

INSPECTION REPORT

THE LONDON NAUTICAL SCHOOL

Blackfriars, London

LEA area: Lambeth

Unique reference number: 100642

Headteacher: Mr G H Wilson

Reporting inspector: Mr M Pavey
17650

Dates of inspection: 7 - 10 October 2002

Inspection number: 249594

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Boys for ages 11 - 16, mixed sixth form
School address:	61 Stamford Street Blackfriars London
Postcode:	SE1 9NA
Telephone number:	020 7928 6801
Fax number:	020 7261 9408
Appropriate authority:	Lambeth
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A J Cox
Date of previous inspection:	7 - 11 October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17650	Martin Pavey	Registered inspector	Personal and social education	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and students' achievements</p> <p>How well are students taught?</p> <p>How well does the school care for its students?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p>
13849	Elizabeth Bowes	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Students' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
15312	Kay Lord	Team inspector	Physical education	
27411	Heather Butensky	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
20729	James Berry	Team inspector	Science	
27351	Michael Stanton	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
12121	Jack Mallinson	Team inspector	English English as an additional language	
8250	John Brigden	Team inspector	Art	
1782	Andrew Lyons	Team inspector	Design technology Business education	
20497	Vernon Williams	Team inspector	Geography Nautical studies	
8104	Joan Child	Team inspector	Music	

28097	Sheila Nolan	Team inspector	Mathematics	
12110	Roger Bailess	Team inspector	Modern languages	
12179	Laurence Moscrop	Team inspector	Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
14490	Susan Jackson	Team inspector	History	
23868	Brian Blundell	Team inspector	Sixth form biology	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The London Nautical School is an 11-18 comprehensive foundation school in Lambeth. It occupies a restricted, urban site, close to the Thames. There are 532 boys aged 11-16, and an expanding sixth form of 91 students, 80 boys and 11 girls. The school strongly maintains its nautical traditions and offers qualifications and activities in line with this founding purpose.

Pupils come from Lambeth and surrounding boroughs. At present, 468 pupils are from white backgrounds, 69 mixed, 31 Asian, 23 black, and 32 from other backgrounds. There are 30 pupils who have English as an additional language. There are 77 pupils on the register of those with special educational needs (SEN), of whom 24 have statements, the majority for specific learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are at present 108 pupils eligible for free school meals (17 per cent, a broadly average figure). The areas from which pupils come are very varied in terms of social and economic circumstances.

Since the last inspection, the school has grown by some 120 pupils and has acquired foundation status. Girls have been admitted to the sixth form as from 1999.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving and very popular school. It provides a satisfactory standard of academic education and many aspects of its wider provision are good. Levels of attainment for pupils joining the school at age 11 have been rising. This suggests that results for younger pupils should be higher than for older ones, and this is partly the reason why results in the national tests at age 14 are very high, GCSE results are average and A level results are well below average. Results, though, could be higher, and although teaching is satisfactory, pupils are not offered enough challenge in several subjects. The leadership of the senior staff is good and that of heads of department satisfactory. The school strongly preserves its nautical traditions, which give it a distinctive and positive atmosphere. The school provides satisfactory value for money. It is well placed to maintain and improve on its present achievements. In recent years, results have been affected by the great difficulties in recruiting teachers in science, and also in mathematics and design and technology, especially for GCSE classes. For the first time in three years, the school has started this academic year with a full complement of permanent teachers.

What the school does well

- Results in 2001 were well above average in the national tests at age 14. GCSE results were high in English language and literature, geography, nautical studies, business studies and art. In 2002, GCSE results rose above the 2001 national average in art, and English language and literature. Results in business studies GNVQ (General National Vocational Qualifications) and A level were high also.
- Behaviour is good. The school is a courteous and well ordered community. The school's nautical tradition has created a positive and responsible ethos, with a marked sense of good order and service.
- There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. Encouraged by the school, the community makes a first rate contribution to pupils' learning.
- The school helps pupils develop very well socially. It cares for them well and parents are supportive of the school.
- The headteacher and deputy lead the school well. Financial procedures are excellent.

What could be improved

- The school is already aware of the following issues, some of which appear in its current development plan:
- Overall, GCSE and A level results are not as high as they should be. However, A level results rose considerably in 2002
 - Teachers need to challenge pupils to do better, in many subjects. Their assessment of pupils' work needs improvement so that pupils make progress in response to clear and challenging targets.
 - Senior staff need to strengthen links with heads of department, especially in the monitoring of teaching, and to help departments become more effective in teaching, assessment and development planning.
 - Accommodation needs general improvement and expansion. In particular, the library is inadequate to serve as a central resource for the school and its growing sixth form.
 - Teaching, results and the curriculum need much improvement in design and technology (DT). GCSE results need particular improvement in DT and science.

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 October 1996. Since then, improvement has been satisfactory overall. Good progress has been made in addressing the key issues for action in the last report; particularly in sixth form development and improvements in the quality of reports and communication with parents. Development planning has improved. Although the school has implemented a good programme of performance management, the regular monitoring of teaching is still not effective enough. Academic results have improved, but not as much as the school had hoped. Improvement in leadership and management has been good. Teaching was reported as good in the last report, but is now judged satisfactory, largely because its impact on standards of attainment and pupils' progress is not as great as it should be.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Pupils' attainment is overall average or somewhat above on entry to the school at age 11. Over their first three years, they generally make satisfactory progress. Though progress is good in mathematics, art, geography and nautical studies, it is unsatisfactory in design and technology. Results in the national tests in 2001 in all three subjects - English, mathematics and science - were well above average, though rather below the school's targets.

GCSE results have been rising for several years and were broadly average in 2001. Over the two year GCSE course, pupils make satisfactory progress. They make very good progress in nautical studies, and good progress in business studies, art, geography and music. Their progress is unsatisfactory in science, design and technology and French. Their progress is not therefore good in any of the main subjects which all pupils take. Although GCSE results have not reached the targets set by the school, they are well above average when compared with those of socially similar schools, on the basis of pupils' entitlement to free school meals. However, when compared with the performance of schools with similar test results two years earlier, the GCSE performance of these pupils in 2001 was very low, in the lowest 5 per cent of schools nationally. This indicates that GCSE results, though average in national terms, could be considerably higher.

The attainment of students entering the sixth form has been below average until recently, and results at A level have been well below average. However, students make satisfactory progress in lessons, overall, helped by good teaching and relationships. In the subjects inspected in detail, students were achieving well in biology, very well in business education, and satisfactorily in others. A level results rose considerably in 2002, and those in English, history and biology were higher than in previous years.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils like the school and are keen to work and succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The school is a courteous and ordered community.

Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils develop good attitudes to work and each other. Relationships are good, and particularly strong in the sixth form.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils are aware of the importance of attendance and are punctual to lessons.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are strong features of the school, which fosters a sense of decency and fair conduct. Pupils respond positively, creating a well balanced and purposeful community. The school's nautical traditions have strongly influenced the development of the school's good ethos.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	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 satisfactory in the majority of subjects in the main school, so that pupils learn at a satisfactory rate also. Teaching is very good in business studies, and good in English, history, art and nautical studies. It is satisfactory in other subjects, including mathematics and science. Though many lessons have some unsatisfactory features, in no subject is teaching unsatisfactory overall. In two respects, teaching is good. These are teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects, and their management of pupils. In most other respects, including their teaching of key skills in literacy and numeracy, teachers' professional skills are satisfactory. A common weakness, particularly in the GCSE years, is the lack of pace and challenge given by teachers. In many otherwise satisfactory lessons, teachers did not stimulate pupils to make as much progress as they might. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work sometimes lacks rigour and detail, and seldom assesses their progress against clear targets for their improvement. The school meets the needs of all pupils well, including those with special educational needs.

Teaching is generally good in the sixth form, and students learn well. Teacher's particular strengths are their good knowledge of their subjects and relationships with their students. Pace, expectation and challenge are often good at this level, being a good deal stronger than in the lower years. Other aspects of teaching in the sixth form are satisfactory, sometimes good. Teachers' planning is often good and their methods and use of resources at least satisfactory. Their assessment of students' work is satisfactory overall, but varies in quality.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum provides a broad and relevant education for all pupils, except in design and technology. Nautical studies and business studies are particular strengths.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school has created an effective, integrated support service for all pupils who need extra help.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Specialist teachers help pupils effectively, though almost no pupils are held back through having English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good in all respects, except for the appreciation of multi-cultural aspects. The school is a good place for pupils to develop well in spiritual, moral, social and cultural terms.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. The school is a strongly supportive community.
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The school works well in partnership with parents. Particular strengths of its curriculum include its support group of teachers and other professionals who help pupils with special educational needs; its vocational provision in the GCSE years, including nautical studies and business studies; its excellent range of extra-curricular activities; and its first rate use of the community to enhance the curriculum it offers. The curriculum has no overall weaknesses, but the programmes of study in design and technology are unsatisfactory and the curriculum does not meet statutory requirement in this subject in the GCSE course.

The school cares for its pupils well, with good procedures for child protection, health and safety, behaviour and attendance. Though the school's overall procedures for assessing pupils' progress are satisfactory, its use of assessment to help teachers set individual targets for the further improvement of their work is unsatisfactory at present. The school is aware of this issue and has already planned to improve its performance in this area.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The school is well led by the headteacher, the leadership group including the head of sixth, and bursar. Its management by heads of department and years is satisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. The governing body is well led. It is well informed about the school and fulfils its statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Development planning and the evaluation of the school's progress are good, but the monitoring of teaching and of departments' performance in assessment and planning are not yet satisfactory.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school is closely aware of its financial income and expenditure, and makes particularly good use of the special grants it receives.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. Particular strengths in leadership and management include the headteacher's clear vision for the continued development of the school; the good partnership between the leadership group and the governors; and excellent financial planning and provision of support services for teachers and pupils. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils work hard, do their best and make good progress. Behaviour is good and the school helps pupils become mature and responsible. Teaching is good and the school is well led and managed. Parents would feel comfortable in approaching the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some parents do not feel well informed or that the school works closely enough with them. They would like better communication from the school, particularly about pupils' progress. Some parents consider that better and more regular homework should be provided.

Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. Though they agree that much teaching is good, particularly for younger pupils and in the sixth form, they judge that its overall effect is satisfactory, because many teachers could do more (in the GCSE years particularly) to challenge pupils to produce higher results.

