learning make this a lively learning community. Governors and senior managers have a clear grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Financial planning is very good. External grants and other resources are used efficiently and best value principles are applied to all spending. The accommodation is only just sufficient for the number of pupils. The school dining room and some teaching rooms are too small for the number of students they accommodate. Accommodation for outdoor physical education is poor. Although the school makes very good use of the library, it is too small for a school of this size.

## 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>• Expectations are high.</li><li>• Their children are making good progress.</li><li>• Good school leadership and management.</li><li>• The ease with which they can approach the school.</li><li>• The good teaching.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The closeness with which the school works with parents.</li><li>• The information the school provides.</li><li>• Homework.</li></ul>

Parents are very supportive of the school and inspectors fully agree with parents' positive views. They do not agree with the criticisms of some parents. Information on students' progress is sufficiently provided in informative reports and parents' evenings. The school works well with parents, and responds readily to their concerns. During the inspection, homework was set regularly and was usually interesting and challenging so that students could extend their learning well.

## ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM

## FALLIBROOME HIGH SCHOOL

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form comprises 263 students. It is larger than most other sixth forms and the number of students has increased since 1997. There are slightly more female than male students on roll. A few students claim eligibility for free school meals. The proportion of students who choose to continue into the sixth form at age 16 is above average and increasing numbers of students are joining the sixth form from other schools. Students are offered an extensive range of 21 Advanced Supplementary (AS) and Advanced level (A-level) courses. They are admitted to advanced courses when they have attained five or more GCSE grades at A\* to C, and are normally expected to have achieved a B grade in their chosen subjects. For students with a strong interest in vocational courses provision is available in other post-16 education providers in the area.

### HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

This is a highly effective sixth form. Students achieve very good examination results, well above national averages. The sixth form is very popular and the proportion of students staying on from Year 11 has increased from year to year. The retention rate at the end of Year 12 is high. Many students gain the qualifications necessary to continue into higher education, including the most prominent universities. The quality of teaching is very good and often excellent. Students with special learning needs are well integrated into the sixth form and receive considerable support from their peers. The leadership and management of the sixth form by the head of sixth together with the two assistant sixth form managers are outstanding. Good progress has been made in sixth form provision since the last inspection. Taking into account the costs and standards achieved the sixth form provides good value for money.

#### Strengths

- Very good teaching is supported by excellent subject knowledge, which enables students to make very good progress.
- Students display maturity in their behaviour and excellent attitudes towards learning.
- The very good match of courses to the interests and aspirations of students leads to a very high retention rate.
- Outstanding leadership provides clear direction and stimulates much innovation in teaching and learning.
- An excellent range of extra-curricular activities provides very good support for students' personal development.
- The excellent use of assessment information provides students with clear guidance on the standards they are achieving and targets for improvement.

#### What could be improved

- Access to and use of ICT to support teaching and learning.
- The accommodation.

*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>Very good.</b> Results are above national averages. Teaching is very good

	because teachers use their excellent subject knowledge and experience effectively to motivate students to learn and achieve well.
<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Overall judgement about provision, with comment</b>
Chemistry	<b>Very good.</b> Examination results are well above average. Teaching and learning are both very good and enable students to achieve well. The provision of computers for use as teaching and learning tools is unsatisfactory.
Physics	<b>Good.</b> Results are above average. Teaching and learning are good, and enable students to make good progress. There are not enough opportunities for independent research and learning. The provision of computers for use as teaching and learning tools is unsatisfactory.
Design and technology	<b>Excellent.</b> Results are well above national average. Lively teaching and learning plus a rigorous approach to designing inspires creativity that results in excellent outcomes from confident designers.
Business	<b>Good.</b> Results are above the national average. Teaching is good, using resources, business links and up-to-date materials. Students show very good attitudes and are very positive about the subject.
ICT	<b>Very good.</b> Results in ICT are above average. Highly motivated teaching and learning strategies strengthen competence and capability. Students can apply their ICT skills to a wide range of problem solving relevant to their futures in a technological society.
Art and Design	<b>Good.</b> Results are above the national average. Good teaching encourages creativity, experimentation and the use of varied and exciting materials. Students respond to the well-planned topics with enthusiasm. They are very positive about the subject and the extra curricular opportunities provided to complement the course.
Music	<b>Excellent.</b> Results are above average. Teaching is excellent and enables students to achieve very highly in relation to their starting points. Leadership and management are excellent, and the wide range of extra-curricular provision enables students to develop their varied cultural interests to a very high level.
Theatre Studies	<b>Excellent.</b> Excellent teaching, which is energetic, well informed and enthusiastic, enables students to achieve very high standards. The curriculum is extended and enriched by an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities.
History	<b>Good.</b> Results have fluctuated over recent years and, although well below average for boys and overall in 2001, improved substantially in 2002. Students respond positively to good teaching and are well supported in their learning.
Sociology	<b>Very good.</b> Results have fluctuated over recent years. Although the 2001 results were average the proportion of students attaining higher grades was well below. However, results improved significantly in 2002 in response to curriculum changes and very good teaching and learning strategies.
English Language	<b>Very good.</b> Results in 2001 were well above average. Students achieve very well as a result of very good teaching based on teachers' excellent

	subject knowledge and their real enthusiasm for the subject.
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French	<b>Very good.</b> Results were above average in 2001, and improved further in 2002. Standards seen in lessons and other work are well above average. Students have very positive attitudes. They work hard and achieve very well in response to very good, imaginative teaching.
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Standards in biology, media studies, psychology, general studies, Spanish and English literature are all well above average. Standards in German are above average.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	The school provides very good care and support for students. Staff know students well as individuals and relationships are very good. Students receive very good guidance in relation to their academic progress and advice on university entrance is excellent.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The sixth form is exceptionally well managed. The model of leadership provides a framework within which the leadership potential of all staff can be realized. Effective use is made of assessment information to set targets and monitor students' performance. The strategic direction of the sixth form is clear and shared by staff, students, parents, governors and the local community.

### 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 choice of courses.</li> <li>• They are taught well and challenged to do their best.</li> <li>• Teachers are accessible to help if they have difficulties.</li> <li>• They enjoy being in the sixth form.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice on what to do in the sixth form.</li> <li>• Information about their progress.</li> <li>• Advice on what to do after they leave school.</li> <li>• Help from the school if they have personal problems.</li> </ul>

Inspectors support the positive views expressed by the students. The vast majority of the students are very positive about the sixth form. The inspection team could find little evidence to support students' opinion that the advice and guidance they receive prior to entry into the sixth and in respect of opportunities after they leave the sixth form, were insufficient. Indeed, students interviewed during the week strongly contradicted these opinions. Students and parents are provided with detailed information on the opportunities the sixth form offers through the prospectus and consultation process. In the opinion of the inspectors, careers education and guidance is excellent. The arrangements for personal support and guidance of students through the tutorial system, and their access to the head and assistant heads, is a strength of this impressive sixth form.

### COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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



## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Students achieve well: results in tests and examinations are outstanding**

1. National Curriculum tests taken in the last year of primary education, at the end of Year 6, show that students enter in Year 7 with standards of attainment that, although wide ranging, are well above average overall. Students achieve very well at Fallibroome School and results in National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 in English, mathematics and science have not only been consistently well above average since the last inspection, but also rising at a faster rate than results nationally. The school has been notably successful in promoting high attainment amongst boys and the performance of boys and girls is very similar. This is in contrast to the national picture, which shows that girls achieve better results than boys. Boys in the school attain results in the National Curriculum tests that are better than those achieved nationally by either boys or girls. Attainment at the end of Year 9 in all other National Curriculum subjects is well above average, with little difference in most in the performance of boys and girls. Teacher assessments show that although both groups are well above average, girls achieve slightly higher standards than boys in modern foreign languages. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in boys' physical education are not as high as indicated by teachers' assessments and standards are closer to average rather than well above.
2. Standards are very high at the end of Year 11 and the school is remarkably successful in the GCSE examination. Not only have results in the tests been consistently well above average in comparison with all schools, but also in comparison with the performance of similar schools (those schools with students of similar social and economic backgrounds). The maintenance of such impressive standards is very difficult to accomplish, but the trend in results has still been rising faster than the national rate of improvement, yet at a much higher level. In 2002, the GCSE average point score places the school within the top five per cent of schools nationally and well above average in comparison with similar schools. Comparison of the results obtained by these students with the results they obtained in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2000 shows that achievement was well above expectations.
3. GCSE examination results are well above national averages in all subjects. In 2002, particularly notable success was gained in English, science, design and technology, drama, statistics and child development. Letters of commendation from the examining board for achieving results that put them in the top five in the country were received by three physical education students, two child development students and one geography student. Any differences between the performance of boys and girls overall are similar to those observed nationally. However, the school has identified the underperformance of boys in art and physical education as areas for improvement.
4. Achievement in lessons is good and students attain standards that are well above average in almost all subjects. These standards are underpinned by good standards of literacy and numeracy and strengthened by close links with the primary schools. The majority of students enter the school with a good basic knowledge of language and close contact with the primary schools ensures that there is good continuity in the development of students' basic skills. The development of literacy skills is given a high profile in all subjects and the standards of work seen show that standards are well above average. Students have very good oral skills and communicate their viewpoints clearly. They are confident speakers and listen carefully during question and answer sessions, group work and discussion. Throughout Years 7 to 11, students make good use of collaborative work to extend their oral skills. They are curious about their work and ask many questions to clarify their understanding and ideas.
5. Reading and comprehension skills are well above average and students read and interpret texts accurately and with understanding. By Year 11, students are able to apply high order reading skills in order to carry out research and investigation, in for example, English, science,

geography, history and design and technology. Standards of written work are very good and

writing is used for a variety of purposes in most subjects. Good examples of creative writing are seen in science and design and technology, and students make written evaluations in art, child development and food technology.

6. Work in the mathematics department lays the foundation for the development of students' number skills, which are well above average. Students have very good mathematical data-handling skills and very good number and calculation skills. They are able to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects. The regular practice of mental arithmetic skills in mathematics lessons helps students to work more efficiently when solving problems. Most students are competent users of calculators and ICT.
7. Standards are well above average because the school has established a culture within which success is valued and students of all abilities are willing to work hard to succeed. Parents comment favourably on the way in which students, and boys in particular, are not afraid to be seen to be working hard. All school planning is sharply focused on continued improvement and this is underpinned by the enthusiasm of teachers to learn from and share ideas with others. Teachers are keen to engage in professional debate about learning and to implement strategies that promote more effective learning. This is seen, for example, in the way in which aspects of the National Key Stage 3 strategy are being implemented successfully in Years 10 and 11. Learning objectives and their relevance are made clear to students who are enthusiastic to contribute to lessons as a result. Students' achievement is also promoted through the wide range of additional activities provided in subjects. The wide range of clubs and societies provide extra breadth and depth to students' learning experiences.
8. Student achievement is also promoted through the strategies the school has established to identify and prevent underachievement. Effective assessment and monitoring systems enable students who may be experiencing difficulties to be identified and additional support provided. Additional support is also available to students through self-referral if they feel they are slipping behind. These systems underpin the very good progress students are making. Students with special educational needs and in particular those with physical disabilities, achieve well because of the very good support they receive. Because support is carefully planned to take account of individual needs their achievement is comparable to that of their peers. The very few students with English as an additional language have no language difficulties that require additional support. Their achievement is also comparable to that of their peers.

### **Good teaching makes challenging demands on students and leads to good learning.**

9. One of the features of the school is the amount of thought that is given to teaching and learning. Teachers are keen to explore, share and implement new ideas. As a result the predominantly good teaching noted in the last inspection report has improved even further, and there is more good, very good and excellent teaching. Teaching is good in Years 7 to 11 and very good in the sixth form.
10. In Years 7 to 11 teaching is satisfactory or better in almost all lessons. It is good or better in 92 per cent of lessons and very good in 35 per cent of lessons. Teaching was judged to be excellent in three per cent of lessons. The quality of students' learning reflects the good quality of teaching and this is directly linked to their good achievement at the end of Years 9 and 11. The school is successful in meeting students' needs, including those with special educational needs and those from different ethnic backgrounds. The school is particularly successful in meeting the needs of students with physical disabilities.
11. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subjects, which underpins confident teaching. The very good use of display in specialist classrooms also reflects the expertise of teachers and helps

to create stimulating learning environments for students. Teachers' high expectations and good control and management skills, help to create purposeful learning atmospheres in lessons. The sharing of good practice and willingness to implement different teaching methods are also leading to more varied and challenging teaching and having a positive effect on students' learning. Students respond well to these environments and the very good relationships provide students with the confidence to contribute with enthusiasm to lesson activities. This can be seen in the best lessons in the consistency with which teachers challenge students to think. These lessons generally begin with rapid questioning to review previous learning, which captures students' interest and stimulates thoughtful responses. This was, for example, one of the features of the excellent teaching observed in a Year 9 and Year 10 English lesson. Students are also challenged to think at the start of mathematics lessons by the use of mental arithmetic exercises. The impact of the National Key Stage 3 strategy can be seen in lessons throughout Years 7 to 11. Teachers provide clear explanations of learning objectives at the start of lessons and, in order to consolidate learning, review the progress made at the end. This practice helps students both to structure their learning in lessons and to place this learning within their developing knowledge and understanding of the subject as a whole. These are consistent features in the good and very good teaching observed in almost all subjects. Only in boys' physical education is teaching not consistently at this level.