Inspectors judge that the level of communication from the school to parents is good, for example in reports, publications and the very full governors' report to parents. The school's practice of seeking and acting upon parents' comments, for example about reports, is very good, while its use of new technology to give parents

24 hour emergency access to a member of staff is first class.

During the inspection, the quality of homework and of homework notebooks was satisfactory. However, parents continue to have anxieties about whether homework is being adequately set and marked, and at least one parent complained to the school during the inspection week. The school needs to ensure that its standards are being kept up at all times.

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM THE LONDON NAUTICAL SCHOOL

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The school's sixth form roll has gradually risen. Girls were admitted to the sixth form in 1999, and further expansion was then planned, so that currently 91 students are enrolled, including 11 girls. This academic year, 41 per cent of Year 11 chose to continue their studies in the school. The school is very committed to providing opportunities for students to continue with their education after the age of 16. To widen the range of courses on offer, the popular GNVQ business course has been introduced. The school wishes all students to be able to benefit from its sixth form provision, including those of low prior attainment. As a result, overall attainment on entry to the sixth form has been generally below average.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

This is an increasingly effective sixth form. It provides an educational experience that meets the academic and social needs of a wide range of students. Although standards are below average, they represent satisfactory levels of achievement for many students. Provisional results for 2002, although still below average, show improvement. Teaching and learning are good. The sixth form makes a good contribution to the development of the students' self-confidence and self-esteem. Students benefit from a range of additional courses and activities which enhance their experience and contribute well to their personal development. They receive good individual guidance and support. Leadership and management are good and the sixth form increasingly provides satisfactory value for money.

Strengths

- Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The recruitment and retention of students in the sixth form have improved.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Teaching and students' learning are good.
- Most students achieve satisfactorily in relation to their starting points, particularly in business studies.
- The students' attitudes to the sixth form are good. They have confidence in their teachers and appreciate the efforts staff make to help them learn.
- Students receive good individual guidance and support, and benefit from the very good range of additional activities.

What could be improved

- Attainment in some subjects is well below the national average, particularly in AS-level examinations. However, A level results rose considerably in 2002, and those in English, history and biology were higher than in previous years.
- Students need better opportunities to benefit from structured tutorial provision, including careers education and guidance.
- The consistency of the monitoring of the students' day-to-day academic progress in each of their specialist subjects needs improvement.
- The identification and development of students' key skills are not yet well provided for.
- Improvement is needed in resources to support students' independent study, particularly library provision.

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
English	Satisfactory. Standards, previously below expectation, rose in 2002 to above the national average for 2001. Teaching is good but does not sufficiently engage students in discussion.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Satisfactory. Standards in the A2-level examinations are improving but too few students are successful in the AS-level examinations. There is a significant increase in the number of students studying mathematics in Year 12.
Biology	Good. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Lively classroom interactions enhance learning. Some resources are inadequate for the increased number of students.
Business education	Good. Results are improving year by year. Given their starting points, students sometimes exceed expectations. Teaching is good.
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory. Results are improving, but remain below average. Teaching is good and students' attitudes very good. Assessment needs improvement.

In other subjects, lessons were sampled. There was good teaching in chemistry, religious education, modern foreign languages, and some geography lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	The school provides effective guidance for individual students in this small but expanding sixth form. It endeavours to maintain a balance between its high expectations about students' dress and behaviour and its efforts to give greater responsibility. Students are appreciative of the support they receive, including advice from tutors, and the various higher education and careers events provided. Despite this, inspectors agree with students that careers advice and resources could be further improved.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The leadership and the management of the sixth form are good. There is a clear vision for its future development. Current strengths include the inclusive approach and good quality of the informal guidance and support given. There are regular reviews of the students' overall progress with the head of sixth form who knows the students well. However, better information on the students' achievements from some subjects, particularly in Year 12, is needed to help students know more clearly how well they are doing.

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"> Students enjoy being in the sixth form. They are taught well and challenged to do their best. They are expected to study and work hard and do independent research. Teachers are supportive if students are having difficulties with work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is insufficient access to careers advice and resources. Students feel that in some subjects they could be better informed about their progress. They would like to be consulted more about the running of the sixth form. They consider that the range of worthwhile activities beyond lessons is too limited.

Students are very positive about the sixth form and the support they receive. Its strengths have been confirmed by this inspection. Their reservations about activities and opportunities beyond the school day are surprising, as there is a very wide range of extra-curricular activities available to them should they choose to

participate. In spite of the number of careers interviews and higher education events, their views about insufficient access to careers advice and resources are just, because of the lack of a structured tutorial and careers programme. In discussion, students confirm that they are consulted and listened to about the running of the sixth form through their school council, even if they do not always agree with decisions made. The inspection evidence agrees with the students' views that in some subjects there is insufficient rigour in the tracking of their short-term progress. Students report positively on teachers' accessibility to discuss their progress, when requested to do so.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Tests taken by pupils on entry to the school confirm overall levels of attainment to be in line with the national average, or somewhat higher. The results of national tests taken in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 in previous schools in 2001 indicate an above-average level of attainment in all these subjects, with science the strongest, followed by mathematics and then English. Because levels of attainment have been rising in recent years, this high attainment of younger pupils is not necessarily reflected in that of the older pupils.
2. Results in the national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were well above average in all three subjects. They were very high when compared with those of pupils in socially similar schools (the comparison is with schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals). Again, results were highest in science, though English was furthest ahead when compared with the average performance in English of schools nationally. The average points scored in these tests has been rising in recent years, although results in 2001 fell short of the targets set by the school on the basis of these student's performance in tests at age 11. Results in 2002 improved a little in mathematics, but were lower in English and science. Overall, results in tests at the end of Year 9 were high but could have been even higher.
3. Over their first three years in the school, pupils' achievement, seen in the progress they make in this time, is satisfactory overall. It is good in mathematics, art, geography and nautical studies, but unsatisfactory in design and technology. So in most subjects, pupils make steady progress in their first three years, though not as much as they might.
4. Results in GCSE have risen for the number of five or more grades A*-C achieved over recent years. Each year they have improved steadily, and reached 45 per cent at this level in 2001, a broadly average result, though below the national achievement in that year. Results rose a little further in 2002. Achievement of five or more passes at grades A*-G in 2001 was again close to the national average, though below, and again results improved further in 2002. The total GCSE points scored in 2001 were close to the average, although from 2000 the trend in improvement in these results has fallen behind the national trend. In 2001, GCSE results were high in English language and literature, art, geography, nautical studies and business studies.
5. When compared with the performance of schools with similar test results two years earlier, the GCSE performance of these pupils in 2001 was very low, in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. However, when compared with the (free school meals) performance of socially similar schools, pupils' performance was well above average. Overall, the school's GCSE results, though average in national terms, could have been considerably higher in view of pupils' previous attainments. Over the last three years, the school has failed to meet its own targets for GCSE. During the GCSE years, therefore, pupils' achievement and progress have been unsatisfactory in relation to their potential. The reasons for this are seen in the relative lack of challenge in teaching and departmental assessment practices. However, the subject reports in part D of this report reflect a generally satisfactory performance in relation to that expected nationally.
6. At present, there are considerable variations between subjects in GCSE achievement and in pupils' progress. Overall, over these years, pupils again make satisfactory progress. Their progress is very good in nautical studies, and good in business studies, art, geography and music. It is unsatisfactory in science, design and technology and French. Particularly where progress is unsatisfactory, pupils are not faced with the challenge and expectations which would bring higher results; where it is satisfactory, more challenge would bring better progress and higher achievement.
7. In English, pupils make satisfactory progress during their five years in the main school, while those with SEN make good progress, helped by good support from teaching assistants and learning mentors. In mathematics, progress is satisfactory overall, but the good progress now seen in pupils' first three years suggests that pupils' high motivation to succeed is now leading to higher achievement in the GCSE years also. In science, though progress is satisfactory overall, severe staffing difficulties in the

GCSE years have led to unsatisfactory progress and achievement at this level. Across all subjects, pupils make satisfactory progress in the key skills of literacy, and good progress in numeracy.

8. The school carefully monitors the attainment of different minority groups, to make sure that everyone is included in the education process. Though there is little significant difference in their attainment on entry to the school, GCSE results are higher for pupils from minority groups than for those from white backgrounds. No particular minority group achieves more highly than another.
9. The school has a sound understanding of how different ability groups of pupils are achieving and helps them overcome any barriers to learning. For example the learning mentors, who have been funded by the Excellence in Cities initiative, play a very important part in raising attainment for C/D borderline pupils in GCSE.
10. Pupils with SEN, including those with statements, make good progress through the five years of main school. Specialist staff, well linked with departments, support individuals well, cover the range of different needs, and ensure individuals make good progress in acquiring basic skills and knowledge of the subject. Progress is monitored closely, so that staff are aware of the progress which pupils make.
11. In most class lessons, SEN pupils make some gains in knowledge and understanding. Where lessons were most effective, pupils were given clear information on how to achieve their learning objectives. For example, in a Year 9 history lesson, the objectives, to distinguish the different types of weapons used in the First World War, were clearly explained at the start. In a Year 10 English lesson, pupils with SEN had positive attitudes and persevered in the face of difficulties in distinguishing the difference between similes and metaphors.
12. The school gives good support to pupils who have English as an additional language. About thirty pupils are so listed, mostly in the earlier years. Their work is monitored, and careful records are kept of test results and progress. But there is no evidence that any of these pupils are hampered in any way in their studies. All can speak English fluently. All can understand the language used by teachers in class, and the language used in text-books.
13. Though their identities are not as clearly established as those of other groups, gifted and talented pupils make good progress in the earlier years, and satisfactory progress in the GCSE years. When tasks are challenging, these pupils can often make rapid progress, absorbing new information rapidly and showing real excitement about what they are doing. For example, in a very good Year 7 lesson in nautical studies, pupils very rapidly picked up information on buoyancy aids and clothing, developing a very high understanding of marine procedures and safety issues. Five bright pupils stayed behind to make their first enquiries about getting into the Royal Navy.
14. Since the last inspection, improvement in pupils' attainment and progress has been gradual in terms of results achieved, but satisfactory overall. However, the last report found that pupils' progress was good in English and science, and this is now judged satisfactory.

Sixth form

15. The attainment of students going into the sixth form has been rather below that of pupils in the main school and the total points scored in GCE A and AS level examinations in 2001 were well below the national average. The school's score was nine points and the national average 16.9. Based on its moderate GCSE performance in 2000, the school exceeded the predictions made for A and AS level achievement in 2002, achieving a score of 12 points. This score was higher than in recent years, over which time the total points scored have risen slowly but steadily. Though most subjects had too few pupils to make a valid national comparison, those which did - biology, computer studies and mathematics - scored well below the national average. The attainment of students in lessons seen was around the national average, though overall a little below this level. There is evidence that levels of attainment are improving as more people join the sixth form, so leading to the prospect of higher results. In 2002, the results in English, biology and history were above the national average of the previous year. The proportion of students remaining on courses has also been rising, from 86 per cent for A level students completing the course in 2001 to 92 per cent in 2002. A similar rise was achieved for AS level students, while there was a considerable improvement in the rate of Year 12 GNVQ students remaining on course, from 33 per cent to 100 per cent.

16. In 2001 and 2002, the school has entered pupils for GNVQ foundation and intermediate examinations in business. In both years, one candidate has taken the subject at foundation level and has passed. One candidate passed at intermediate level in 2001 and three passed the intermediate examination and one the foundation in 2002.
17. During the sixth form course, pupils make satisfactory progress overall, though their progress in art is unsatisfactory at this level. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds made better progress than others, judged in their higher points scores in the A level examinations in 2001, but made the same progress as all others in 2002. Students make satisfactory progress in the key skills of communication, application of number and information and communication technology, and their skills in these areas are sufficient for them to benefit from the courses they take. However, they do not make all the progress they might, as the school has not yet provided any particular courses to improve these skills. As the result of their satisfactory progress overall, students increasingly reach the courses they have applied for; in 2000 54 per cent went on to higher education, and this increased to 69 per cent in 2001.
18. In the last inspection report in 1996, sixth form results were in line with the national average. Since then, the average points score has fallen, and results have not improved as much as might have been hoped. However, the number of candidates was very low until 2000, and comparison between the performance of different years is not really possible. Numbers are now much higher, and are now sufficient to make overall comparison with the national achievement. Small numbers still make the comparison of individual subjects with national averages difficult in most subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

19. All pupils in all years, including those with SEN, have good attitudes and values, to the school and each other. Responsibility, attention to duty and equal regard for others are central to the school's mission statement, and these values permeate all aspects of school life.
20. At the last inspection, positive attitudes, values and personal development were clearly apparent, and this continues to be the case. Parents also have positive opinions of the attitudes and values promoted in school. The majority of pupils wish to please their teachers and take to tasks willingly. Attitudes were very good when the lesson was well planned, teachers had high expectations and the pace was brisk. In nautical studies, attitudes were invariably very good, as pupils were very interested in the subject. Where attitudes were not satisfactory, this was often due to a slow pace and an insufficiently planned lesson that did not account for pupils' different abilities.
21. The behaviour of pupils is good and parents appreciate the behavioural standards set by the school. All groups of pupils behave well in lessons and relate well to other groups within the school, including peer groups and minority ethnic groups. All groups are successfully integrated into school life. Pupils demonstrate respect for belongings and school property. The school has high expectations regarding behaviour and there has been a significant number of fixed term exclusions when behaviour has failed to reach these standards. Significantly, there have been no permanent exclusions for several years. Bullying is rare and no group of pupils experience higher levels of bullying than any other group. This good standard of behaviour is due, at least in part, to the school's high expectations, seen for example in the parades for the whole school which take place twice a week. Pupils parade in naval headgear, which is respectfully worn, and the routine of these parades does much to confirm the ethos and good public behaviour of its pupils.
22. Occasionally behaviour in the playground can become too boisterous. The school has now started to adopt school-time exclusion, where disruptive pupils have to spend the day with a deputy head teacher; this has started to have a positive effect on reducing fixed-term exclusions.
23. Relationships within the school are good. Teachers and other staff, including the caretaking and catering staff, are effective role models and lead by example. The personal development of pupils throughout the school is also good and the pastoral system is effective. All pupils can identify at least one person that they can talk to if they have a problem. The residential activity week is an intrinsic part of making all boys feel welcomed into the school community. There is an effective system for promoting initiative and personal responsibility, based on the nautical traditions of the school. Pupils in the upper school are given increasing responsibility and are encouraged to support younger pupils.

Personal development is also significantly enhanced by the great number of extra curricular activities which take place at and around the school.

24. Pupils attend from a very wide geographical area. As a result, attendance and punctuality can suffer if there is disruption to transport in London. Despite these problems attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Sixth form

25. Attitudes in the sixth form are good. Students are keen to learn and are capable of working with a mature attitude. They therefore acquire a good basis to maintain lifelong learning and independent habits of work. They have very good attitudes in some subjects, for example in business studies. Their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school, where they are seen as role models and mentors for the younger pupils. Good relationships between staff and other students are very evident in the friendly, supportive atmosphere. Students are very sensitive to the needs of others.
26. At present, the sixth form is developing and there is only a small number of girls. However, they have settled in well and are not intimidated by being in such a minority. Personal development of students in the sixth form is good. For example, each student, as a senior person in the school, agrees to accept a responsibility to repay what the school has given him, by some particular service. Each chooses an area where they feel they can be most help, such as IT assistant or social representative. Many students are contemplating higher education and are keen to discuss such matters. Although there are individual careers interviews and a range of external information, both about careers and higher education, students rightly feel that they would like more advice and a structured careers programme.
27. Since the last inspection, sixth form students have maintained the good attitudes and behaviour reported in 1996.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

28. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is satisfactory overall in the main school up to age 16. In Years 7-9, teaching and learning were good and satisfactory in equal proportion, but there was also a number of lessons where teaching and learning were very good. A small minority of teaching was unsatisfactory - three lessons only - though learning was at least satisfactory in almost all lessons. For teaching and learning for GCSE pupils in Years 10 and 11, rather more lessons were satisfactory than good, and there were fewer very good lessons. In four lessons of the 46 seen, teaching was unsatisfactory; learning was unsatisfactory in three lessons. Teaching and learning are therefore stronger in Years 7-9 than in Years 10 and 11.
29. Teaching is satisfactory in the majority of subjects at these stages. It is very good in business studies, and good in English, history, art and nautical studies. Though there are unsatisfactory aspects, in no subject is teaching judged to be unsatisfactory overall.
30. In two respects, teaching is good. These are teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects, and their management of pupils. Good subject knowledge, when combined with good teaching skills, gives teachers a secure basis for helping pupils learn. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson, good knowledge of the two passages under scrutiny and how to analyse them led to good preparation and explanation of the lesson. This gave pupils a secure grasp of the skills and knowledge they needed. However, although this was a good lesson, it lacked real challenge and depth of discussion, so that pupils did not make all the progress they might.
31. Teachers' good management of pupils gives almost all lessons an orderly context, so that pupils enjoy a sound working atmosphere. Teachers expect pupils to behave, listen and get on with their tasks. When teachers exploit this, creating exciting lessons with real involvement from pupils, the result is rapid progress and a refreshing sense of time well spent. For example, in an excellent Year 9 history lesson on trench warfare in the First World War, the teacher's first rate knowledge and class control was very constructively used to set a fast pace and challenge individual pupils to contribute what they knew and felt. As a result, they learnt rapidly, showing their capacity for interest, concentration and effort. There are many lessons, though, where teachers do not use their competent management of pupils to help them learn in this rapid, positive way, so that pupils do what is asked but no more. This is a major reason for their seldom achieving more than average grades in GCSE.
32. In all other respects, teachers' professional skills are satisfactory. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are competently taught, and the overall planning of lessons is generally sound. For example, in a Year 8 mathematics lesson, the teacher planned a relevant session on number,

reinforcing pupils' sound skills of numeracy. However, because the lesson objectives were not crystal clear, the teacher was not able to pinpoint exactly what pupils had learned and how clearly they had progressed. Because the level of work was not adjusted to challenge the different levels of ability in the class, higher and lower achievers did not make as much progress as they might. Generally, though, teachers plan relevant and useful lessons. Sometimes, planning is good or very good, as for example in a Year 7 art lesson in which the teacher had planned a very clear lesson, carefully designed to reflect the year's programme. Pupils learnt rapidly, in a series of timed tasks, how to exploit their knowledge of Seurat's technique.

33. Lessons such as the Year 7 encounter with Seurat and the Year 8 session on the First World War prove how much pupils can achieve when expectations are high and pace good. Another such example was seen in a Year 10 Spanish lesson on pastimes and interests, when pupils responded quickly to the rapid pace and high expectations, fluently stating their zodiac signs in well pronounced Spanish. Everyone learnt well, concentrating hard and gaining a good sense of how well they had learned. There are many lessons, however, in which teacher's expectations, though adequate to generate sound progress, are no more than average. For example, in a Year 11 personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson, the teacher had prepared a relevant lesson on race and immigration, as part of the citizenship programme. Though the lesson was very valuable in terms of cultural education, the teacher did not elicit many committed statements from pupils, who were able to leave the lesson as impassively as they had come. The differences between the expectations of one teacher and another are well illustrated in science. In a very successful Year 11 lesson on the relationships of time, speed and distance, the teacher established objectives very clearly, asked challenging questions, and followed up the answers with a simple but highly effective competition - racing with rubber bands - which generated huge interest and a real sense of concepts being learned. In another science lesson in Year 9, the teacher lost the interest of the class by setting a task without much scientific content. By the time everyone had found the scissors and cut out the labels, the lesson had expired in social chat, for want of challenge and content.
34. Teaching methods and the use of time, support staff and resources are generally satisfactory, so that pupils make sound progress at reasonable pace. For example, Year 8 pupils in an ICT lesson made adequate progress in understanding the advantages and disadvantages of e-mail because the teacher had produced a good printed summary and used the time to let pupils get used to sending and receiving messages. A good feature of this lesson was the use of another teacher to help pupils learn. When resources are used imaginatively to support a well planned series of activities, pupils can learn very well. For example, in a Year 10 geography lesson on volcanoes, the teacher had maps, overhead projection, tables prepared on the board and annotated diagrams ready to reinforce the sequential points being covered. Not a moment was wasted and everyone gained a vast amount from the session.
35. Teachers' daily assessment of pupils' work and the homework they set is satisfactory overall, though some parents say how little homework their children appear to bring home. Work is usually marked adequately, though there are seldom many indications of how a student could do better, and some work is very sketchily marked, if at all. The regular marking of work, with helpful comments to encourage pupils to do better, is not generally a strong feature, and does not challenge pupils enough. Pupils do not therefore get a strong understanding of how much better they could do.
36. Teaching of pupils with SEN is good. All members of staff have copies of individual education plans, and pupils with SEN are identified in the lesson plans for main class lessons. Specialist teachers for those with SEN use evidence from National Curriculum and other tests to review and monitor the progress of their pupils. They test pupils annually, to monitor spelling and reading levels. Specific targets for improvement are set by the SENCO. The teaching given by the school's learning mentors is making a positive difference to those who might not feel included in the process of education.
37. Teachers are good at offering all groups of pupils, including those who are gifted and talented, an equal opportunity to do well. They are encouraging to all pupils, of whatever ethnic background, show their approval of them and offer them all a good subject and vocational choice, and careers guidance.
38. In the last report in 1996, teaching was good overall and a strength of the school. Though this remains true in some areas, for example in business studies and nautical studies, and for several very talented teachers, teaching is not overall making the impact it should. Teachers are not generally challenging

pupils enough or insisting on a fast enough pace. Too many lessons are instruction sessions, not a chance to learn by participation. For many teachers, a good class is a quiet class, and pupils do not learn quickly enough. This is why GCSE results are not higher and why many teachers need to lift their sights to help these increasingly able pupils do better.