12. Teachers use a good range of strategies to enable students to learn and develop skills. Through paired and small-group work students develop the confidence to discuss issues and participate actively in the process of learning. Very few lessons were seen in which students were not actively engaged in learning. The very effective use of a variety of teaching and learning strategies in history, for example, helps to maintain students' interest and motivation. This was seen in a Year 9 lesson where students gained a greater understanding of the 'triangular trade' through the effective use of video and group discussion. In a Year 9 girls' physical education lesson, students worked enthusiastically in small groups as they practised their netball passing and catching skills. Students work successfully in small groups when devising movement sequences in dance, when engaged in role-play in drama when developing their oral skills in modern foreign languages. Small-group work is used effectively in English, mathematics and geography to discuss and extend students' thinking and to undertake practical work in design and technology, and science.
13. Teachers use the learning resources that are available to them well. Although the library is too small for a school of this size, it is used very well. The library staff provide teachers with additional support for students and help them to find information and use it to extend their learning. Homework is used effectively to enable students to extend their learning. Homework is usually challenging and encourages students to work independently and gain further knowledge and understanding without direct supervision by the teacher.
14. Consistently good teaching is underpinned by a willingness to apply the principles of learning theory and an openness to new ideas. A great deal of thought is given to how students learn and lessons are structured accordingly. Students respond well because they understand the relevance of learning objectives and come to share their teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects. Learning is at the heart of this community and both teachers and students are willing learners.

**Students' attitudes are very good: they are keen to learn and contribute well to the sense of community in the school.**

15. Students' attitudes to learning are very good and make a significant contribution to their learning. In almost all lessons attitudes are good or better and in 60 per cent of lessons they are very good or excellent. In only two lessons were attitudes and behaviour unsatisfactory or poor. The school provides a supportive and mutually respectful working environment in which students are well motivated and enjoy being challenged. This is seen in mathematics and science, for example, where students enjoy the challenge of rapid starter activities at the beginning of lessons. Both students and parents are proud of Fallibroome School, and the very good attitudes of students make a significant contribution to the general life of the school. Students are keen to do well and concentrate on the tasks set. They listen attentively and assimilate new information and ideas

quickly. Students are keen to help each other in lessons and are considerate towards those with disabilities. They respond well to the enthusiasm of their teachers and are willing to check and improve their work, as in a Year 10 English lesson where students were preparing to write a story. Only in one science and one boys' physical education lesson did attitudes and behaviour not reach the usually very good standard, and in both instances this was related to weaknesses in class management.

16. Students work well in pairs and groups, collaborating effectively and responding well when given the opportunity to show initiative. They make considerable efforts to succeed and by the time they are in Years 10 and 11, they are developing well as mature learners. This was seen in a very good Year 10 music lesson, for example, where students demonstrated their ability to work effectively without close supervision by the teacher as they composed their own 12 bar melodies.
17. The very good climate for learning is due to several factors, and especially to teachers' high expectations and the very good relationships they establish. The very good relationships seen in most lessons provide students with the confidence to ask questions and enable teachers to concentrate on teaching. This was seen, for example, in a Year 8 Spanish lesson where the students' enthusiastic response to vibrant and challenging teaching led to very good progress in learning. Students have many opportunities, individually and in groups, to review evidence and identify key facts, for example in geography and history. Their discussions strengthen both their understanding of the subject, and also their language skills. Students are willing to help each other to solve problems. This was seen, for example, in a Year 10 mathematics lesson where the sharing of ideas helped students to increase their knowledge and understanding linear functions. Very good relationships also formed the basis of an effective Year 10 RESPECT (religious education, social and personal development and careers education) lesson, where students shared their understanding of Buddhism in a thoughtful and confident way.
18. The very good attitudes of students can also be seen in the way in which they respond to the school's high expectations of behaviour. These are clearly understood and behaviour is very good. Students are courteous, very helpful to visitors and show respect to each other and to their teachers. The school is an orderly community and conduct around the school is very good at lesson change-over times. This is particularly important when large numbers of students enter and leave the different teaching blocks at changeover times. The sensible behaviour of students helps to ensure safety at these times, particularly for students with physical disabilities. There is no evidence of any graffiti in the buildings and the main corridors remain litter free all day. Students queue patiently when waiting to enter the dining hall and when waiting to enter teaching rooms. Students respond well to the efforts made to support those with behaviour difficulties. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour, although rare, are dealt with effectively by staff. In the last year both fixed-period and permanent exclusions were well below average for a school of this size. Students interviewed during the week of the inspection reported that there were very few incidents of bullying and that the school had dealt with any incidents effectively. Senior staff dealt with one incident of verbal mockery observed during the inspection immediately and effectively. Students are confident that any future incidents would be dealt with equally effectively. Attendance is above average and because students are punctual at the start of morning and afternoon school, the majority of lessons start on time.

### **The curriculum is enhanced by strong links with primary schools and the wider community**

19. The school provides a good quality and range of learning opportunities. The quality of the school's curriculum has been recognised by successive Schools Council Curriculum Awards and the strength of provision in the performing arts is seen in the school's bid for specialist Arts College status. The school takes considerable care to ensure that learning experiences are available to meet the needs of all students. Girls and boys from all backgrounds and with differing levels of subject competence are provided with equal access to the learning experiences available. Students with special needs receive a curriculum that extends their learning well.

20. The curriculum builds on the school's excellent links with the primary schools. Members of the English and mathematics departments meet with teachers from the primary schools to ensure a smooth transition at the end of Year 6. These meetings facilitate the exchange of information, identified as a weakness at the time of the last inspection, and promote continuity in the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills. Links between the geography, music and physical education departments also ensure that schemes of work in Years 7 to 9 build on students' experiences in the primary schools. The school's recognition of the importance of links with the primary schools and the wider community is seen in the successful Networked Community bid to the National College for School Leadership. The project aims to establish strong working relationships between a network of five primary schools and another secondary school, initially to share the school's expertise in the performing arts but eventually to involve all curriculum areas.
21. Close links with the primary schools ensure the early identification and assessment of students with special educational needs. The aim of the school is for students with additional needs to be taught in mainstream classes wherever possible and have access to the full curriculum. For those who need individual or small-group teaching in order to improve basic skills, this is organised in a way least likely to cause disruption to learning and the curriculum. As a result students with special needs are fully integrated into all aspects of school life and have access to the same curriculum as their peers. The very good liaison with the primary schools means that the school is able to make appropriate provision for the needs of students with physical disabilities as soon as they arrive in school and this underpins the good progress they are making.
22. The school recognises the valuable contribution the community can make to students' learning and links with the community are very strong. Through an extensive network of contacts the school makes use of contributions from a very wide range of organisations in imaginative and innovative ways. These contributions enrich the curriculum and broaden students' social experience. For example, the RESPECT programme is enhanced by contributions from representatives of different faiths, Alcoholics Anonymous, the health service, the Drug Rehabilitation Unit, the police and local magistrates. The curriculum is enriched and made more relevant by extensive links with business and industry. Representatives from McDonalds have worked with Year 7 design and technology students on a product design project and have contributed to business awareness in Year 9. Representatives from a variety of other firms contribute to the careers education programme. In collaboration with the education link officer at Astra Zeneca, employees have visited the school to explain roles and responsibilities in a multi-national company. Visits are made to companies to look at production systems, employment conditions and systems for ensuring health and safety at work. Very good use is also made of the local community for fieldwork in geography and history. Students also benefit from the links established by the physical education department with numerous sporting clubs and societies in the Macclesfield and Manchester area.
23. Links with the community are particularly strong in the performing arts. Through these links the school not only makes use of but also contributes to the wider community. For example, the curriculum in music and drama is enriched by distinguished speakers from, for example, the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester, the Royal Court Theatre in London and the Royal Northern College of Music. Talks and workshops led by visitors such as these stir students' imagination and raise aspirations. Contributions are made to the community through, for example, performances by the school orchestra and choirs, street theatre performed in Macclesfield town centre by students in Years 8 and 9, and the performance of shows such as 'Bugsy Malone' in the local theatre. These and numerous other community related curriculum activities increase students awareness of the worthwhile contributions they can make to society and offer good preparation for responsible citizenship.

**Visionary leadership ensures that students are provided with a high quality education in a stimulating learning environment**

24. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and receives very good support from the senior leadership team. This finding is endorsed by 95 per cent of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Since taking up post in January 2002 the headteacher has established a model of leadership and style of management that encourages all staff to demonstrate their creative potential. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school as a model of excellence in teaching and learning. Staff share this vision and are enthused by the very good professional leadership the headteacher provides and the support they are given by the senior leadership team as they seek to realise this vision. Amongst the many strengths of the school is the openness to new ideas, the willingness to apply theory to practice and the readiness to go outside the school to observe examples of best practice, wherever these may be found. The school culture is one in which there is a clear and shared commitment to continuous learning and professional development. As a result the school has a strong positive atmosphere and provides a well-ordered and stimulating learning environment in which students' attitudes, attainment, behaviour and personal development are very good. Students are prepared well for life in contemporary multi-ethnic society.
25. All school improvement planning is very well organised, systematic and well focused on maintaining and improving standards through the continuous improvement of teaching and learning. Governors have high expectations and are conscientious in carrying out their responsibilities. There is a high level of involvement in strategic planning and financial management. They have a very good sense of best value in spending. This is seen not only in their application of best value principles in obtaining tenders for service contracts and goods, but also in their appreciation of the need to ensure that spending is linked to educational priorities and leads to benefits to students. The school is carrying forward a high budget surplus. However, a substantial proportion of this is committed to additional resources and improvements to the accommodation. When this money is spent the budget surplus will be in the range considered to be prudent. Except for the provision of a daily act of collective worship, statutory requirements are met. Governors are vigilant about health and safety and very good arrangements for child protection are in place. They work closely with the head teacher and senior staff and are committed to helping the school to do its best for the local community.
26. The school made a vigorous response to the previous inspection report and almost all of the weaknesses identified at that time have been tackled successfully. The senior leadership team has been restructured to now comprise one deputy and five assistant headteachers. All members of the senior leadership team have clear line management responsibilities for subject departments and meet with heads of department on a regular basis to review progress towards targets. Formal departmental reviews are well established and form part of the school's strategies for self-evaluation. The school's strategies for evaluating performance are excellent and underpin all improvement planning.
27. Substantial progress has been made over the past four years in the collection and use of assessment information. The assistant head with responsibility for assessment has established a comprehensive database and detailed analyses of assessment information are carried out. This information is used effectively both to monitor the progress of students and to evaluate teaching effectiveness. The information is presented to heads of departments who use it well in the planning of teaching and learning. Very good use is also made of the information to identify students who might be in danger of failing at an early stage and additional support provided. The use of assessment information in this way makes a significant contribution to students' achievement.
28. The importance the school places on the development of teaching and learning is reflected in the emphasis given to teaching and learning in the school's professional development activities. Developments in teaching and learning are being led effectively by an assistant headteacher and the school is rapidly developing a culture within which there are many examples of excellence. Embedded within this culture is the rigorous evaluation of test and examination performance and regular classroom observations. There is no complacency in this school even though standards are well above average and staff are keen to learn and apply principles and methods gained from other sources. Visits are made to other schools and staff have attended conferences and visited

schools in the United States and Australia to observe teaching techniques that accommodate different styles of learning. All of these activities are having a direct effect on the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom and the progress students are making.