Sixth form

39. Teaching is generally good, and students learn well. In the 28 lessons seen, over half were good and a small number were very good. One lesson was excellent, one satisfactory and two unsatisfactory. Teachers' particular strengths are their good knowledge of their subjects and relationships with their students. For example, in a Year 12 chemistry lesson on the properties of alcohol, the teacher's good knowledge of the subject allowed him to challenge the students strongly and made them work hard, in an enjoyable way, so that they learnt rapidly and well. Pace, expectation and challenge are often good at this level, being a good deal stronger than in the lower years. One of the two unsatisfactory lessons was in Year 13 English, and lacked pace and structure. The other, in Year 12 geography, lacked sufficient consolidation of the main points and did not involve students enough.
40. Other aspects of teaching in the sixth form are satisfactory, sometimes good. Teachers' planning is often good and their methods and use of resources at least satisfactory. For example, in a Year 12 geography lesson on tectonic activities, the teacher planned a good lesson, though the methods used were too teacher-directed to be wholly successful. Nevertheless, students learned well and made good progress in distinguishing different types of scarps.
41. Teachers' assessment of students' work is satisfactory overall, but varies in quality. For example, it is often good in English, where work is scrupulously read and marked, but is unsatisfactory in mathematics, where students' unfinished work is not always followed up and some students are unclear how well they are doing. The teaching of key skills is not well developed across the sixth form curriculum and requires greater planning and emphasis in the various subjects.
42. Teachers are good at meeting the needs of all their students, and because the relationship between teacher and student is so positive, students' individual learning needs are well provided for. For example, in a Year 12 AS Spanish lesson for two students, the teacher was able to provide exactly the material needed to help each to learn rapidly and make real progress. In a Year 13 business studies topic on profit and loss, the teacher set clear goals for everyone and took pains to ensure that each student could make a positive response and feel that he was mastering this new topic.
43. In the subjects inspected in detail, teaching was very good in business studies and good in mathematics, biology and English. It was satisfactory in ICT. Common strengths include subject knowledge, which are particularly good in English, ICT and business studies. The pace of lessons is often good, for example in biology and business studies. Overall, teaching in these subjects is competent and effective. In the sixth form, teaching is increasingly leading to higher standards in work seen in lessons.

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

The curriculum in the main school

44. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are satisfactory in the main school and the appropriate statutory curriculum is in place. The school believes in providing an inclusive education, and this is reflected in the equality of access which all enjoy.
45. The curriculum provided is satisfactory. It is relevant to the needs of these pupils, being very well adapted to the nautical traditions of the school. It has a broad range of subjects, and, with the exception of ICT in Year 9, the balance of time between subjects is satisfactory. Because of pressure of space, ICT pupils have only one lesson a fortnight in Year 9. This situation is to be corrected next academic year. The provision for modern foreign languages is affected adversely by the rotational arrangement used for the teaching of both French and Spanish during Years 7-9. There is no provision for computer aided design and manufacture in the curriculum for design and technology. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils with SEN.

46. In Years 10 and 11, students have access to the full range of subjects, including ICT. However, provision for the development of the key skills of literacy and numeracy is not yet well made across all subjects, and is not yet monitored effectively. The school has taught nautical studies as a GCSE subject. This is a strong, successful and popular subject, of great importance to the school and its founding purpose. This is its final GCSE year, as the subject is to be phased out because examination boards no longer provide it. Nautical studies have enriched the vocational aspect of the GCSE curriculum. Business studies is the other vocational subject taught at this stage; one lively and successful lesson seen, a practical session of auction with bidding, proves the worth of this well planned subject.
47. The rich and extensive programme of extra-curricular activities is excellent. It supports academic learning very well. A notable feature of the curriculum is the number of nautical outdoor activities offered to all pupils, in addition to the exploitation of the many and diverse institutions and activities of the capital. Pupils are involved in a range of sporting activities. For example Millwall FC has been providing soccer coaching for Year 8 pupils. For many years, the school site manager has taken a number of football teams each year to an international competition in Holland, and the trophy cabinet is evidence of the school's success in this very welcome initiative. Pupils are involved in creative arts activities, for example visits to galleries and participation in the local projects. Students go on a variety of visits in the local area and outside London. There is an established pattern of residential visits and exchanges with other countries, including France and Spain.
48. Community links are also excellent. The school has established positive links with the community around the immediate neighbourhood and beyond. For example, a local study was carried out by Year 7 geography pupils in the Coin Street area and lower school pupils attended the National Maritime Museum Christmas lecture, "Oceans of Opportunity".
49. Careers education and guidance are good. Pupils in the lower year groups are given a careers programme based around a well developed commercial scheme. In Year 9, pupils are enthusiastic about the mini-enterprise they develop and in the recent past many groups have raised significant sums of money in their enterprises. Year 10 pupils prepare for and participate in work experience. Year 11 pupils have individual careers interviews with the local careers service. The school has a range of excellent links with the local business community. The business mentors scheme in Year 11 is very effective and benefits students by extending their experiences of life in the workplace.
50. The school makes excellent use of the local environment and the vast range of extra-curricular activities help to prepare pupils for living in a diverse society and in choosing an appropriate career. For example, pupils were offered the chance to attend a presentation at London Zoo for those who were thinking about jobs working with animals. The programme for careers is clearly structured, diverse and interesting, and responsibility is well divided for the main school, sixth form and the extensive and successful work experience scheme. Careers is regularly taught in the PSHE programme, and pupils' work in this field now appears in the new progress files which have been introduced to Year 9.
51. The programme for PSHE is good. It includes sex education and guidance and advice regarding drugs misuse. This is enhanced by the contributions from external agencies such as the armed forces and the police. The PSHE area of the curriculum contributes well to pupils' awareness of social issues and helps build their moral values.
52. The newly introduced citizenship programme is beginning to be implemented across the school. The school has conducted a comprehensive and useful audit of existing opportunities for teaching citizenship in the curriculum. The programme has been carefully planned and includes elements that are already embedded in many subjects, including English, history, geography and RE. All staff have had some training in teaching the subject and are beginning to advise pupils when a particular aspect of citizenship is being covered in their subject. The programme is still developing and the school is keen further to enable pupils to develop their skills of participation and responsible action.
53. The curriculum for pupils with SEN is good and is discussed in the section, *How well does the school care for its pupils?*, later in this report.
54. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained its broad and balanced curriculum and has further

extended its PSHE programme.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the main school

55. Overall, the provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
56. The provision for spiritual development is good. Opportunities exist in assemblies for pupils to be quiet and to reflect on issues and themes such as forgiveness. These reflections are sometimes accompanied by short prayers and a short talks of Christian character. There are significant opportunities for spiritual development in the religious education lessons where pupils often consider and respond to questions of meaning and purpose such as suffering and the existence of God. Other subjects also make an input to this provision. In art, for example, the pupils consider religious and other purposes of art, and are led to consider a range of sources that inspire artists, such as the beauty of the natural world. More could be done, however, in other subject departments to strengthen this provision. The general ethos of the school, in its caring and supportive atmosphere, also makes a significant input to pupils' spiritual development. The school gives the pupils a sense of value and worth and promotes their self-esteem.
57. The provision for moral development is good. The pupils are expected to behave well, respect others and have a clear sense of right and wrong. There are significant units of work of a moral nature in the PSHE programme. These include work on sex education, drugs, smoking, gambling and animal welfare. Assembly themes and events also have a strong moral content. The code of conduct covers a range of issues including general behaviour, dress and the use of school facilities. It sets out the school's expectations clearly. This code is further strengthened by the home-school agreement, which has a strong emphasis on personal responsibility. Staff set good examples for the pupils to follow. Individual subject departments also contribute to the moral provision, for example in physical education with its emphasis on fair play and the necessity to play by the rules. Science also investigates a range of moral issues, such as pollution and the environment.
58. The provision for social development is very good. Many clubs and activities help the pupils to establish and develop positive relationships. These include the many sports clubs and the nautical teamwork activities. Positive relationships are also encouraged and developed through residential events such as visits to Bradwell and through the Marine Society. Work in the PSHE programme has developed units of work on social development. These include work on friendships, teamwork and consideration. The pupils have the opportunity to take responsibility through the school council and the offices of form captains, prefects and school monitors. Pupils actively participate in open days and parents' evenings. The pupils participate in the wider community in a variety of ways such as in charitable work, musical activities and events such as the Remembrance Day service at Tower Hill and the annual Seamen's Service at St Paul's Cathedral. The essential elements of citizenship are also included in the PSHE programme. The topics include work on the world of work, special needs, disability, and human rights.
59. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. The school has a good number of clubs and activities which enable the pupils to celebrate and be involved in their own cultural traditions. These include trips to theatres, geography field trips and links with the Tate Gallery and the Courtauld Institute. The school is also involved in many arts activities and musical performances, and there are visits to the history museums of London. Its link with the National Maritime Museum is particularly valued. Pupils have good opportunities to celebrate the school's own particular maritime tradition by involvement, for example, in visits to the Royal Navy, its association with the Royal Navy frigate *HMS Richmond*, and visits to the Imperial War museum and *HMS Belfast*. Other cultural activities include Young Artist of the Year and the Greenfinger Challenge.
60. The school has good European connections, for example in the modern language visits to France and Spain, and the very popular football festival already described. However, the multi-cultural aspect of its provision is not strong, although it is significantly present in some individual subject departments such as in religious education and its study of world religions. It is also well represented in art in its study of oriental and African traditions. Overall, despite this lack of overt multi-cultural provision, the school offers a very rich and inclusive experience from which Londoners can learn about the life, culture and history of our capital and nation.

61. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained its good provision for pupils' personal development.

Sixth form

The curriculum

62. The curriculum in the sixth form is generally satisfactory. The school provides a balance of academic subjects and vocational opportunities, and the curriculum it provides continues to expand. The curriculum is inclusive in that it is open to all students, whatever their attainment. The sixth form curriculum meets the requirements of the local area and the school is clearly responsive to local circumstances as it is attracting increasing numbers of students who have not previously attended the school, boys and girls alike. An area in need of development is that of key skills. The school is aware of this, but has not yet coordinated the teaching of these skills.
63. Students have an excellent enrichment programme, including opportunities for sport. Many visits and exchanges are arranged and there are activities arranged for students at local universities. For example, they attended a "Drawing on Art and Science" course at University College, London. Students are involved in fund raising activities and charity work and the annual Poppy Appeal is particularly well supported. A feature of the extra-curricular provision is the amount of support available to help individual students make progress in their academic and vocational courses, for example in the very popular computer clubs.
64. Community links and relationships are excellent. Students benefit from the effective links made with universities, including three schools of medicine. The Tate Modern and the Courtauld Gallery have provided prestigious venues for sixth form workshops.
65. Students state that although a careers programme does exist, which includes individual careers interviews and information on higher education, many feel they would benefit from a more structured approach which would enable them to make more informed careers choices. Some students take advantage of the business mentors scheme, which they praise for providing a clear insight into the world of work.
66. Since the last inspection, the sixth form curriculum has improved considerably, and now provides a satisfactory range of courses, and some first rate extra-curricular experiences, for its students.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the sixth form

67. As in the main school, the provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good.
68. Assembly times give the students some opportunity to be quiet and reflect on their experiences. Religious education in the sixth form makes a significant contribution to this provision. Here the students are led to consider and respond to a range of religious and philosophical issues such as the meaning and purpose of life. Moral guidance is provided through tutor reviews, speakers who visit the school and through some assembly themes. The school's general expectations of behaviour reinforce this aspect of the students' development.
69. Visits and activities help students to develop positive social relationships. They learn to take responsibility through the prefect system and in the support they give to subject departments in the main school. Each school year begins for the new lower sixth with a residential week, which does much to unite staff and students and to build trust and friendship. Such diverse activities as the community sports leaders course, work experience and residential visits to Cambridge University help the students appreciate some of their own cultural traditions. Their involvement in the Square Mile Club, a sixth form society of City of London schools, gives them an excellent range of speakers of national significance. This gives an international dimension to students' experiences. However, in multi-cultural terms, the sixth form has few specific opportunities to learn about the faiths and cultures which make up contemporary society. There is a vast amount to be learned, both from the experiences of the school's own students and in communities very close at hand.

70. Since the last report, the school has continued to provide good personal development for its sixth formers.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

71. The school is a strongly supportive community where the achievements, attitudes and well-being of every young person matter. The school knows about pupils' language, culture and values. It makes use of its links with parents, and is alert to providing translation facilities from local community organisations. Support staff, including office staff and the caretakers, perform an outstanding contribution to the quality of care offered by the school. Parents report that they are very pleased with the concern shown for their children's welfare. Learning mentors, funded by the Excellence in Cities initiative, provide very effective help in raising attainment and self-esteem with a selected group of pupils in their GCSE year.
72. Procedures for child protection are very good. All staff are aware of the procedures to follow should a child disclose an issue of concern. There is a well-trained and designated child protection liaison officer. There is very effective liaison between senior staff and the local social services. The school is aware of how to act in the best interests of the child.
73. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance, in part due to a grant from the social inclusion fund of an attendance officer, who makes a very significant contribution to the monitoring of attendance and punctuality. For example, there are now 'phone calls home on the first day of absence. The attendance officer makes appropriate arrangements for those who are absent for religious observance and offers practical support to pupils who have been absent for some time. Unauthorised absence is also well monitored. Effective liaison with the educational welfare service makes it clear to parents that prosecution is an option if non-attendance becomes a major issue. The school is situated some distance from many of the pupils' homes, making for occasional problems in attendance. Attendance registers comply with statutory requirements.
74. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating oppressive behaviour. The nautical values of respect and duty have a positive impact on behaviour management. There is appropriate and judicious use of rewards. Teachers adopt a consistent approach to dealing with behaviour, so that pupils quickly learn what is expected and begin to develop a responsible attitude. The school monitors behaviour well. For example, it has recently conducted an anonymous pupil questionnaire with Years 8 and 9. The school has effective strategies for dealing with any racist incidents and follows the guidelines of recommendation 68 of the *Macpherson Report*, published after the death of the school student, Stephen Lawrence. There are also effective methods for dealing with any other form of discrimination. Form tutors, head of years and the senior management team are alert to the possibility of bullying. They encourage the role of the school counsellor, who offers a confidential service to pupils and staff, who know they can approach the counsellor if they feel they have any problem. As a family therapist, the counsellor is available to help families with a child at the school.
75. The school's monitoring of pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is generally well taught. Tutors keep records of personal development and these comments form the basis of their annual report.
76. There are good arrangements for first aid and numerous staff have been trained, including the caretaker. Medication is well managed; staff request detailed information and authorisation from parents when necessary. Parents have reported that they would like a medical room, but at present a lack of space makes this difficult to provide. However, pupils do have a specific area to go to if they feel ill.
77. The school conducts regular fire drills and also internally assesses health and safety in each department. The inspection team reported a number of health and safety issues to the school, and concurs with the school that an external health and safety risk assessment is a matter of priority.
78. Support and guidance for pupils with SEN are good. All pupils, including those with SEN, are offered the same well-considered level of support. The SEN coordinator (SENCO) meets regularly with the year co-ordinators to review pupils' progress, academic and social, and to decide the most appropriate

provision for them. The school has regular links with social, health and voluntary organisations, and pupils can be referred for a range of additional support. For example, the school has invested in the services of the local education welfare and psychological services, who are available for whole-school or individual needs. The SENCO also liaises with the head of careers to discuss pupils with SEN. A specialist careers officer from the local authority service attends all transition reviews for those with statements of special educational needs. The SENCO and subject department concerned provide support, where identified, for National Curriculum tests and GCSEs. The SEN department makes any special arrangements for GCSE examinations.

79. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall. However, the use of information gained from assessment to help pupils raise their attainment is unsatisfactory. Senior staff are aware that this aspect of departmental work needs improvement.
80. The school has started to collect the results of national tests taken at the end of Year 6 in pupils' previous schools, though with 60 primary schools sending pupils this has been no easy task. For three years, it has also been administering standardised tests to all pupils on arrival. With this objective baseline assessment made, the school now sets targets for performance in the national tests in core subjects at age 14. Based on these, it sets targets for school, departmental and individual performance in GCSE. Aply supported by its learning mentors, it has made much progress in setting targets and providing help for those who might get a grade D in GCSE. The headteacher monitors individual and department performance closely after GCSE results are known.
81. The school publishes voluminous statistics on every student, but though it has held a training day and continues to inform teachers of the application of these figures, it is still not easy for staff to know what to do with much of this. The leadership group is aware of the need to increase departmental use of statistics and to raise goals for individuals by clear setting of targets and their regular monitoring. At present, teachers' assessment of daily work is satisfactory, but seldom makes reference to targets based on the objective data available. The use of performance data to set challenging targets, and the assessment of pupils' work against such targets, is not common practice, particularly for younger pupils. Teachers do not make regular use of the National Curriculum levels in Year 7-9 to test how well a student is performing in relation to available attainment data and the level which should be reached. In both key stages termly and annual reports contain information on how well a student has progressed, so the school is generally aware of pupils who under-achieve.
82. Because data from assessment are not widely used in regular teaching to assess the progress of individuals and subjects, the school is not yet able to assess whether overall progress is sufficient to reach the good targets it has accurately set for performance in tests at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE. Despite these challenging overall targets, much teaching continues to lack the pace and challenge which are needed to translate potential into reality. Many teachers and departments have not yet acknowledged the increasingly high level of ability now entering the school, clearly reflected in the baseline data now available and the overall targets set by the senior team.
83. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to give its pupils good general support and guidance. However, it has not made enough progress in the assessment of their work and in setting pupils demanding enough personal targets, especially the younger pupils.

Sixth form

Assessment

84. Overall, the procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Students benefit from effective systems for the whole school, but in addition, have termly reviews of their work and progress. The school has comprehensive information on the students' earlier achievements. These are used with increasing effect to set potential targets for attainment grades at the end of the sixth form.
85. Generally, students receive regular advice and guidance from the head of sixth form on their progress. However, this is dependent on all subject areas accurately diagnosing individual students' learning needs and their progress in relation to their grade targets. Some subjects, for example mathematics, do not detect students' difficulties rapidly enough, and this in part has contributed to Year 12 students'

modest performance in AS-level examinations. Students do not always know how well they are doing because the quality of day-to-day marking is variable, and sometimes fails to relate students' achievement to their established targets.