### **Students' personal development is enhanced by very good support and guidance and a very good range of extra-curricular activities**

29. Provision for personal development and the care the school provides for students are important factors, not only in the academic success that students achieve but also in the very positive way in which they respond to what the school has to offer. The school is a caring institution, and concern for the care and support of students is central to its ethos. Continuity in care is a feature of the school pastoral system, which is based on the role of form tutors and year heads. Care and support for students begin at the time of transfer from primary school. Parents and students alike say that transfer arrangements are effective and that the school has very good induction procedures for students and their parents.
30. The great majority of students remain with the same tutor as they move up through the school. This extended contact enables tutors to develop a very good knowledge of individual students and their particular social and educational needs. Heads of year play an important role in ensuring continuity in care, and provide good support for form tutors. They meet regularly with the tutors to discuss and monitor individual students' academic and social progress. This knowledge underpins the school's provision for students' personal development, which is a strength of the school. Although the form tutor is the first point of contact with home, heads of year are also in close contact with parents when students need additional support. The 'School Journal and Homework Diary' is an effective means of harnessing the support of parents in the day-to-day monitoring of homework, effort and behaviour. As a consequence, all students are provided with very good support as they move through the school. The quality of this provision makes a significant contribution to students' progress and achievement. The school's very good links with the careers service, local employers, further and higher education ensure continuity at the time students leave school.
31. A particular strength of the school is the attention paid to the analysis of examination and test results. The system is based on the transfer of information from the primary schools. This information, supplemented by information obtained through the school's own initial assessment procedures, is used to predict National Curriculum levels at the end of Year 9 and to monitor each student's progress towards their targets. The same method is applied to Years 10 and 11, with effective use of YELLIS, a national data gathering and analysis system that provides reliable predictions about students' performance in the GCSE examination, to predict GCSE grades. There are careful procedures for assessing and monitoring students' progress, and students are left in no doubt about their levels of attainment and targets. This is particularly strong in the two years leading up to the GCSE examination. Form tutors and subject teachers are able to check with students how well they are doing and whether they are doing well enough. The value of this is that pastoral and curriculum teams work closely together to support students' progress. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting were particularly appreciative of the clarity of the information they are given about the progress their children are making.
32. Students are provided with many opportunities to develop self-confidence and self-esteem, and to show initiative. Students are able to contribute to the ongoing life of the school through their elected representatives on the School Council. The RESPECT programme helps to develop students' awareness of social issues such as teenage pregnancy, drug taking and alcoholism. The programme includes careers and work-related education, which is very good and benefits from the school's well-established links with careers advisers, local colleges, training providers and employers. This makes a significant contribution to students' social development. Many other issues of social consequence are covered across the curriculum. For example, the impact of environmental issues on people's lives is tackled in science and geography and the social consequences of decision-making in business and industry are considered in business education. The topics covered in the programme, together with contributions from other subjects such as

religious education, history and geography increase students' understanding of different religious and cultural perspectives and prepare them well for life in contemporary multi-ethnic society.

33. Students are offered numerous opportunities for personal development through the excellent range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. There are particular strengths in the performing arts and students are provided with many opportunities to develop and demonstrate their expertise in dance, drama and music. Students take part in regular productions of high quality. The school provides a good range of sporting activities for individuals and teams. Notable success was achieved by the girls' under-16 hockey team, which reached the final stage of the English Schools National Hockey Championship. Additional support is available to all students when necessary and all have access to ICT facilities for independent study. Students have the opportunity of taking part in a large number of local and overseas visits. There are field trips in geography, history and science and many visits to theatres, exhibitions and recitals. The exceptional quality and range of the school's extra-curricular activities were

recognised in the 2002 Schools Curriculum Award. These activities make a significant contribution to the very good academic and personal progress that students make at Fallibroome.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Standards and the quality and range of opportunities provided in boys' physical education**

34. Teacher assessments show attainment at the end of Year 9 to be well above average with little difference in the standards attained by boys and girls. Although lesson observations were restricted during the period of inspection because of inclement weather and the indoor facilities being used for the mock GCSE examinations, inspection evidence indicates that boys' standards are closer to expectations rather than well above. Standards in a Year 9 basketball lesson were below expectations. Skill practices broke down because students were unable to perform basic passing and catching techniques. Little progress was made in the lesson because weaknesses in class management led to generally poor student behaviour. The performance of students in a Year 9 cross-country lesson was consistent with expectations for the age group. In a Year 7 dance lesson students showed an understanding of terms such as 'solo' and 'motif', and were able to incorporate movements from a traditional Indian dance into their group work. However, while the performance of boys was generally consistent with expectations the performance of girls was above. Girls showed much greater musical sensitivity and less self-consciousness, and made greater progress as a result.
35. The school recognises that boys' results in the GCSE examination should be higher. There has been an overall downward trend in boys' results over the past four years, even though these results have been above both the national and Cheshire averages. Girls outperform boys and the difference in performance is greater than that observed nationally. While boys nationally achieve about 0.5 of a grade higher in physical education than in other subjects taken, at Fallibroome, boys are achieving over half a grade below that achieved in other subjects.
36. The senior leadership team is closely monitoring teaching and learning in boys' physical education, and raising standards in Years 10 and 11 is a school improvement priority. However, within the department there is a lack of a clear vision for the future development of boys' physical education and of strategies for raising standards. In particular there is a need to develop teaching and learning strategies that will motivate and enthuse students and capture their interest. There is an emphasis on games in the curriculum and team games dominate the extra-curricular programme available to boys. Although these activities are open to all students, it is acknowledged that few non-team members participate in these activities. Parents, at the pre-inspection meeting, expressed concern about the quality and range of opportunities provided in boys' physical education, and inspection evidence supports these concerns.



## **The accommodation**

37. The popularity of the school is reflected in the rising numbers of students on the school roll and the increasing numbers of students in the sixth form. However, there is a general shortage of teaching space and several teaching rooms are too small for the number of students they accommodate. There is a lack of large communal areas and large teaching spaces and it is impossible to hold assemblies for more than two year groups. This affects the school's ability to comply with the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of corporate worship and has an adverse impact on the physical education curriculum when the sports and training halls have to be used for school examinations. There is a lack of large working space for the performing arts, dance and drama, and the school dining room is cramped and overcrowded at lunchtimes. The accommodation for physical education is unsatisfactory. The indoor accommodation, comprising a half-sized sports hall and small training hall, is inadequate for the number and size of teaching groups. The sloping ceiling in the dance studio makes it impossible for jumps to be included in dance sequences if students are working in one half of the room. The outdoor facilities are in poor condition. Because of poor drainage, the playing field is often waterlogged and water running off the field carries mud onto the hard play area. This restricts the space available for outdoor activities, particularly when the indoor facilities are used for school examinations. The outdoor tennis courts are in need of resurfacing. Changing accommodation is inadequate and although an additional changing room has been provided by the adaptation of a room in a teaching block, the distance of this room from the male staff changing room makes supervision difficult when switching from indoor to outdoor lessons. The school medical room is totally inadequate for the needs of physically disabled students and there are outstanding 'ramping' issues that cause access difficulties for wheelchair students.
38. The school library provides a very good resource for learning. The library is in continuous use during the day and in the evening, and the library staff provide a very good service to staff and students. The library is well stocked and the librarian works closely with departments to ensure that stock is regularly updated to match subject needs. Use of the library is firmly embedded in the work of departments and much use is made of the library by classes engaged in research and project work and by sixth form students for personal study. However, the space the library occupies is too small for a school of this size and this restricts opportunities for students to engage in independent learning.

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

39. The school is aware of the issues raised in this report and action to tackle them appears in the school's plans for improvement. To further raise the standards of work and attainment of pupils, the governors, headteacher, senior leadership team and staff should now:

### **Main school**

- (1) Raise standards in boys' physical education by ensuring that leadership in the subject is able to:
- raise expectations of the high standards students can achieve in the subject;
  - improve the quality of teaching and learning so that students are enthused and motivated to achieve high standards;
  - present a clear vision for the future development of boys' physical education and of strategies for raising standards;
  - provide a wider range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.  
(paragraphs: 2, 4, 12, 16, 35-37)
- (2) Strive vigorously and, with governors, work collaboratively with the local education authority to improve the accommodation, especially for lunchtime (dining) use, physical education, the performing arts, the school library and the medical room.

*(paragraphs: 38-39)*

### **Sixth form**

- (1) Ensure that effective use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning in all subjects.  
*(paragraphs: 88, 95, 101, 112, 123, 139)*
- (2) Improve the accommodation in line with the action points listed for the main school  
*(paragraphs: 81, 82, 134)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	71
	Sixth form	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		68

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Years 7 - 11</b>							
Number	2	25	38	4	1	1	0
Percentage	3	35	54	6	1	1	0
<b>Sixth form</b>							
Number	11	25	19	0	0	0	0
Percentage	20	45	35	0	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 Years 7 - 11 and the sixth form here as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.*

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1164	263
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	36	4

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	18	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	54	1

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	40

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	8.1

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	115	116	208

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	94	107	107
	Girls	98	98	100
	Total	192	205	207
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	83 (86)	89 (85)	90 (85)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	61 (60)	76 (66)	52 (63)
	National	(31)	(43)	(34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	104	105	110
	Girls	110	92	103
	Total	214	203	213
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	93 (89)	88 (90)	92 (85)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	51 (69)	63 (69)	61 (67)
	National	(31)	(42)	(33)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	100	106	206

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	76	94	97
	Girls	90	99	101
	Total	166	193	198
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	80 (75)	93 (98)	96 (98)
	National	(48)	(91)	(96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	51.8 (52.1)
	National	(39)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	5	100
	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	64	56	120

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	64	56	120
	Average point score per candidate	20.3 (22.4)	25.9 (24.4)	22.9 (23.7)
National	Average point score per candidate	* (16.9)	* (18)	* (17.5)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	64	56	120	-	-	-
	Average point score per candidate	20.3	25.9	22.9	-	-	-

National	Average point score per candidate	*	*	*	*	*	*
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*\*National comparison data for AS/A level results in 2002 are not yet available. Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	1406	24	2
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	12	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

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

### ***Financial information***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	79.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18

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

Total number of education support staff	24
Total aggregate hours worked per week	675

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.9
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	26.5
Key Stage 4	23.7

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	3,960,912
Total expenditure	3,773,324
Expenditure per pupil	2,709
Balance brought forward from previous year	329,839
Balance carried forward to next year	517,427

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	17.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	22.7

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	1427
Number of questionnaires returned	327

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	38	55	6	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	47	48	2	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	67	5	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	61	15	2	2
The teaching is good.	31	62	4	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	46	23	2	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	45	6	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	36	2	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	24	48	22	1	5
The school is well led and managed.	42	51	3	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	53	3	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	43	9	2	9

*Figures may not total 100 because of rounding. The questionnaire gives the views of parents with children in Years 7 to 13.*

### Other issues raised by parents

- Thirty-four parents attended the meeting with the Registered Inspector before the inspection. Parents expressed strong support for the school.

## **PART D: THE SIXTH FORM**

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

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

40. When students begin sixth form courses, they have usually attained a grade B from their earlier GCSE examination in the subject. Where there is no equivalent GCSE subject matching the course that a student wants to take, students' overall GCSE performance is taken into account. Students receive very good advice about which courses are most likely to suit their talents, with the result that they make very good progress during Years 12 and 13. Students who enter the sixth form with above average GCSE grades continue to sustain these high standards and results are well above average overall at the end of Year 13. This has been the situation since the last inspection. Female students attain particularly high standards and their results in 2001 were very high, placing the school in the top five per cent in the country. Students with special educational needs or with English as an additional language achieve at least as well as their peers. Students from different ethnic backgrounds also achieve equally well.
41. At A-level in 2001, students attained well above average results in biology, chemistry, theatre studies, ICT, English, English literature, French, design and technology and mathematics. They were above average in history and average in geography and sociology. Results were below average in general studies and well below average in psychology. In German the numbers were too small for a comparison to be made. The 2002 A-level results show continued high levels of performance with even better results obtained in almost all subjects. The 2002 results show a rise in performance in art and design, biology, business studies, chemistry, ICT, English literature, French, general studies, German, geography, history, mathematics, music, psychology, sociology and theatre studies. In 2002 all students obtained passes in the A to E range. Female students achieve slightly better results than males in most, but not all, subjects. These differences in performance tend to reflect differences in attainment on entry to the sixth form rather than any underachievement on the part of males. Underpinning the continuing rise in standards is the excellent use the school makes of analyses of examination results to identify strengths and weaknesses, and set challenging targets.
42. AS results for Year 12 students in 2002 were very good. Almost all students passed the examinations, and just under a half attained grades A or B. As a result, students were well equipped to continue their studies to A-level. Achievement across the many subjects examined in the AS examinations in 2002 was good overall. Based on the profiles of students' attainment when they began their sixth form courses students achieved particularly well in biology, chemistry, theatre studies, general studies, mathematics, German and ICT and slightly less well in English, English literature and psychology.
43. In work seen during the inspection in the 13 subjects inspected and reported in depth, students were achieving good and often very good standards in response to the high expectations of teachers. In no subject were students achieving below what might reasonably be expected at this stage of their courses, based on earlier evidence of their attainment in GCSE examinations. In history and sociology, where results have fluctuated over recent years and where the proportion of students gaining A or B grades was below average in 2001, standards and achievement in lessons were good. This is reflected in the improved examination results in 2002. In design and technology, music and theatre studies, students' achievement is very high. In mathematics students are skilled at finding solutions to problems and in exploring possible alternatives. Students' achievement in business studies and design and technology is enhanced through the school's excellent links with business and industry. In history and sociology, students analyse sources of evidence very well and evaluate these effectively.
44. Standards in the performing arts are high. In music, for example, Year 12 students possess a knowledge of musical styles and eras that is above average, and their extensive knowledge of key words and definitions enables them to analyse music they hear very accurately. In Year 13,

students are very capable in composing, exploring and experimenting in a range of styles, as well as in their instrumental accomplishment. In theatre studies, students are achieving very well. Standards of performance are high and, by Year 13, students are able to draw on a very wide range of knowledge to discuss theatrical techniques and use precise technical language with confidence. Students achieve well in modern foreign languages. In French, for example, students use the language confidently and demonstrate good knowledge of vocabulary and language patterns.