Advice, support and guidance

86. The school provides good advice on the sixth form to prospective students, and increasingly attracts students from outside the school. Before a student joins the sixth, the school publishes its sixth form prospectus, holds an open evening and interviews individual applicants. It welcomes its new students well, and the head of sixth gives a real sense of common purpose to new arrivals. Sixth form tutors are effective and enjoy a good rapport with students. Head of sixth and tutors provide them with good personal support.
87. When students arrive, their records of previous attainment are used to identify their potential, and any particular needs are considered. The SEN department is available to assist any students who need support. For example, there is at present one student with a statement of SEN who receives continuing support.
88. Though students are well known to their teachers and benefit from their ready exchange with them of information on higher education and careers, the quality and accessibility of impartial information about careers and opportunities in higher education are limited. Students would appreciate more specific support. However, they are very appreciative of the business mentors scheme that enables personal support and advice to be given from members of the business community.
89. Since the last report, the appointment of a head of sixth has given focus to the academic and pastoral direction of the sixth form. The school has improved the advice and guidance it provides, and assessment procedures have developed. Better sharing of information gained from the assessment of students' work and the provision of more regular careers advice are areas for further development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

90. The school has good links with parents, the majority of whom are positive and supportive. At the last inspection, most parents were satisfied with the partnership between school and parents. However, a few were unhappy regarding inconsistencies in homework, the content of annual reports and the quality of written policies. The school has dealt with most of these issues and annual reports and policies are now clear and informative. The partnership with the majority of parents is also good owing to the introduction of several initiatives including the parents teacher association. The school has taken good steps to include its parents in the process of education. Students are supportive of the school and largely satisfied with sixth form provision.
91. The parents' questionnaire analysis and the comments from the parents' meeting before the inspection indicate that a high proportion of parents confirm that their children like the school and that they make good progress. Parents are happy with behaviour. They consider that the school is well led and managed. Parents agree that the school has a very good range of outside activities and that the school helps their children become more responsible. There were many positive and supportive comments voiced at the parents' meeting. However, a few parents expressed concerns about how pupils are grouped in Year 7 and how their place in sets is assessed. The inspection team has investigated these comments and information on the assessment of pupils can be found elsewhere in this report. Parents also had concerns about inconsistency in the use of homework diaries and after-school detentions. The school is aware that clear lines of communication are very important, owing to the fact that many parents live and work some distance away. The inspectors have found that homework diaries are being well used and are a satisfactory tool of communication. However, information regarding the homework timetable is missing for some tutor groups and as a result parents are unaware when a particular homework is to be done. School sanctions such as detentions are correctly given for inappropriate work or behaviour. However, in one subject, detentions are sometimes given for missed homework even when the child has been absent from school.
92. The quality of information provided by the school on pupils' progress is good. End-of-year and other

oral reports provide parents with clear information. Documents are all available to be translated into community languages through use of the Lambeth community network. Reports from the learning support department are very detailed. Form tutors provide comments on behaviour and attitudes to work. Although general targets are identified, more specific academic targets are less well defined. The formal parents' evenings provide an opportunity to discuss any concerns. The school also contacts parents if they wish raise to specific issues.

93. The school has an excellent method of ensuring that parents and others can contact a member of staff 24 hours per day throughout the year. This very welcome service is managed by the head of office support systems. The school website and the facility to leave a message for any member of the staff are examples of the significant improvements in communication which have taken place since the last inspection. The *Making Waves* newsletter is informative, provides comprehensive information on forthcoming events and celebrates achievements. In the sixth form, booklets detailing the various course are provided. Some are excellent, such as the one for religious education, though others are less detailed. The governors' annual report is detailed and comprehensive, and the prospectus is clear. Details of the numbers from different ethnic groups of pupils who have been temporarily excluded are recorded.
94. The school has some 60 junior schools which send pupils from across the capital, and it is therefore difficult to establish any specific links with any school. However, induction arrangements are good and parents have the opportunity to give feedback on the proceedings. Pupils and parents report that they are satisfied with this process. The school invites comment on all its publications, including reports, and views are carefully recorded and investigated. The school does not at present publish the outcomes of this very good practice. Because some parents feel they are not adequately informed and consulted, such a further step would have a very helpful effect. One invaluable source of information is the *Year 7 Survival Guide*, published by the parent teacher association.
95. Parents' involvement with the work of the school is satisfactory. Many parents demonstrate their commitment to the school by their support of the parent teachers association, which acts as a social meeting place. It also raises welcome funds. The main event of the calendar is the regatta and 'BBQ'. Money raised from this event has been used to provide a wide variety of equipment, for example TV and video equipment, navigational equipment for nautical studies, frames for art displays and sports resources.
96. The SENCO endeavours to involve parents in planning and setting pupils' targets in individual education plans. Whenever parents are unable to attend a meeting the SENCO will hold discussions with parents over the 'phone. This involvement has a positive impact on the motivation and progress of these pupils. Meetings with parents are also well used by the department to forge links and maintain contact.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

97. The school is well led by the headteacher and the leadership group including the head of sixth and bursar. Management by heads of department and years is satisfactory. The headteacher, working closely with the leadership group, provides clear direction for the school's work. In the three years the headteacher has been in post, applications for places have doubled, and the school is now significantly over-subscribed.
98. Senior leadership increasingly promotes high standards. Priorities for development are very well chosen, and effectively presented at the level of the leadership group. There is a detailed school development plan for the current year and five years ahead. The plan contains specific targets for examination performance, and is closely monitored in all its aspects - curriculum, curriculum support, pastoral, finance and works, school governance, staff development and budget. Detailed analyses of the school's strengths and weaknesses are undertaken, accurately identifying areas for further enquiry and emphasis. In GCSE, targets are set for each subject and class, and results carefully analysed. The headteacher has undertaken a very full and objective analysis for the present inspection, identifying its strengths and weaknesses with accuracy and insight.
99. Only two years ago, an entirely new leadership group was formed. The group has led the school into a

new era of planning and accountability. Other major initiatives have been introduced; for example the creation of a year system, the creation of a support team and network for special educational needs, and the formation of the governors' pastoral and curriculum committee.

100. The leadership group has also improved the opportunities for staff training and development, and has introduced a clear and successful model for performance management. Training days are well organised and a day is reserved for departmental planning at the start of each term. Individual teachers have responded positively, and are now in a position to evaluate their professional competence more clearly. This has led to a growing commitment to improved academic standards among most staff, seen for example in the anticipation of improved GCSE results in 2002, disappointment at the small overall gains, and the determination to improve results in areas of weakness.
101. Though senior staff and many individual teachers share a vision for improvement, heads of department are not yet working as a harmonious team to ensure that targets are reached in every area and that all teams share a common goal. Senior staff are already aware that departmental leadership is the next area for improvement, and that standards of leadership in this area are very variable - good, for example, in art, business studies, geography and nautical studies, but unsatisfactory in design and technology. For many of the larger departments, leadership is satisfactory overall, but in need of a clearer focus on standards in teaching and learning.
102. Senior staff have yet to improve three significant areas of leadership which, to become fully effective, must be shared with all with heads of department. First, the monitoring of teaching is not yet rigorous enough. The headteacher is generally aware of the calibre of his staff, and the performance management process ensures regular monitoring of individual teachers. However, such monitoring is not yet rigorous enough. At the moment, crucial questions such as the pace and challenge of teaching are not being monitored in relation to the expectations teachers should have of their pupils, whose potential is often undervalued.
103. Second, senior staff have not yet led heads of department into the field of academic target setting with enough emphasis. This matter is further discussed in paragraphs 80-87 of this report. Third, though development planning is good at school level, with very good evaluation of the outcomes of planning by the headteacher and leadership group, it is patchy in departments. Inspectors found that planning was not rigorously evaluated in no fewer than nine subject areas. The leadership group is well aware of the variation in the quality of leadership in departments. At present, it has not made enough progress in this area, though recent appointments have begun to reflect the standards which some longer serving heads of department need to reach.
104. The SEN department is well led and managed by the SENCO, who maintains clear systems and procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils with SEN. The allocation of support staff and assistants is just sufficient to meet the needs of pupils. In-service training for special educational needs has raised the awareness of all staff. The SEN teaching area is reasonably stocked and resourced, though ICT is not well provided.
105. The creation of a year system has led to an increasingly good standard of management by the heads of year. Management by tutors is variable. There are some examples of first rate management of tutor sets, and also some examples of indifferent management of such important routines as punctuality to assembly and the maintenance of good homework notebooks. Overall, management by heads of year and tutors is satisfactory.
106. The school has a good statement of its aims and values. By continuing to promote the values of its nautical tradition, it remains faithful to its founding principles and succeeds in its aims of encouraging self-esteem, setting high standards of service to the local community, preparing pupils for the challenges of adulthood, developing good moral and spiritual values within a Christian context, and encouraging active participation in water and other sports. It succeeds also in helping pupils develop reliability of character, teamwork and cooperation, and in promoting an active partnership with parents and the community. Through all these qualities, pupils do acquire a liveliness of outlook. The only aim which is only partly realised is that of helping pupils achieve their best intellectually, though some pupils, of whatever ability, convincingly do this.
107. The headteacher and senior management team, supported by the governors, promote the concept and

reality that all pupils should feel included in the school and the education it provides. They prevent, and if need be act upon, any forms of racism. They promote a community which stands for racial harmony, where all pupils feel they are valued and supported. They are committed to such inclusive policies, and these attitudes are seen in the conduct of staff, parents and pupils. All staff are told to challenge, correct and deal with racist behaviour and remarks.

108. The governing body is well led and enjoys good relations with staff. It is well informed about the school and fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. For example, the governor with responsibility for liaison about SEN takes a close interest in all aspects of the subject, and governors publish a very full and informative annual report to parents. Working through its two committees - the pastoral, admissions and curriculum, and the finance and general purposes - governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors are closely involved in monitoring standards, for example in their regular monitoring of policies and of the school development plan. Individual governors do not yet have links with departments, other than SEN. The need to develop departmental leadership suggests that such links, perhaps for some pilot areas, would further help governors to understand and development the work of the school.
109. Financial management is excellent. The bursar has a clear grasp of detail and works closely with the headteacher and governors to ensure that long-term financial and development planning meets the strategic needs of the school. Accounts are clearly audited and the most recent management letter disclosed no major concerns. Accounting for regular expenditure is meticulous, and the school is well served by its accounts and administrative staff. The use of special grant is very clearly analysed and such funds are very well used. For example, funds from the Excellence in Cities programme are applied with great success for employing learning mentors and the encouragement of Year 11 pupils in danger of underachieving. Grants for social inclusion are very well spent in providing a very effective attendance officer and secretary. Grants for the National Grid for Learning has enabled the school to provide three computer suites and internet connexions. In total, £224,363 was received from all grants in 2001-02, and this sum has made a great overall improvement in the quality of education the school provides. This figure partly explains the relatively high level of income and expenditure the school enjoys. Its position in an inner city borough, and its receipt of grant to protect its previous expenditure as a grant maintained school, also contribute to its high total expenditure of £4447 per student.
110. The school makes good use of new technology. For example, pupils' timetables and addresses are all on computer, so that staff who need to locate pupils at any time are able to do so. Extensive records of achievement and attendance are also on computer. Computer systems are very well maintained by an expert in computer maintenance systems who works full-time in the school.
111. The number of teachers matches the demands of the curriculum well. For the first time for some years, the school is fully staffed with qualified, permanent teachers. Teacher turnover has been higher than average in recent years, as the school has had difficulty in recruiting staff for some subjects, particularly for science and also for mathematics and design and technology. Staffing to support pupils with SEN is good. Kitchen and site management staff are helpful and efficient, and the standard of catering is very high. Office and administrative support is well organised and gives a high level of service. The school has a satisfactory programme for the induction of new teachers and opportunities for professional development are good.
112. Accommodation is only partly adequate for the needs of the curriculum. Some science laboratories are too small for good practical work, there is insufficient space to provide ICT to all years, some sixth form classrooms are too small, and the curriculum in design and technology suffers from an inadequate range of specialist rooms. At present, the library is highly inadequate, but is planned for major improvement in the site development plan. The gymnasium is very inadequate and has been criticised by the local authority and an independent chartered surveyors' report. In other words, most practical subjects lack good, modern facilities. It is noteworthy that two of the subjects most in need of academic improvement, science and design and technology, are in need of the benefit which good accommodation can bring.
113. Resources for learning are satisfactory, with the exception of the library stock. The provision of computers has greatly increased and is now average. In line with its income, the school provides a generous amount of money for learning resources, compared with national average figures. The school makes excellent use of the resources which the community provides in this remarkably central area of

the capital. For example, the maritime resources of *HMS Belfast*, Trinity House and the National Maritime Museum are all available and well used. The Honourable Company of Master Mariners generously provides equipment and sponsors individual pupils for projects such as travel and nautical training. The Marine Society provides careers advice on maritime careers and financial support for sail training. The school is admirably placed to increase the quality and range of work which gifted and talented pupils could do in addition to their normal tasks.