45. Students communicate clearly, both orally and in writing. They use their mathematical skills competently in subjects such as science, design and technology, business studies and geography. Students use computers with confidence to word-process their work and search for information on the Internet. The key skills course provides students with the opportunity to further develop their communication, application of number and ICT skills. These skills are high and students are well prepared to meet the challenges of their chosen subjects.
46. The number of students continuing from Year 11 into the sixth form is high. Nearly all students remain for the full length of their courses. A very high proportion of students, over 90 per cent of the total in 2002, continue on to university with many securing places at the most prominent universities in the country.

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

47. Students' have excellent attitudes to their work and to the school. They are very well motivated and are fully involved in their studies. They relish the challenges they are set and the opportunities the school provides for them to show responsibility. Year 12 students recognise that at the beginning of their courses the workload will be very demanding. However they are sufficiently mature to understand the future benefits they will gain from their studies. Students are helped to take responsibility for their own learning, and do so with confidence.
48. Students' behaviour is excellent, both in their classrooms and in the common room. They are keen to learn and pay close attention to their teachers and their peers. They respond well to questions and readily involve themselves in class discussions. They show confidence in discussing their work and in explaining interests and ambitions to inspectors. Students succeed because they have high personal ambitions, enjoy the subjects they are studying, pay careful attention to their teachers and respond well to opportunities to work independently. They are aware of their position within the school and fully understand the importance of being good role models for the younger students.
49. The personal development of students is very good. They are confident and mature young people who are very willing to express their opinions and enter into informed discussions. They enjoy their work with younger students. This includes peer tutoring, when they work with Year 7 or Year 8 students on a one-to-one basis, and peer mentoring, when they provide additional support to Year 11 students who are on the GCSE grade D/C borderline. Sixth form students also have a highly visible role as anti-bullying mentors. Year 13 students are able to apply to join the sixth form student management team. This is a group of students who work with the head of the sixth form to promote the interests of sixth formers, to manage the sixth form common room and to arrange social events. This group makes a valuable contribution to school life and also helps students to develop their communication and organisational skills.
50. The supportive and encouraging atmosphere within the sixth form results from the very good relationships between the students, and between students and their tutors. This makes a significant contribution to students' personal development. They become very independent learners who are well prepared for higher education and other directions when they leave the sixth form.
51. Attendance in the sixth form is above that in sixth forms in other schools. This good attendance has a marked effect on students' progress and achievement. The school monitors attendance closely. Punctuality is very good.



## HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

52. Overall, teaching is very good. Teaching was identified as a strength in the last inspection report and has improved further since that time. All teaching is good or better, 85 per cent is very good or excellent and 20 per cent is excellent. The very good teaching that students regularly receive meets their needs very well and students of all levels of subject competence and from all ethnic backgrounds learn successfully and achieve well. Of the 13 advanced courses reported in depth, teaching is excellent in design and technology, music and theatre studies and very good in mathematics, chemistry, ICT, sociology, English and French. Teaching is good in physics, business studies, art and history. All sixth form subjects are consistently well taught, often with some lessons of excellent quality. In addition to the excellent teaching in design and technology, music and theatre studies, excellent teaching was also seen in mathematics, ICT, general studies and English. Key skills are effectively taught and applied in all subjects.
53. The emphasis that the school is placing on the development of teaching and learning is seen in the quality of teaching in the sixth form. In all subjects, teaching has a powerful impact. It enables students to learn and achieve well. Students are expected to concentrate on their subjects and work hard, in and out of lessons - and they do. A significant feature of teaching and learning is the amount of thought that teachers give to how best students learn. Lesson planning is linked not only to syllabus and examination requirements but also to teachers' understanding of the strategies that accommodate the different ways in which students learn. The outcome is lessons that are varied, stimulating and with students' interest fully engaged. The strengths of teaching that were seen in lessons were also apparent in the work students had completed over previous months.
54. Teachers' high expectations of what students should achieve are apparent in almost all lessons. In music, for example, students become absorbed in learning because of the high level of intellectual rigour and challenging pace in lessons. In design and technology, students are motivated by the dynamic pace of lessons and the expectations that work will be of the highest standard. In mathematics, teachers are particularly skilful at ensuring that students understand complex mathematical concepts and are able to apply mathematical techniques with confidence when solving problems. In chemistry teachers use their subject expertise well to provide clear detailed explanations in a careful logical sequence that allows students to understand intricate relationships and ideas. In theatre studies, the teacher's excellent knowledge of the subject, allied to tireless energy and enthusiasm, and high expectations inspires students to make excellent intellectual and creative effort.
55. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge enables them to plan their lessons in the most effective way for successful learning of their subject. Within the structure of most lessons, teachers plan opportunities for students to learn independently and for good individual support to be provided. Psychology lessons, for example, are characterised by the very good planning of independent learning activities and individual support for students as they work their way towards greater knowledge and understanding. Excellent subject knowledge and high intellectual demands are consistent features of teaching and learning in sociology.
56. Teachers make very good use of a wide range of resources to support students' learning and meet their individual needs. Good use is made of computers to support teaching and learning in many subjects. Technology is used well in music, for example, to help students gain a clearer understanding of technical aspects of the work of different composers. In design and technology and ICT, the use of interactive white boards, the overhead projector and other technological aids enhance students' learning. However, not enough use is made of computers to support teaching and learning in chemistry, physics, art, business studies and history.
57. Teachers manage their classes very well through relationships that are very good and often excellent. The very good quality of relationships both among students as well as with teachers, support learning very well. For example, good humour and friendly atmosphere helped students to a greater understanding of the relationship between culture, propaganda and the arts in Stalinist Russia in a Year 13 history lessons. Students were willing to express ideas and challenge each

others thinking because of they knew that they could express their views without conflict. Similarly, very good relationships underpinned effective groupwork in a Year 13 French lesson on the topic of homelessness in France. Good relationships helped Year 13 students with their practical work in design and technology on electronic circuits because they were willing to exchange ideas. Mutual respect and very good relationships assist the discussion of issues in sociology and English literature. The confident participation of students with their teachers enables them to clarify their ideas in a very active and effective learning partnership.

58. Teachers expect students to work at a high standard both at home and at school. Homework is set regularly and well planned to consolidate and extend classroom learning. Students are conscientious in completing their homework and generally complete it successfully. Assignments are set appropriately and assessment is used very effectively to ensure that students are clear about the standard of their work and what they must do in order to attain high grades. The aim of teaching at Fallibroome is not only to increase students' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are studying, but also to develop the skills and attitudes that will make them successful lifelong learners. Inspection evidence suggests that the school is well advanced towards the achievement of this aim.

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

59. The school provides an enriched curriculum from which students benefit both academically and socially. It is well-planned to meet the needs of all its students while focusing on a predominantly academic curriculum. Students are satisfied that the curriculum meets their needs and aspirations and this is seen in the continued rise in student numbers. Students in Year 12 are able to choose from a very good range of 21 AS level subjects, all of which are continued through to A-level in Year 13. The school has embraced the requirements of Curriculum 2000 and this has increased the range of opportunities for students. The curriculum is sufficiently flexible to allow many students to undertake up to five AS level subjects in Year 12. In Year 13, most usually progress to study four of these subjects at A-level, together with AS level general studies. Because of the good quality of the information supplied to students before entering the sixth form, only a few make changes to their options early in Year 12. The school is recognised as a key local provider of post-16 academic studies and its increased popularity has attracted many students from outside its natural catchment area. Those students who at the end of Year 11 are seeking to continue their studies through a more vocationally oriented curriculum are given help and guidance in finding appropriate provision at another post-16 institution. The good relationships the school enjoys with other post-16 providers ensures that students are able to choose from a comprehensive range of courses at the end of Year 11.
60. A well-planned programme of additional studies that covers a wide range of topics enhances the curriculum. The topics include aspects of personal, social and health education, careers education, religious and physical education. A major component of the programme is the assessment of students' capabilities in the key skills of communication, application of number and ICT. In Year 13 students are prepared for the AS level general studies examination. Following this examination, students are encouraged to continue to develop their key skills or to complete the general studies course to A-level.
61. All students, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and with English as additional language, have equal access to all courses, dependent upon their prior attainment. Teachers are aware of the needs of the very few sixth form students with special educational needs and ensure that they have sufficient support to enable them to succeed in their chosen subjects.
62. A strength of the curriculum is the excellent range of enrichment activities it offers. These activities extend the range of achievement opportunities for all students and cater well for the needs of the gifted and talented. Many of these activities are to be found in the performing arts and students attain very high standards in dance, drama and music. Students have access to a

very substantial programme of musical activities where the highest standards are achieved. They frequently attend the theatre and take part very actively in drama themselves, again with high standards of performance. The school's activities in the performing arts are recognised by both parents and students as a major strength of the school. Included in the numerous other enrichment activities that the school provides are talks from visiting speakers, opportunities to attend exhibitions, and participation in a wide range of conferences, challenges and debates. A team of sixth form students won the National Young Consumers Quiz Competition and demonstrated their willingness to support others by donating the £1,000 prize to the money being raised to build a new medical room. Students are also provided with many opportunities to take part in residential activities both at home and abroad.

63. Provision for careers education is excellent. The sixth form tutors collaborate closely with the careers service and the head of careers in the main school to ensure that students are provided with an appropriate sixth form programme. Careers advisers visit the school regularly and are readily available for information and advice. The introduction of a four-day work experience in Year 12 builds on the work experience of Year 10. It is a very good response to the increasing demand in university applications for vocational experience and the demonstration of personal qualities in a different context to school. The careers library has a wealth of information including computer programmes to assist students in their career choices.
64. Provision in the sixth form for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is very good. The statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship is not met. However, there are assemblies twice each month that bring students together to focus on school and world issues. Provision for students' SMSC development is effectively woven into the fabric of their whole school experience. All students have appropriate opportunities to raise their knowledge and understanding about themselves, their personal growth in mind and spirit and their impact on the world around them. The sixth form general studies programme provides many opportunities for students to research and engage in debate on questions such as 'science versus religion' and 'the ethics of designer babies'. Topics such as these challenge personal values and opinions and raise spiritual awareness. Many subjects such as music, drama and modern languages challenge students' emotions and sensitivities but the school has not yet undertaken a full audit to ensure all possible opportunities are fully exploited.
65. Support for students' social development is excellent. Students behave with maturity during their personal study time and there is an air of a university common room about the new and attractive sixth form area. The curriculum provides good opportunities for cultural development. Appreciation of cultural diversity is promoted through art, history, design and technology, modern foreign languages and science.

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

### **Assessment**

66. The school's procedures for assessing sixth form students' attainment and progress are very effective. The school is rigorous in its use of ALIS, a national data gathering and analysis system, which provides reliable predictions about students' performance in the A-level examination. This information is used to set target grades and to measure the 'added value' effect of teaching and learning. Assessment is used effectively within subjects to monitor students' progress and every term students' performance is measured against their target minimum grades. This information, together with other measures, such as attendance levels, informs teachers, students and parents about how well they are doing. This system is very effective in identifying which students need additional support and in which subjects. Student self-assessment of the progress they are making is an integral part of the school's very good assessment procedures. Assessment arrangements in subjects carefully follow examination board requirements. As a consequence, students are well prepared for public examinations. Summary reports are issued four times a year with a comprehensive formal report are issued annually. Reports include judgements on how well

students are achieving and what they need to do to improve further. The school's effective use of assessment makes a significant contribution to students' achievement.