114. The school makes satisfactory use of the principles of best value. For example, although some parents do not feel they are closely enough consulted, the school has consulted well about its plans for the major development of its site and its present bid for sports college status. It compares its results with those of other schools locally and nationally. It challenges itself to maintain its distinctive nautical traditions and does so successfully, despite the huge disappointment that nautical studies is no longer available as a GCSE examination. It does not particularly compete to provide the right service for a keen price, and could do far more to investigate whether its generous funding represents the best it can provide in terms of expenditure for staffing, resources and pupils' results. For example, an analysis of these factors, department by department, would begin to reveal the value for money which each was providing. In many ways, the school provides good value for money. Its results are improving, it has good standards of behaviour and attendance, excellent programmes of activities and very good links with the community. However, income and expenditure are high and results need further improvement at all levels. Overall, therefore, value for money is satisfactory.
115. Since the last inspection, improvement in the leadership and management of the school has been good, particularly in the quality of development planning, and learning support including SEN provision.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

116. The leadership and the management of the sixth form are good. Governors and staff share a clear vision for its future development. The governors have supported the development of the sixth form over a number of years. During this time, the sixth form has been growing steadily, but has not yet managed to make a positive academic or financial contribution to the school. Helped by the governors' good decision to admit girls, numbers are now growing rapidly, and are planned to reach 120 or more within the period of the current school development plan. From the financial year 2003-04, the leadership group and governors plan for the sixth form to start making a cost-effective financial contribution. Current indications are that standards in AS and A2 examinations will rise in line with the increasing level of students' attainment, now that some more able students are starting to stay on. The sixth form is therefore well placed to make a positive contribution in standards and income. It already contributes very positively, through the good influence of its students, to the general life of the school.
117. The head of sixth gives good leadership to the tutors and students. Under her active and committed guidance, ethos and numbers have grown, while the range of activities available to sixth formers has further increased. Current strengths include an approach which aims to include students of all abilities and backgrounds, and good relationships which allow positive informal guidance and support to be given. There are regular reviews of the students' overall progress with the head of sixth form who knows them very well.
118. Some important aspects of sixth form management need further attention, particularly the provision of better planned careers and tutorial guidance and the further improvement of the assessment of students' work from some departments, so that all students know how well they are doing in relation to the targets agreed for them. However, good progress has been made in the curriculum and management of the sixth form since the last report.

Resources

119. Staffing is appropriate for the sixth form curriculum. Many teachers of sixth form students have long experience of work at this level and are well qualified and experienced in this area. The school makes appropriate provision for any students with SEN also. The one student with a statement of SEN is well served by qualified staff.
120. Resources for learning are generally adequate for the teaching of class groups, but are in short supply where individual needs are concerned. For example, the library is very short of good background reading at this level, and the number of computers provided there is inadequate to make a positive contribution to the good learning of students.
121. Accommodation is generally inadequate for present numbers. Many subjects lack sufficient space. Some sixth form teaching rooms are too small, as is the library. The school is planning a major redevelopment and hopes to achieve this in advance of the rise in sixth form numbers to 120. Providing an adequate base for sixth form study is a high priority, and the governors and headteacher have produced an admirable overall plan for the future accommodation of the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

122. The school should:
- (1) Raise the attainment of pupils in GCSE, AS and A2 examinations, where results are below average, by:
 - teaching with more challenge and pace,
 - setting pupils more demanding targets, and
 - assessing pupils' progress towards these targets more rigorously.(see paragraph numbers 31-33, 35, 81-82)

- (2) Improve links between the leadership group and departments, so that:
 - teaching is monitored more effectively,
 - help can be given to departments to improve their assessment of pupils' work, and
 - development planning in departments better reflects the school's priorities, particularly in realising its targets for the improvement of academic work.(see paragraph numbers 102-103)
- (3) Continue to press for much-needed improvements to, and expansion of, accommodation, with particular emphasis on the library, physical education facilities in the school, rooms for ICT and design and technology, and sufficient space for the sixth form.
(see paragraph number 112)
- (4) Improve teaching, results and the curriculum in design and technology (DT); improve GCSE results in DT and science.
(see paragraph numbers 148-150 and 160-169)

The school is already aware of the above issues, some of which appear in its current development plan. In addition it should also include the following less general item in its development planning:

- the organisation of subjects within modern foreign languages for younger pupils.
(see paragraph number 199)

Sixth form

The school should improve:

- (1) attainment in the subjects where standards are well below the national average, particularly in AS level examinations at the end of Year 12.
(see paragraph numbers 15-18)
- (2) the planning of tutorial sessions, providing more structured careers education and guidance.
(see paragraph numbers 88 and 118)
- (3) the consistency of the monitoring of the students' day-to-day academic progress in every subject.
(see paragraph numbers 84-85)
- (4) the identification and development of students' key skills and the resources to support their independent study, particularly in the library.
(see paragraph numbers 62 and 120-121)

The school has already planned to take action to improve items 1 and 4 above.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	111
	Sixth form	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		49

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

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

Number	1	15	41	47	6	1	0
Percentage	1	14	37	42	5	1	0

Sixth form

Number	1	4	15	7	2	0	0
Percentage	3	14	52	24	7	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	532	91
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	102	6

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	23	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	76	1

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.9
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	100	0	100

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	79	79	89
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	79	79	89
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	79 (84)	79 (83)	89 (81)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	43 (47)	50 (55)	48 (42)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	79	83	77
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	79	83	77
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	79 (72)	83 (81)	77 (86)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	29 (23)	53 (55)	55 (40)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	91	n/a	91

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	41	79	85
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	41	79	85
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	45 (41)	87 (91)	93 (96)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	35.8 (36.5)
	National	39 (38.4)

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

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	19	0	19

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	9	n/a	9	n/a	n/a	n/a
National	16.9	18	17.5			

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
419	38	0
0	0	0
48	0	0
18	1	0
42	3	0
0	1	0
0	0	0
5	3	0
2	0	0
14	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	2	0
21	0	0
3	0	0
31	2	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	37
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.9

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	315

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.3
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	25.5
Key Stage 4	21

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-02
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	£
Total income	2697290
Total expenditure	2723891
Expenditure per pupil	4601
Balance brought forward from previous year	163556
Balance carried forward to next year	136955

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	17.1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	20

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

593

Number of questionnaires returned

158

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	42	5	3	3
My child is making good progress in school.	37	39	8	5	11
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	49	5	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	49	16	5	8
The teaching is good.	34	51	3	2	11
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	44	14	2	12
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	43	4	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	35	3	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	28	46	18	1	7
The school is well led and managed.	43	41	5	1	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	43	3	1	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	39	8	1	8

Other issues raised by parents

In the parents' meeting, though many parents were satisfied, a large minority of the 53 parents attending felt that communications between the school and parents were unsatisfactory; they were particularly dissatisfied with the information the school provided on pupils' progress and about the quality and frequency of homework. These concerns are considered in section 5 of this report.

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Test and exam results are high. GCSE results are above the national average, and among the best in the school.
- Teaching is good.
- Teachers' relationships with pupils lead to good attitudes and behaviour.
- Extra-curricular activities are good.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers do not consider carefully enough how pupils can best learn.
- The use of performance data is inadequate.
- There is a lack of rigour in departmental evaluation of standards and planning.

123. Attainment in English on entry is above the national average. Results of tests taken at the end of Year 9 show standards rising sharply in 2000 from levels below the national average to levels above, and remaining roughly at those levels for the last three years. Compared with similar schools, attainment is very good. Standards in GCSE, both language and literature, have also risen in the last three years, and are now above the standards attained nationally. Results within the school compared with those in mathematics and science show English performing worse at the end of Year 9 but better in GCSE. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in English during their time in the school. This includes those who are gifted and talented and those who have English as an additional language. Those with special educational needs make good progress. There has been significant improvement in examination results since the time of the last inspection. However, standards of achievement could be higher: that is to say, pupils could reach higher standards than they do.
124. Standards of writing observed in Years 7 to 9 are broadly in line with these results. Pupils of this age show positive attitudes to their work, most coping accurately with spelling, punctuation and syntax. Pupils of low ability have poor handwriting and weak spelling. Standards of presentation are much improved in work that has been re-drafted. More word-processing would improve this still further. Good work was seen in preparing imaginary school prospectuses, in which pupils showed they had absorbed new ideas about lay-out and the language of persuasion. However, at all levels of ability the range and quantity of writing are less than they might be. Prose generally lacked width of vocabulary and vivid use of language, but the poetry on display was a joy to read, showing originality of thought and expression.
125. By the end of Year 11 the ablest pupils are writing fluently, with command of technical terms such as dramatic irony. They could analyse the opening scene of a play to show how its ingredients each had an impact on later developments. Middle ability pupils could compare the style of two modern newspaper columnists in discussing homelessness, noting their use of emotive language to engage their readers' attention. Most pupils become increasingly aware of Shakespeare's skill as a dramatist, writing well about atmosphere, character and motivation.
126. Standards of speaking are at the nationally expected level. Very good examples were observed in Year 8, when pupils made speeches about bullying and the rest of the class offered tips for improvement. Higher ability Year 10 pupils spoke fluently, and unprepared, in the re-telling of ancient myths and fables. However, it is rare for pupils to engage naturally in discussion, so they have little experience of listening to an argument and countering it.
127. Standards of reading vary. Those who do so in class often mumble and give their reading poor expression. But low attaining pupils in Year 8 showed that they could read an appropriate text accurately and fluently. They commented perceptively on the language used, and could predict what might happen next. An annual "Readathon" is very popular. Reading records are well kept, and show good reading habits. However, the library is an uninviting area, and despite the large sums being spent

on it, loans are few. In many classes only two or three pupils appear to have borrowed books in the current term.