### **Advice, support and guidance**

67. The school provides high levels of care, support and guidance for its students. Subject teachers and the sixth form tutors have very good relationships with students and ensure that personal help is readily available as and when it is needed. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning, and this includes knowing when they need to seek help from their tutors. Their tutors and the head of sixth form carefully monitor their personal and academic progress. Students have very open access to their tutors, and are kept very well informed of their progress.
68. Students are well informed about the courses available to them in advance of starting in the sixth form, and are closely monitored during the first few weeks of their studies to check how well they have settled in. The information and guidance they receive about future careers and opportunities in higher education are excellent.
69. Arrangements for students' health and safety are good. Their attendance and punctuality are carefully monitored, and the success of this work is reflected in the good attendance levels. Procedures for recording and monitoring their attendance are thorough and work well. Students are punctual at the start of lessons. The support and guidance provided to students is a strength of the sixth form.

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

70. Parents expressed positive views about the school and the education it provides for their children. They receive good information from the school and they consider that their children are well supported by their tutors. The sixth form students enjoy their role in the school.
71. Students feel they are taught well and are challenged to do their best. They enjoy such challenges and consider it helps them to mature and gain confidence. The majority feel they receive very good support from their tutors, and that they received clear and helpful information about the courses available to them. They also enjoy being in the sixth form.
72. Some concerns were expressed through the questionnaires. A small number of students felt that support and guidance was not consistent in all subjects. They also felt they did not receive enough advice when they first joined the sixth form, and that they are not given enough advice about what will be available when they leave school.
73. The students' positive views are supported by the inspection findings and inspectors welcomed their openness, courtesy and confidence in expressing their views. The inspection team could find little evidence to support the students' less positive opinions, and the evidence from interviews with students strongly contradicted the negative views. The careers advice and guidance is excellent and the students have very good access to their tutors for personal support.

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

#### **Leadership and management**

74. Leadership of the sixth form by the head of sixth and the sixth form management team is outstanding. The sixth form is a significant part of the school and is managed very effectively. The effectiveness of leadership is shown by the very good progress students make and the well above average standards achieved at A-level. Standards are continuing to rise because school leadership encourages and supports innovation in teaching and learning. There is an ethos of



continuous improvement with the ongoing review of the quality of teaching and learning under ongoing to ensure that these are as effective as possible. With the exception of the provision of a daily act of collective worship, all statutory responsibilities are met. The school leadership team and governors have an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas in need of improvement in the sixth form. The school takes its responsibilities for social inclusion seriously and has in place policies to promote racial harmony and racial equality. The very firm commitment and systematic practice of making provision highly inclusive for every student, irrespective of background or ethnicity, as of right are priorities of leadership and underpins the preparation of students for life in a culturally diverse society.

75. The sixth form leadership team, made up of two assistant managers and a co-ordinator of key skills, is well informed and provides very good support to the head of sixth form. Their roles are clear and together they ensure that day-to-day management is very effective. The head of sixth form is a member of the school's senior leadership team and ensures that senior management is fully informed on all matters affecting the sixth form. Subject leadership of the 13 subjects reported in depth in the inspection is very good overall. Excellent leadership in design and technology, theatre studies, music, ICT and modern foreign languages provides exceptionally clear educational direction to the work in their subjects.
76. The strategic management of the sixth form is very good. The priorities in the sixth form improvement plan are identified through the school's rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures. Any areas of under performance are quickly identified and prompt action taken to improve the situation. This has a direct bearing on standards and the progress students make in the sixth form. Overall, planning for change and improvement and evaluation of outcomes are effective in ensuring the continued progress of the sixth form. Since the last inspection the sixth form has grown in size and this expansion has been managed well. Excellent use is made of assessment information to evaluate the quality of education the school provides and to set targets both for individual students and for the sixth form as a whole.

## **Resources**

77. The overall standard of resources in the sixth form is good. Spending on resources is about the same as the national average and in all subjects resource provision is generally suitable for the needs of the sixth form. In modern foreign languages, learning is enhanced by the provision of a digital projector and good library resources. Standards in sociology are enhanced by the use of an inter-active whiteboard and the use of Powerpoint for presentations. In music, very good resources promote high standards of attainment and achievement. However, although resources are generally good, in science there are not enough computers for sixth form use and the range of activities in art is restricted by limited access to ICT.
78. The expertise and experience of teachers in the sixth form are well suited to the demands of sixth form teaching and they are deployed effectively to provide a rich and varied curriculum. Provision for the professional development of staff is excellent in the sixth form. Staff development is given a high priority in the school and this is contributing to the continued improvement seen, for example, in the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are encouraged to 'take risks' in their teaching and to evaluate their success. The outcome is teaching that is highly innovative and very effective. Induction procedures for newly qualified teachers are very good and they are given the opportunity to gain experience in sixth form teaching.
79. The school seeks best value when deciding about spending in the sixth form and is careful to evaluate the impact of these decisions. Bearing in mind the amount spent on the provision in the sixth form, the well above average standards, their good progress and personal development, the sixth form provides good value for money.
80. Overall, the accommodation for the sixth form is satisfactory although there are some significant weaknesses, particularly in practical subjects. The student common room and quiet areas are pleasant and well furnished and students treat them with respect. They are useful study areas but are not well equipped with reference books or textbooks. Similarly, although some students prefer to use the library for independent study, the library is too small for a school of this size.

Pressure on shelf space means that many dedicated sixth form books have to be stored in departments rather than in the library and this reduces the effectiveness of the library as a central resource area. In a school where sixth form students have diverse interests and enjoy independent research this is a real disadvantage.

81. Many sixth form subjects are taught in good-sized classrooms, which provide at least adequate accommodation. The learning environment in all teaching rooms is enhanced by excellent displays of students' work. In music, very good new accommodation provides a stimulating learning environment and provision for French is enhanced by specialist accommodation for foreign language assistants. However, significant weaknesses exist in art, dance, design and technology and theatre studies. In art one of the rooms is too small with inadequate storage space and this restricts the range of provision. Similarly, in design and technology the cramped design studio has an impact on learning and there is insufficient space to accommodate A-level food or textile courses. In theatre studies creativity is hampered by pressure on the one good studio space available.

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

In the inspection, 13 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall information of teaching and learning in the school.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002.

### GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-B		% gaining grades A-E		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	14	29	-	86	-	34.2	-
Biology	3	33	-	67	-	26.6	-
Chemistry	5	60	-	100	-	44	-
Business Studies	9	11	-	89	-	42.2	-
Art and Design	6	17	-	100	-	33.3	-
Music	2	50	-	50	-	30	-
History	10	30	-	90	-	33	-
Sociology	6	50	-	100	-	45	-
Design & Technology	4	0	-	100	-	22.5	-
English Language	5	80	-	100	-	52	-
English Literature	1	0	-	100	-	20	-
French	8	50	-	100	-	45	-
General Studies	72	75	-	97	-	50.4	-
Geography	5	20	-	100	-	36	-
German	3	0	-	100	-	40	-
ICT	14	7	-	78.6	-	25	-
Music Technology	1	100	-	100	-	60	-
Physics	3	0	-	67	-	13.3	-
Psychology	17	18	-	65	-	24.1	-
Theatre Studies	3	0	-	100	-	36.6	-

### GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-B		% gaining grades A-E		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	27	74	-	100	-	104.4	-
Biology	40	50	-	100	-	86.5	-
Chemistry	30	67	-	100	-	100.6	-

Physics	12	42	-	100	-	85	-
Design and Technology	18	44	-	100	-	88.8	-
Business Studies	23	26	-	100	-	80	-
Art and Design	17	65	-	100	-	95.3	-
Music	5	100	-	100	-	116	-
Geography	19	53	-	100	-	91.5	-
History	19	53	-	100	-	82.1	-
Sociology	33	39	-	100	-	77.6	-
English Language	54	35	-	100	-	78.5	-
English Literature	16	81	-	100	-	102.5	-
French	6	83	-	100	-	103.3	-
German	8	50	-	100	-	87.5	-
General Studies	11	64	-	100	-	101.8	-
Music Technology	7	43	-	100	-	97.1	-
Psychology	9	44	-	100	-	84.4	-
Theatre Studies	24	58	-	100	-	95.8	-
Information Technology	17	35	-	100	-	77.6	-

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

### MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

82. Advanced mathematics, chemistry and physics courses were inspected and reported on in depth, but biology was also sampled. In biology, results in 2001 were well above average and students did well in comparison with their results at GCSE. In the two lessons observed, students worked well and were eager to learn. Teaching was at least good.

#### Mathematics

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

##### Strengths

- The range of courses is very good.
- Teachers' excellent subject knowledge is used well to promote rapid learning leading to very good progress in lessons.
- Very good relationships impact positively on learning and students' enthusiasm for the subject.

##### Areas for improvement:

- Extending teaching and learning strategies.
- Increasing the use of ICT to support teaching and learning.

83. In 2001, the standards achieved by students at A-level were above the national average, with male students achieving the highest grades. All students achieved pass grades in the A to E range. The performance of students in previous years has been consistently above national averages, with female students tending to achieve the greater proportion of higher grades. In 2002 the school recorded its highest ever success with 74 per cent of entries gaining the higher grades, and all students achieving their predicted grades.

84. Student performance at AS level in 2001 was good in relation to the proportion of students who obtained A and B grades. Only two students did not gain grades in the A to E range. Of the students who took AS level in 2002 two-thirds achieved A or B grades and all but three students achieved grades in the A to E range. This represents outstanding achievement in comparison with their predicted grades. Generally male and female students achieve similar proportions of higher grades. A high proportion of students have returned to complete the course to A-level. A few students will retake one or more of the AS modules alongside the A-level modules in 2003.
85. Students currently studying A-level mathematics are achieving very highly in lessons. Learning is rapid and secure. For example, following a well-planned introduction in one Year 13 lesson on exponential and trigonometrical functions, students went on to examine the physical concept of rotating a function about the x axis. This required students to demonstrate their sound knowledge of integration and skills in measurement of the volumes the various shapes formed. These students also demonstrated very good understanding of graphs of various algebraic functions, enabling them to sketch the resulting solid. Very good teaching has resulted in students making very good progress and achieving high standards.
86. Students in Year 12 have made a good beginning to their AS level studies. Students build on their prior knowledge of algebra to extend and develop their understanding of the properties of linear and quadratic expressions. The rigorous teaching of mathematical methods is evident in students' work and is underpinned by the high quality of students' note-taking and supporting exemplars.
87. Overall, the teaching in the sixth form is very good. Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge and experience effectively to teach the methods and principles needed to approach standard problems in each of the modules studied. Teachers ensure students understand topics before moving on. This is particularly important for those students who may not have had the rigour of mathematical thinking required for the GCSE higher tier papers. Students are challenged to explain the various methods used to solve problems and why they work. This helps them to evolve a greater insight into how and why these methods work and if not, why not. This was seen, for example, in a Year 12 lesson on random variables, where, as a result of excellent teaching, the principles taught were successfully applied by students to determine probability values of various functions.
88. The enthusiasm shown by all teachers of the subject has a considerable impact on students and their attitudes to learning, which are often excellent. Students are attentive, work well together, support and help each other. The atmosphere in lessons reflects the very positive relationship that has been forged between students and teachers. This is impacting most strongly on learning. Lessons are challenging with high expectations. This motivates students to learn. However, there is a need to increase opportunities for students to engage in more open-ended tasks and independent research. Students are encouraged to use ICT to enhance their learning and deepen their knowledge of particular topics, although currently this is not exploited enough.
89. Although students' work is marked and assessed, written comments are less frequent and do not always suggest ways for a student to improve. However, discussion in class does much to dispel any misunderstandings a student may have. The department maintains good assessment information on students' progress and makes good use of this to measure progress against targets.
90. The overall leadership and management of the subject are very good. Teachers share their expertise and seek opportunities to improve their own knowledge and understanding of the subject. The department has made good progress since the last inspection.

## Chemistry

Overall, the quality of provision for chemistry is **very good**.

Strengths

- Teaching, which is very good.
- Teachers' subject knowledge, which is excellent.
- The high proportion of students achieving A and B grades in A-level examinations.

#### Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT to support teaching and learning.

91. The A-level examination results in 2001 were well above those of other schools nationally. Female students' results were better than those for males. Results in 2001 were slightly below those achieved in 2000. All students gained a pass grade and the proportion gaining higher A and B grades was well above average. Provisional A-level results in 2002 were above those obtained in 2001, particularly at grades A and B. The AS-level results in 2002 were also well above the 2001 average. In each of the 2001 and 2002 examinations, students' achievement was better than expected relative to their GCSE grades.
92. The standards of Year 13 students are well above average and they are achieving very well in relation to their GCSE results. In lessons, students achieve very well as a result of the very good teaching, which demands much of them. In one lesson, for example, higher-attaining students made good improvements in their skills of interpreting mass spectrographs. Lower-attaining students found this work very demanding but still achieved some degree of success in the identification of radicals.
93. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into their course. Nevertheless, they are achieving very well overall. They show, for example, good knowledge and understanding of ionisation energies. Most are successfully moving on from GCSE work into new areas of chemistry and are making good progress in developing their skills of independent research. Lower-attainers, however, have greater difficulty in applying the concepts learned in the GCSE course to more advanced work. Written work is generally well presented and matches the confidence which students display in the classroom. Students display a high degree of numerical competency.
94. Teaching is very good. The use of excellent subject knowledge coupled with good, well-focused planning and a good range of teaching methods, maintain interest and engender learning. Assessment is used very well to monitor the progress of students, to identify underachievers and adjust teaching accordingly. Day-to-day marking is thorough overall, but does not always provide information for students on how to improve. Students learn very well. They respond very well to challenge, work hard and show interest in their work. They support and help each other and enter into mature discussion as part of their learning. They undertake independent work maturely.
95. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. There is a commitment to improving standards. Apart from the provision of computers, which is unsatisfactory, a good range of learning support materials is used well to develop opportunities for independent learning. More attention needs to be given to the use of ICT both as a teaching and learning tool. Target setting, based on careful analysis of students' performance in tests, is used very effectively to provide learning goals. Improvement since the last inspection is good and the capacity to improve further is good.

## Physics

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

#### Strengths

- Teaching, which is good.
- Teachers' excellent subject knowledge.
- The good working relationship between students and teachers.

#### Areas for improvement.

- The number of students gaining higher grades.
- The use of ICT to support teaching and learning.

96. The A-level examinations results in 2001 were above average compared with other schools nationally. They were better than those achieved in 2000. The large majority of students gained a pass grade and the proportion gaining the higher A or B grades was above average. Provisional 2002 A-level results were not as good as those obtained in 2001, particularly in the higher grades. Results in physics have fluctuated since the previous inspection with results in some years being better than others. Provisional AS-level results for 2002 were above the 2001 average and the numbers of students increased. In each of the 2001 and 2002 examinations achievement, relative to GCSE results, was as expected. The number of students studying physics, particularly females, is lower than in other science subjects.
97. The standards of students currently taking the subject are above average. In Year 13, the achievement of students is as expected in relation to their GCSE results. In lessons students achieve well as a result of good teaching. In one Year 13 physics lesson, for example, students made good progress in their understanding of electron diffraction. Most students recall previous knowledge well and use it effectively to develop further understanding.
98. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into their course. Nevertheless higher-attaining students achieve well. They show, for example, good understanding of how the velocity of an air-pellet can be determined by equating the pellet's momentum with the resultant momentum of a piece of plasticine, mounted on a mobile trolley, into which the pellet is fired. Most students are successfully moving on from their GCSE work into new areas of physics. Lower-attaining students, however, have greater difficulty in applying the concepts learned in the GCSE course to more advanced work. Their skills of independent research, vital for success in advanced work, are less well developed. Overall, the presentation of written work is good, particularly that of female students. However, the work of males and that of lower-attaining students, does not always match the work they do in the classroom. Students display a high degree of numerical competency.
99. Teaching is good with some very good features. The use of excellent subject knowledge and good, well-focused planning maintain interest and engender learning. Some lessons, however, are too teacher-centred. In these, there is insufficient opportunity for students to carry out independent research. Very good use is made of assessment information to set students targets, monitor their progress and to plan teaching and learning. Day-to-day marking is thorough overall, but it does not always provide advice, which will help students to improve their performance.
100. Students learn well. Higher-attaining students respond very well to challenge, work hard and show interest in their work. They support and help each other, enter into mature discussion and, when given the opportunity to do so, carry out independent research as part of their learning. Lower-attaining students are far less confident. They are often unwilling to participate in discussions and have greater difficulty with independent research, often relying heavily on their teachers for information. This has a negative impact on progress.
101. Leadership and management are good overall. There is a commitment to improving standards. Apart from the provision of computers, which is unsatisfactory, a good range of learning support materials is available, but this has yet to be used fully to provide opportunities for independent learning. Target-setting, based on careful analysis of students' performance in tests, is used very effectively to provide learning goals. Improvement since the last report was satisfactory. The capacity to improve further is good.

## **ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING**

102. Design and technology was inspected and reported on in depth.



## Design and technology

Overall, the quality of provision for design and technology is **excellent**.

### Strengths

- Standards are high and examination results are well above average.
- Very good teaching promotes very good learning.
- Very productive industrial and commercial links enhance teaching and learning.
- Leadership and management are excellent.

### Areas for development

- Some aspects of the accommodation.

103. The A-level examinations results in 2001 were well above average compared with other schools nationally. All students gained a pass grade and the proportion gaining the higher A or B grades was above average. Results over the past four years show a rising trend, particularly at the higher grades. Provisional 2002 A-level results show a slight drop in the proportion of students gaining the highest grades, although these results remain well above the 2001 national average. Again all students obtained a pass grade. Achievement is good based on students' standards on entry in Year 12. Provisional AS-level results for 2002 were above the 2001 average and the numbers of students increased. In each of the 2001 and 2002 examinations achievement, relative to GCSE results, was as expected.
104. Attainment in lessons is well above average because of the impact of highly innovative teaching and learning. The department strives to achieve the school aim of promoting students' responsibility for their own learning. Students are self-motivated and demonstrate a very good work ethic when given opportunities for collaborative learning. This was seen in a Year 12 graphics lesson, for example, where students worked effectively in pairs to investigate and share information on manufacturing and lithographic processes to enhance product packaging. Their understanding of these processes has been refined and challenged by working with a local manufacturer. The excellent commercial product knowledge and very good mentoring available through this link helps to promote students' achievement.
105. Both male and female students achieve well and make substantial gains through Years 12 and 13. The options at A-level have been extended by the addition of graphics and as a result more female students are being attracted to and achieving well in design and technology. Students learn very quickly and in discussion acknowledge the impact that their teachers' high expectations and excellent demonstrations have on the quality of their work. Students' attitudes to learning are excellent. They achieve high standards because they concentrate well and are industrious in lessons.
106. Very good teaching promotes very good learning. Teaching is dynamic and highly innovative. Students are presented with high levels of challenge as, for example, when they research various designers' work, analyse 'human needs' and consider the implications of using non-renewable resources in product design. Often consideration of these issues includes debate in which students demonstrate their confidence in expressing their views and their willingness to listen to the views of others. Students develop a very mature approach to their work and are able to place the impact of design and technology in local, national and global contexts. Lessons proceed at a challenging pace and students respond very well to different ways of improving their designing. For example in one Year 13 lesson, revision of the function and purpose of materials was very effective because the teacher used the individual white-board technique developed from the Key Stage 3 strategy. The teacher was able to quickly identify the areas of uncertainty and respond accordingly. This work is further consolidated by regular short tests to ensure understanding is embedded in each student's learning.
107. Subject leadership and management are excellent. The head of department has built a highly effective team and draws the maximum benefit from expertise available. Close informal and formal

monitoring of all teachers' plans and work ensures that the department's commitments to high standards are met. All staff make very good use of accommodation that is not all helpful to

good learning in the subject. The department also manages well equipment that is in some instances out of date. Standards have risen over the last four years and improvement since the last report has been very good.

## **BUSINESS**

108. Business studies was inspected and reported on in depth.

### **Business Studies**

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

#### Strengths

- Students achieve well, obtaining A-level results that are above the national average.
- Good teaching, using case studies from business to support students' learning.
- Students demonstrate very good attitudes and have very positive views of the course.

#### Areas for development

- The use of ICT to support teaching and learning.
- Continued development of teaching and learning strategies.

109. The department offers AS and A-level courses in business studies with 26 students in Year 12 and 15 in Year 13 currently following them. There are good levels of retention with most students completing their courses. In 2001 A-level results were above the national average. The percentage of students obtaining grades A to E was above the national average whilst the percentage obtaining A and B grades was also above it. In 2002, results rose with all candidates obtaining a pass grade although the percentage obtaining A and B grades fell. Results were in line with the national average in 1999 and above it in 2000.

110. Inspection evidence shows standards of work in Year 13 to be above course expectations. These standards match those in recent examination results. Most students have good knowledge and understanding of business topics and can apply it to the analysis of case studies drawn from the business world. They are confident at using complex terminology in order to analyse the problems faced by business. For example, in a lesson based on a case study of a building firm, Year 13 students were able to give accurate explanations of terms such as speculative house buying and could describe the implications of a management buy-out. Other students were able to use background information about a national chocolate manufacturing company to identify changes in strategies and analyse opportunities for future development. The achievement of students is good. Students make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of business concepts and applying what they have learnt to business situations. This was demonstrated in a Year 12 lesson on the impact of mergers on firms. Students showed their increasing awareness of the positive and negative effects of mergers and their ability to give recent examples of them from the business world.

111. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use their knowledge of business studies to explain topics well and provide relevant examples from the real world. Lessons are well planned with clear aims and objectives and a detailed structure that includes a range of appropriate teaching approaches, including group work. Teachers support students well with up-to-date business materials. This ensures that the quality of learning is good. Students are well motivated and demonstrate good independent research skills. Their views of the subject are very positive and they appreciate the support given to them by teachers, especially when preparing for examinations.

112. The leadership and management of the business studies department are good. Courses are well co-ordinated by the head of business studies leading a small team of teachers. There is a helpful departmental handbook with appropriate documentation and a development plan. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. Links with business have provided good learning opportunities for students, including some visits abroad. There has been increase in the use of ICT in the subject as well as the introduction of a wider range of teaching and learning styles. The department recognises that these are areas for further development.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

113. ICT was inspected and reported on in depth.

### Information and Communication Technology

Overall, provision for ICT is **very good**.

#### Strengths

- Very good teaching.
- Improved resources are improving skill and application.
- Very good technical support.
- Students are autonomous learners and have very good relationships with staff.

#### Areas for improvement.

- The layout of teaching rooms to facilitate whole class teaching.

114. A-level results in 2001 were above average at the higher A and B grades and well above average at grades A to E; students' average point scores were also above average. At that time the course only attracted male students. The unconfirmed 2002 results show an increase in the proportion of students gaining A or B grades with all students gaining grades in the A to E range. There were three female candidates, one of whom obtained an A grade. Provisional AS-level results for 2002 were above the 2001 average and seven of the 35 candidates were female. In each of the 2001 and 2002 examinations achievement, relative to GCSE results, was above expectations. Student numbers are rising, results are improving and more girls are opting for ICT.
115. Students' work seen in lessons, in portfolios and presentation volumes, and through small group discussions, confirms standards to be above national averages and achievement is good and getting better. Challenging teaching and active learning enhanced excellent work in a Year 12 lesson on data capture. Students benefited from relating their learning to everyday applications of data capture. They handled a wide range of collection processes, such as voice entry data, bar code readers, OCR (Optical Character Recognition) of pre-printed forms and MICR (Magnetic Ink Character Recognition), with confidence. Learning was consolidated by links made with everyday applications and their understanding demonstrated by their answers to probing questions from the teacher. This was further consolidated by student's suggestions of suitable data capture methods for given situations. Use of the interactive white board had a positive impact because learning was made highly active.
116. As students move to Year 13 they display very mature attitudes to their learning. They develop a clear understanding of the more complex issues of responding to commercial problems. In one lesson they confidently listed a data dictionary from their analysis and derived an entity relationship model to use in designing a process that responded to the intended user's needs. Thinking and rationalising their ideas was a real challenge and the moments when a solution was found gave the lesson an inspired lift and students a renewed self-assurance in their learning. The breadth of reference materials available to students sets their learning in a real context and is

supported by resources from the library or research from the many Internet sites suggested in lessons.

117. Overall teaching is very good with excellent subject knowledge that includes first-hand experience of ICT use in organisations other than schools. Teachers and the technician team have a wide range of complementary skills, which enrich teaching and learning in the subject. Exceptionally good planning linked to weekly assessment ensures all students have a clear understanding of what they must do to improve. Teachers' high levels of interest and enthusiasm for the subject transmits to students and these have a significant impact on learning and classroom relationships. Skilful questioning probes students' understanding to consolidate knowledge. Marking is good, annotation is clear and provides a very good model for students' annotation of their own testing and modification procedures.
118. Leadership and management of the subject in the sixth form are excellent. The ICT team have a very good subject improvement plan. The plan promotes effective strategies for the development of ICT to support the whole school vision of transforming learning in order to prepare students for the future, and to improve access to computers in all subjects. The close monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning ensures the continued drive towards higher standards. All staff make very good use of accommodation, although the layout of rooms restricts opportunities for students to work away from computers when engaged in collaborative planning or when engaged in whole class discussion. The department also manages equipment well and ensures that the system is well maintained and responsive. Standards are rising and improvement since the last report has been very good.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA**

119. Art, music and theatre studies were inspected and reported on in depth, but media studies was also sampled. Media studies was introduced into the curriculum in September 2002 and is organised and staffed by the English department. Teaching and learning is very good. The teacher's excellent subject knowledge and obvious enthusiasm lead to high levels of student participation and very good progress. Students are already confident in film analysis and are able to use a wide range of subject terminology.

### **Art**

Overall, the quality of provision for art is **good**.

#### **Strengths**

- Results are consistently above average and standards of creativity are high.
- Teaching is good: topics are well chosen and supported by very good extra-curricular opportunities and regular assessment.
- Students are encouraged to talk thoughtfully about their own and others work.
- The subject is well led and there is a spirit of cooperation between staff, and between staff and students.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Additional resources are needed to allow the department to be more adventurous.
- Longer teaching sessions for creative work.
- More emphasis in the personal studies of higher-attaining students on sustained, in-depth research.

120. Results have been consistently above the national average for several years. A-level results were above average in 2001 and these rose in 2002 to be well above the 2001 average. The unconfirmed 2002 AS level results were very good with two-thirds of candidates obtaining the highest A or B grades and all obtaining pass grades.

121. Standards of creativity are high and a wide range of media, for example oil pastels, chalk pastel, printing, collage, drawing and construction are tried, very often on the same piece. The students are encouraged to work on a large scale when appropriate. The practical work achieved by Year 13 is of a very high standard. Their workbooks are attractive, aesthetically pleasing, and inventive, but might benefit from a more in-depth investigative style. Year 12 students display a variety of skill levels at this early stage of the course, but they are all making sound progress within a well-ordered structure. Each student is considered individually and progress is monitored on a monthly basis. More emphasis on drawing at this early stage could help to boost their confidence and potential grades.

122. Teaching is consistently good. Well thought out tasks are set with clear guidelines, in line with exam requirements, but with the students' abilities in mind. These are complemented by gallery and studio visits and visiting artists. There is a nice atmosphere in the studios with pleasant teacher - student relationships. The open studio approach, with staff giving freely of their time, contributes to the exceptional progress made from Year 12 to 13.
123. A quiet, orderly atmosphere, with work of paramount importance, is the norm in both teaching spaces. A good balance of activities uses group discussion, paired discussion, individual feedback, with some theoretical background, teacher-led discussion and time for individual creative work. Individual one-hour lessons do put limitations on progress each session but the students accept this stoically.
124. This is a well-run department with enthusiastic staff encouraged by a supportive leadership style. Modest finances are used very effectively. Standards of behaviour, attitude and work ethic are clearly laid down and consistently acknowledged. To continue the improvements made, the department will need additional funds to provide a wider range of craft and ICT opportunities, a big investment in reference materials and the support of a technician. The storage of students' work, with groups as large as these, is a major issue and with any increase in the range of media available is likely to become even more critical. A place where their work can be left out for students to access whenever they are free, and safe, accessible places to put finished work awaiting assessment are vital. Since the last inspection the department has continued to make good progress. There are now plenty of opportunities provided for the students to gain confidence through independent initiatives and collaborative working. The effective application of communication skills is now a major feature of all the lessons.

## Music

Overall, the quality of provision for music is **excellent**.

### Strengths

- Results are above average and students' achievement is excellent in relation to their starting points.
- The excellent teaching and schemes of work cater very successfully for students' varied musical needs.
- Wide-ranging extra-curricular musical opportunities provide outstanding opportunities for students' social and cultural development.
- Leadership and management of music are excellent.

### Areas for development

- There are no significant areas for development.

125. Results at AS level in 2001 were well above average and at A- level were above average. In 2002, results in both examinations were well above the average for 2001, but national figures are not yet available for comparison. Work seen during the inspection was above average and students' achievement is excellent.
126. Students' are mostly advanced musical performers and have gained high grades in nationally recognised practical examinations. Students in Year 12 possess a knowledge of musical styles and eras that is above average, and their extensive knowledge of key words and definitions enables them to analyse music they hear very accurately. Students develop their strengths and personal interests when composing and achieve high standards, often with the use of computers. Students acquire a thorough working knowledge of conventional harmony, which contributes significantly to the assurance they display in their composing.
127. Teaching is excellent. The teachers have highly developed musical skills and readily share these along with their own enthusiasm with students. Lessons are characterised by excellent relationships and good humour. Lessons are very well prepared and use an appropriate range of

resources, including worksheets of very high quality. Teachers provide very good individual assistance, which enables all students to make excellent gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. Students' learning is excellent because the carefully targeted support enables both the most experienced musicians and those who began AS level without having first taken GCSE to learn confidently. Time is carefully apportioned to tasks and deadlines are used effectively to establish and maintain a very good pace of learning. Students' learning is continually checked by the very searching use of questioning. Students maintain a high level of concentration through lessons, and they collaborate efficiently, for example in paired composing. They mostly participate readily in discussions, but a few quieter students contribute relatively little to these, which reduces their pace of learning. In an outstanding lesson in Year 12, students investigated ways of developing musical ideas when composing. The students worked very hard throughout the lesson, experimenting with varied scales and musical devices. The teacher made very good use of information sheets, an overhead projector and a recording to analyse the opening section of Bernstein's 'Chichester Psalms'. From this the students gained a clear understanding of important technical aspects of the Bernstein work, while the teacher's obvious enthusiasm helped them to appreciate its musical impact.

128. The schemes of work provide a wide range of interesting topics, which reflect the students' aptitudes and interests, and comply fully with the requirements of the examinations. The documentation, both for music and for music technology, is of a very high standard. Marking is detailed and constructive. The department makes good use of data to predict examination grades for students. Students' work is carefully monitored, and this leads to target setting and subsequent review. This process and the teachers' support are much appreciated by the students. Lessons are supplemented by visits to concerts, and workshops that involve professional musicians. Extra-curricular provision is excellent. The school's choral and instrumental ensembles take part in a wide range of performances of a high standard in the course of the year, give regular performances in the community and visit feeder schools. Music provides students with outstanding opportunities for social and cultural development.
129. Leadership and management of music are excellent, as is day-to-day organisation of the department. Teaching is regularly monitored and the school has the capacity for realising its ambitious plans for further development. Improvement from the high standard noted at the time of the last inspection has been very good.

## Theatre studies

Overall, the quality of provision in theatre studies is **excellent**.

### Strengths

- Leadership and management of the department are excellent.
- Results are consistently very high.
- Teaching is excellent and as a result students achieve very high standards in their written and practical work.
- The range of dramatic experiences is outstanding.
- The subject makes an excellent contribution to students' personal development.

### Areas for improvement

- Accommodation.

130. Standards in theatre studies are very high compared to the national average. In 2001 all students achieved at least a pass grade and of the 25 candidates 21 gained Grade A or B. Over the four years 1998 to 2001 results have been consistently well above or very high in comparison with national averages. These are impressive results. Results fell slightly in 2002 but, nevertheless, students achieved standards similar to or above those predicted by their GCSE results and they achieved higher standards than in their other subjects. Some past students are now doing well in the profession.

131. Inspection evidence confirms these very high standards. Year 12 students already have an impressive knowledge of the theory of drama and can relate this knowledge to their own work. The two Year 12 groups are currently studying Stanislavski in parallel with their work on the set text 'Yerma' by Frederic Garcia Lorca. Both groups display total engagement with the text. In one lesson, students followed Stanislavski's method of breaking down a short piece of text into units and then identifying each character's objective and motivation. In a very lively and wide ranging discussion, students displayed excellent understanding of the acting process and of the importance of using their own experiences to inform and enrich their performances. The other group worked intensively on one character from the play, discussing symbolism and how gestures, stance and movement contribute to the audience's perception of the character. They sculpted each other into frozen images and explained the reasons behind their decisions, exploring the director's role in the drama. For this stage in their studies, both groups have an impressive understanding of Stanislavski's theories.
132. By Year 13, students are able to draw on a very wide range of knowledge. In the lesson observed, they discussed, with confidence and panache, techniques of Brechtian theatre such as pastiche, direct address, montage, chorus, epic, fragmentation and alienation. This confidence and familiarity with the material is evident also in their written work and practical portfolios. Work on Brecht's 'The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui' demonstrates cogent argument using a full range of technical terminology and exploring in detail the social, historical and cultural context of the play. Their portfolios are rich and full accounts of their research and the directorial and design processes through which they move to realise their performances.
133. Students display excellent attitudes towards the subject. They participate fully in discussion and in practical sessions, work extremely well together and work very hard both in lessons and in their independent research. They respond with enthusiasm to the teacher's high expectations and enjoy being responsible for their performance work, recognising that they grow in independence through having to plan, organise, design and direct their devised pieces.
134. The quality of teaching is consistently excellent. The teacher's excellent knowledge of the subject, tireless energy and enthusiasm together with extremely high expectations inspires students to make excellent intellectual and creative effort. In lessons, students are led through a rapid learning curve and skilful questioning techniques ensure that they learn for themselves, drawing on their own knowledge and experiences to move forward and to improve their standards of performance. In a Year 13 lesson, Brechtian techniques were used to show how the use of the prologue could affect the audience's perceptions and expectations. The session dealt with sub-text, frames of reference, distortion of viewpoint and tunnel vision, always related to and linked with the text. Drama makes an outstanding contribution to students' personal development and to the key skills of communication, working together and problem solving. The constant use of assessment in lessons enables students to improve their own learning and performance, another key skill.
135. Leadership and management of the department are excellent. The head of department sets an example to others by her own energy and commitment, and continues to strive for further improvement. In response to a student survey she has led a complete revision of schemes of work so that theory and practice are totally integrated. She has established fruitful contacts with the Exchange Theatre in Manchester, which enables some students to do work placements there and all to come into contact with professionals. A wide range of theatre visits, workshops and performances augments these links. These ensure a diverse range of dramatic experiences for students. Resources for the subject have been improved since the previous inspection with the acquisition of new sound equipment and improvements to the drama studio. However, although never allowed to compromise the high standards, accommodation is unsatisfactory. There is only one studio suitable for drama teaching. Because of the number of main school groups and the large numbers opting to take GCSE drama in Years 10 and 11, demand for space means that some sixth form lessons are conducted in the dining hall or the performance theatre. These spaces are large, impersonal and often noisy and do not provide the intimate, secure environment in which creativity flourishes. Teachers and students work hard to overcome these difficulties but deserve much better.



## HUMANITIES

136. History and sociology were inspected and reported on in depth, but psychology, some elements of humanities in the general studies course and curriculum enrichment programme were also sampled. Teaching and learning in psychology is very good. The teacher's excellent subject knowledge and obvious enthusiasm lead to very confident teaching with well-structured learning activities to ensure high levels of student participation. Students clearly enjoy the subject and display a good understanding of a wide range of subject terminology. In an excellent Year 13 general studies lesson students made rapid progress in understanding the potential for bias in newspaper reporting. Very good use was made of small group work to help students distinguish fact from opinion. Two Year 12 religious studies lessons, taught as part of the curriculum enrichment programme, were sampled. Teaching and learning in both lessons were good. There was a strong emphasis on active learning as students planned investigations of topics as wide ranging as atheism, communism, Islam, the ethics of the firemans' strike and liberal attitudes to sex.

### History

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

#### Strengths

- Teachers' subject knowledge.
- Support for students' learning.
- Students' attitudes to the subject.

#### Areas for improvement

- The range of teaching and learning strategies.
- The use of ICT to support teaching and learning.
- Improvement planning.

137. Results in the A-level examinations have fluctuated over the last few years. In 2001, both the overall results and those of male students were well below average, although in 2000 they had been close to average. In 2002 results improved significantly. All students obtained pass grades in the A to E range with over half obtaining higher A or B grades. These results represent good achievement and there was little difference in the performance of male and female students. About three-quarters of the Year 12 AS candidates elected to continue with the subject into the present Year 13.
138. In lessons and work seen during the inspection attainment is above average, and students achieve well. Students analyse sources critically and use evidence well in coming to conclusions about conflicting interpretations of history, although they are unlikely to explicitly refer to the provenance of a source in evaluating its reliability. Presented with a range of evidence, they make accurate and perceptive inferences, which higher-attaining students are able to confidently substantiate and amplify in oral work. Their technically accurate extended writing reflects quite good progress in the communication area of key skills, but the absence of planned ICT opportunities in lessons restricts the benefits that can be obtained through the application of these skills. Lower attaining students are less likely to demonstrate detailed chronological knowledge about events and developments in pre-Revolutionary Russia.
139. The quality of teaching is always good and sometimes better than that. Teachers' very good subject knowledge is apparent in the detailed notes with which students are issued to support their studies, and supplemented by well-chosen lesson activities. This was seen in a Year 13 lesson on Stalin's cultural policy, for example, and resulted in students learning very well about 'socialist realism' supplanting the 'cult of the little man'. In another Year 13 lesson on the collapse of Ramsay Macdonald's Labour government in 1931, the teacher selected materials well and

challenged students to reconcile the conflicting views of MacDonald as either a 'traitor' or a 'National statesman'. Students are well supported in their learning by the close marking of essays, which includes the correction of spelling errors and detailed diagnostic comment identifying scope for improvement. In some lessons opportunities were missed to reinforce students' grasp of chronology, or to develop their independence and self-reliance in learning, because of the tendency to tell rather than ask, or to ask closed rather than open questions. Teacher-centred lessons with a lack of variety in learning activities means that higher attaining students are not always as stretched as they might be, which is reflected in the relative paucity of A grades in recent examinations and coursework.

140. A significant contribution to the good quality of learning is made by students' very good attitudes to the subject. They are willing and attentive in lessons and contribute readily and at length in discussion; they approach their studies in a mature and responsible way, and the good humoured and mutually respectful atmosphere in classrooms encourages less confident students to participate.
141. The subject is well led and managed by an experienced teacher who has been at the school for some while. There is a good range of resources available although students occasionally have to share one text that is currently out of print. Accommodation has improved since the last inspection with the acquisition of another classroom, but the subject still makes very little use of computers in teaching and learning. Results are carefully analysed and are well used to offer students valuable advice about examination and study skills. Development planning accurately identifies appropriate areas but lacks clear criteria for measuring progress and therefore makes effective monitoring of progress difficult. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection, but there is a need for further improvement in teaching and learning and the use of ICT.

## Sociology

Overall, the quality of provision for sociology is **very good**

### Strengths

- Very good teaching and learning.
- Excellent leadership and management.
- Students' very positive attitudes.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment in external examinations.
- Students' use of statistical data.

142. A-level results have fluctuated over recent years. In 1999 results were slightly above average, but in 2000 they were well above, and boys in particular, achieved very well. In 2001 the overall results were average although the proportion of students obtained the higher A or B grades was well below students nationally. The 2002 results show an improvement overall, although students performed less well in sociology than they did in the other subjects taken. One candidate's marks were high enough to be in the top ten in the country. Sociology is very popular and almost one-third of current sixth-formers are studying the subject. AS level results are satisfactory and in 2002 all students achieved their predicted grades.
143. Inspection evidence shows standards in Year 13 to be above course expectations. Students have a good knowledge and understanding of a range of sociological terms and studies, and can address issues through different sociological perspectives. They have well developed research and oral communication skills because of the prevalence of investigative and discursive teaching and learning strategies. Critical thinking is encouraged through the analysis and interpretation of material presented through a variety of media including articles, texts, images and photographs, videos and electronic presentations. Students' files confirm that their organizational and personal learning skills are good, but that there is scope for development in some of their written work; lower-attaining students in particular often fail to answer in sufficient detail and their spelling is

occasionally sufficiently eccentric to impede the effective communication of their ideas. There was only limited evidence of students routinely using statistical data in their work and this is an area for development. Students complete a good volume of personal work and make good progress over the course as a whole.

144. The quality of teaching is consistently very good. Lessons are meticulously planned with considerable attention paid to a variety of starter activities designed to capture students' attention. Students are effective independent learners because they are actively involved in the majority of lessons and make good progress as a result. In one Year 13 lesson, the teacher used the idea of an imaginary remote control to invite students to 'flick' through television screen images to introduce them to the eclectic and fragmented nature of post modernism. An important contribution to the quality of learning in the subject is the attitudes of students, many of whom are passionate about sociology, and the insights that it has afforded, into the world around them. They approach their work in an enthusiastic and mature fashion and engage in

heated debate about issues such as the morality of radical feminism. Very good use is made of ICT in the research and presentation of material and students are increasingly adept at using the interactive white board to 'deconstruct' sociological topics.

145. Leadership and management of the subject are excellent. The head of department has worked extremely hard to rebuild the subject following the effects of a fire; lesson observations, students' files, display and departmental documentation confirm that the breadth of teaching and learning styles has continued to be a critical focus. Much energy and reflection have been devoted to the creation and organization of resources for the subject; students are very well supported in their learning through being able to choose their own topic in the Power and Control unit and through the use of detailed proforma, which involve them in assessing and monitoring their own progress. Given the variety of learning activities that may be going on at the same time the accommodation is a little cramped. The last report included little mention of sociology and the current high profile of the subject indicates that there has been very good improvement since then.

## **ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION**

146. The focus of the inspection was on English language and French, but English literature, German and Spanish were also sampled. In 2001 all students passed the English literature examination and the proportion gaining Grades A or B was well above average. Girls achieved better results than boys. 2002 results show an increase in the proportion gaining the higher grades and again, all students passed the examination. In the lesson observed, attainment was above average and teaching and learning were very good. Thorough preparation and lively and imaginative teaching engaged students' interest and they made very good progress in their understanding of the issue of race in 'Othello'. Students displayed good knowledge of the text and an ability to make shrewd and perceptive comments. Results in A-level German in 2002 were above the national average for 2001. Evidence from the lesson observed and from students' files shows standards in Year 13 to be above average, and teaching is good. Spanish is in its first year as an AS subject. Both male and female students contribute significantly to oral work, and achieve very high standards in timed oral presentations and debate. Teaching in the lesson observed was excellent.

### **English language**

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

#### Strengths

- The department is very well led and managed.
- Very good teaching enables students to make rapid gains in learning and achieve well above average examination results.
- Students have very positive attitudes and work hard.
- The diagnosis and provision for individual learning needs are excellent.

#### Areas for improvement

- The consistency of marking students' work.

147. Standards in GCE A-level English language in 2001 were well above average, as they had been in the two previous years. Boys and girls achieved similar results. Results in 2002 fell, but far more students were entered for the examination with a wider range of prior attainment. AS results were also lower, but re-marks being returned to the school have almost all shown an increase in marks awarded and it would seem reasonable to assume that the department has been affected by the national problems experienced with the marking of AS and A-level papers.

148. The observation of work during the inspection confirms that standards are well above average. Year 12 students rapidly acquire both the specialist subject knowledge about language and the analytical skills that the course demands. By Year 13 they have a very secure knowledge and

understanding of a wide range of theorists such as Chomsky, Crystal and Piaget and are able to use their analytical skills in discussing, for instance, whether language structures are innate or learned.

149. Students display very positive attitudes towards the subject. Year 12 students recognise that the early stages of the course are challenging because of the very steep learning curve involved, but they feel that teachers make every effort to explain the new learning clearly and try to make learning as much fun as they can. They are willing to work hard because they know that the new skills of analysis and evaluation that they are acquiring will be useful across the curriculum, not just in English language.

150. The quality of teaching is very good with some excellent features. Very good planning, underpinned by teachers' excellent subject knowledge, results in lessons with a wide range of teaching methods which engage students' interest. Teaching also promotes very good development of the key skills of communication and working together. As a result students are very good at taking and making notes, at digesting the material they read and at presenting their findings coherently. Teachers have very high expectations and maintain a constant emphasis on how to achieve success in examinations. Students are encouraged to become independent learners because they are required to undertake personal research. For instance, in an excellent Year 13 lesson, students had prepared entertaining group presentations based on their own research. One group had videoed a two-year-old and analysed his language development. Another group showed a video presentation of a role-play in which they debated the various merits of different theories about language acquisition. The chairperson was able to summarise, keep the debate moving and then draw together their ideas at the end. This lesson was particularly successful because of the teacher's insistence on students' planning and developing their own learning while ensuring that they had the skills and knowledge to achieve these very high standards of attainment. The only area for further development is the use of marking. While assessment of students' understanding and progress through carefully focused questioning happens on a regular basis in lessons, marking is inconsistent. Although some teachers base their comments on the course assessment objectives and explain how the work can be improved, others make very general comments and do not give sufficient guidance about improvement.

151. The department is very well led and managed. The head of department leads, through his own enthusiasm and excellent teaching, a committed team of teachers who work together to develop relevant and challenging schemes of work. They give very good support to students and the diagnosis and provision for individual learning needs is excellent. The department has responded

energetically to the disappointing AS results in 2002. Students themselves recognise that teaching is now more focused. They appreciate the way in which learning objectives are shared with them at the start of lessons and used at the end to check the progress that has taken place. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and the department is well placed to improve even further.

## **French**

Overall, the quality of provision for French is **very good**

### Strengths

- Results at A-level are consistently well above the national average.
- Very good teaching features imaginative activities, which engage students well and stimulate learning.
- Students have very positive attitudes and work hard.
- An excellent range of assessment procedures supports learning effectively.
- Excellent leadership and management ensure further commitment to raising standards.

### Areas for improvement

- The number of students continuing from Year 12 into Year 13.

152. Results at A-level in 2001 were well above the national average for the 12 students entered. Nine students, including both male candidates, gained A or B grades. Results in 2002 were even better, with five of the six students gaining grades A or B, again including both male candidates. Unfortunately, less than half of students who completed the AS level course continued to A-level in 2002, a situation repeated in the current Year 13. Students make their decisions because of workload in Year 12 and despite very good results in the AS examination.
153. Evidence from work seen, students' files and an interview with students confirms that standards are well above average. Students in Year 13 are continuing to make very good progress, building on the high grades they gained at GCSE and AS levels. All five are high-attaining female students. They speak French confidently, though there is some searching for words when they try to convey difficult concepts. They talk freely about holidays in France, and with acceptable accuracy and content when discussing more challenging themes such as homelessness and a film about prejudice. Pronunciation is very good, and intonation satisfactory. They understand the key messages in extended passages of spoken and written French. They show good ability to deduce meaning from context, because their knowledge of vocabulary and language patterns is well developed. Written work shows strong evidence of applying this knowledge. They build arguments in accurate and extended essays on social and environmental issues. Redrafted work demonstrates improvement. Content shows evidence of independent research, including use of Internet sources. Achievement, overall, is well above average.
154. In Year 12, three male and nine female students are making good progress in the early stages of study. They are quickly extending the grammatical knowledge which helped them to gain high GCSE grades, and are beginning to apply this in both oral and written work. They benefit from participation in imaginative tasks, including games, which improve their oral confidence. In one lesson, they collaborated in a lively game, involving the whole class, to identify types of drugs. Early attempts at writing about prescribed social issues show very good progression from GCSE. Though they do not yet eliminate basic errors, content is good, and accuracy and range of language are improving. They are rapidly increasing their factual knowledge of contemporary French society, and understand key points in comprehension work. All students are achieving their potential at this stage, with some clearly achieving very well indeed.
155. Teaching is very good, overall, with some excellent features. Knowledge of French, and of examination requirements, is excellent and drives learning. Teachers use French consistently and provide appropriate models. The best sequences of teaching and learning are those where no English is tolerated. Planning for lessons is very good, with activities delivered effectively through an excellent range of teaching methods. Through the provision of imaginative and purposeful oral tasks, students are really well engaged. They enjoy participation, lose oral inhibitions and make steady progress. The foreign language assistant makes a good contribution to further developing oral skills through small group work. Teaching and learning in French make a very good contribution to Key Skills in the area of communications. There is also some contribution to the ICT strand, as students use Power Point to make oral presentations, and access Internet for factual information. Teachers provide students with very good strategies for success in reading and aural comprehension, especially through the outstanding Students' Handbook. This also ensures that they fully understand course objectives and assessment criteria, so that they gain the maximum benefit from excellent marking and verbal feedback in lessons. Homework is an important tool for promoting independent work, and contributes significantly to learning.
156. Students in both years have very positive attitudes. They make very good use of guidance to improve their study skills as they cope with the greater demands on their time of the AS course. They enjoy classwork and value the efforts of teachers on their behalf. They are fully aware of how well they are doing and of how to improve further. In private study time they make effective use of listening and reading resources in the library, and participate in regular sessions with the foreign language assistant. They organise their files very well, so that they have easy access to the large quantity of support materials made available to them.
157. There is excellent leadership and management for work in the subject. Consequently, teachers share a commitment to prioritise active tasks, which bring schemes of work to life. Planning for

comparatively new courses is well developed, with constant review in the light of experience. Most lessons focus on issues which raise awareness of the human condition, and make a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Plans are in hand to address the problem of retention into Year 13. A battery of assessment procedures, including individual tutorial time, ensures that students' progress is constantly monitored and that problems are detected early. It is intended that some students may soon be able to spend Year 12 work experience time in France, which would extend their knowledge of French youth culture as well as boosting oral fluency. Overall, this is a very effective team of teachers, which has brought about very good improvement since the previous inspection.