128. Standards of teaching and learning are good. Teachers are highly conscientious, taking great trouble to plan carefully, prepare thoroughly, and mark regularly. They apply the principles of the National Literacy Strategy with discretion, though sometimes lessons are not concluded with sufficient summing-up and evaluation. Their excellent relationship with pupils results in high motivation and good behaviour. Many lessons are stimulating, either through the skilful use of questions or by such devices as the playing of pop lyrics to illustrate rhythm and repetition in poetry. As a result, pupils are kept concentrating on their tasks. They do what is asked of them well. But they are not learning as much as they might, and this restricts their overall achievement. Discussion is rare, either in the whole class or in small groups. Pupils have little opportunity to think for themselves, or argue. When they speak, it is nearly always to the teacher, and seldom to each other. Over-reliance on the teacher and very limited use of ICT makes it hard for them to become independent learners.
129. The department work well as a team, with much informal discussion about what works well, and how to improve. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, including a drama club to compensate for the absence of drama on the timetable. But standards could be raised further if there were greater attention to formal administration and tightening of procedures. Schemes of work are vague, the handbook sparse, development plans lack scope for evaluation, and annual reviews are bland. The department is not using the mass of performance data effectively, to monitor progress, and set more carefully judged targets. The department can take a proper pride in what it has achieved in the last few years, but these aspects need greater attention.
130. Although test and exam results have improved since the last inspection, there are still things to be done, chiefly in giving pupils more opportunities to learn and in sharpening the overall organisation of the department.

English as an additional language.

131. The school has the means of giving good support to pupils who have English as an additional language. About 30 pupils are so listed, mostly in the earlier years. Rather more are eligible for the ethnic minority achievement grant, which enables the school to employ an additional support assistant. However, no pupil is placed in any of the early stages of need. Their work is monitored, and careful records are kept of test results and progress. But there is no evidence that any of these pupils are hampered in any way in their studies. All can speak English fluently. All can understand the language used by teachers in class, and the language used in text-books.

Literacy across the school

132. Strategies for the teaching of literacy throughout the school are currently satisfactory. These strategies have been in place for under two years, but there has been training for the teacher in charge, and several training sessions for the whole staff. Two advisers from the local authority have been closely involved. A working party of departmental representatives meets regularly to share ideas and review progress. Achievements so far include the placing of dictionaries and the display of key words in every classroom, references to literacy in all schemes of work, a fresh look at the language used in subject text-books, a wider use of modelling and writing frames. Perhaps the most successful initiative has been the "Work of the Week" prize, which has aroused enthusiasm among pupils.
133. It will help to propagate good practice if there is more support from senior management, and if all departments are represented on the working party. The school also needs to ensure that speaking, listening and reading are given the same emphasis as writing.
134. Though all subject departments are fully aware of the strategy, they vary in how far they have incorporated all its recommendations. There is no evidence that a poor standard of reading and writing is holding pupils back. They can nearly all understand the technical terms used in books and work-sheets. However, it is rare to find pupils using materials adapted to their particular level of ability. In some departments, but not all, teachers are correcting spelling, and encouraging the use of dictionaries.

135. Pupils' attainment in reading is at the nationally expected level, but they seldom read aloud, and when they do they are given little encouragement to read with greater fluency and expression. Pupils could be reading when not in assembly, but most do not. The library is bleak and ineffective. It is too small for a whole class to study there. Though there are plenty of books, they are displayed uninvitingly. No attempt is made to analyse borrowing habits. The sixth form have access to four library computers, other pupils none. It is not a place where pupils might be encouraged to read quietly and study. However, the annual "Readathon" arouses great enthusiasm among younger pupils.
136. Pupils are mostly articulate. But there is wide variation in the way their speaking skills are developed and harnessed to learning. Some good practice was observed in history, geography and physical education, where pupils contributed freely to discussion and listened attentively. Very good examples of effective speaking were seen in some PSHE lessons and tutor periods; also in business studies, where lively discussion threw up new ideas which benefited the whole class.
137. The literacy strategy is well managed and led, but its recommendations need to be acted upon more consistently. There is still much to be done.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The pupils' results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 are above average. Pupils have good number skills.
- GCSE mathematics results are at least as good as the national average.
- Pupils generally apply themselves well to their work in lessons when they are required to do so.
- There is a good match of teachers to the needs of the mathematics curriculum.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils make less rapid progress in their GCSE mathematics courses than over Years 7 to 9.
- In some lessons, pupils have too few opportunities to learn through a broad range of activities, including oral work.
- Pupils take too little care with the presentation of their work. As a result, their notebooks are not a useful future resource.
- The marking of the pupils' work does not always show them clearly how to improve.

138. On entry to the school, the pupils' attainment in mathematics is broadly average. By the age of 14, pupils' attainment is well above average overall. Over several years, there has been an improving trend in the standards reached in the national tests in mathematics at the end of Year 9. Given their starting points, this represents at least average achievement for most pupils, and reflects the pupils' high motivation to succeed. There were no significant variations in the results of students from different ethnic or other groups. Provisional mathematics test results for 2002 indicate a further rise in the proportion of the school's pupils achieving level 5 or better. In 2001, mathematics results in the national tests were similar to those of English and science. They were very high when compared to similar schools.
139. In the 2001 GCSE mathematics results, the proportion of the school's pupils achieving grades A* to C was marginally above the national average. Based on the pupils' achievements at the end of Year 9, the results were below those found in similar schools. Boys were more successful in achieving the higher GCSE grades, A* to C, in mathematics than in science, but they were less successful than in English. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieved at least as well as others in the school. The 2002 provisional GCSE mathematics results were similar to those of the previous year. Although the proportion of the pupils achieving the higher A* and A grades in 2001 and 2002 was approximately half of that nationally, this reflects steady progress for gifted pupils of mathematics. Those pupils who have special educational needs in mathematics successfully achieved their expected grades. However, too few pupils who achieved average levels at the end of Year 9 obtained their target GCSE grades.
140. Inspection evidence confirms that attainment by the end of Year 9 is above average. Higher attainers have very good numerical skills and are confident in using a range of mental methods in their

calculations. Manipulative algebra skills are strong and pupils work systematically in solving, for example, a range of equations, often explaining their procedures orally, as in a Year 9 lesson. Some mathematically able pupils, however, are less confident in interpreting word questions or in applying their skills to problems. Average attaining pupils are well able to work with directed numbers, convert units, draw graphs and calculate more complex questions involving long multiplication. However, they are less sure of how to apply these skills to non-routine questions to test deeper conceptual understanding. For example, although they know the rules associated with the areas of plane figures, they cannot always interpret the mathematics involved in contextual problems. Some lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, manage simple probability questions well. They are competent with work involving money, constructions and scale drawings. However, they very often fail to give reasons for their answers, particularly when making comparisons.

141. By the end of Year 11, the standards pupils achieve in mathematics are average overall. Able pupils show good problem-solving strategies and are able to use their algebraic skills well in finding generalisations. They use ICT successfully to help extend their course work tasks. Although average attaining pupils reach appropriate standards in oral work in class, for example in their work on scientific notation, they often present their written work very carelessly so that workbooks show little progression. Misconceptions and mistakes are not always followed up, contributing to the underachievement among a significant proportion of these pupils. Lower attaining pupils, as well as those with special educational needs, can use circle formulae to work on problems involving circumference and diameter. Their basic number work is sound but they are not always sure of the order in which to perform calculations. The presentation of their work lacks structure and does not promote their understanding of the stages involved in setting out an answer.
142. The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory overall. Nevertheless, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching within the department. There was no unsatisfactory teaching but too rarely is teaching good. As a result, pupils have a restricted mathematical experience. In the best lessons, the pace is brisk, with realistic time limits for completing tasks. Oral work is well used to further the pupils' understanding and there is a considered balance between consolidating previous work and acquiring new skills. In these lessons, pupils concentrate well and waste little time. Most teachers plan the content of their lessons carefully, secure in their knowledge of mathematics. However, few lessons are planned to provide a range of activities and practical resources to help the pupils' mathematical understanding. There is too much reliance on written materials and too little emphasis on imaginative and visual resources. As a result, some pupils become bored and make less progress than they should, as in a Year 11 lesson on standard form. In some lessons, teaching objectives and learning outcomes are not clearly distinguished and there are missed opportunities to assess and record the pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Although individual pupils often receive good and immediate feedback on their work in lessons, marking of pupils' work is often cursory and gives insufficient guidance on how to improve.
143. Since the last inspection, progress within the mathematics department has been satisfactory. Attainment in examinations has improved, particularly at the end of Year 9. ICT is better used to support useful mathematical projects in Years 8 and 9, and at GCSE. The good leadership of the department has initiated recent positive changes through the National Numeracy Strategy. The department has a shared commitment to improve and has the capacity to do so, in spite of its recent staffing problems. There remains much to be done, however, to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning, particularly so that the pupils' achievement in GCSE mathematics can match that at the end of Year 9.

Numeracy across the school

144. There is good provision within mathematics to develop the pupils' numeracy skills. The department is making effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy to develop existing number skills in Years 7, 8 and 9.
145. Pupils' standards of attainment in numeracy are above average. Years 7, 8 and 9 have benefited from their experience of the National Numeracy Strategy in primary schools, and overall they show good facility in their calculations. Two groups observed showed confidence in dealing with number operations, factors and multiples. In other year groups, including those at post-16, pupils' numeracy skills support their work well in many subjects. Most pupils use calculators efficiently and sensibly.

146. Pupils use their numerical skills effectively in science. They apply their skills well to interpret distance-time graphs and substitute into formulae to calculate gas pressures, for example, in their GCSE work. In Years 7, 8 and 9 they manage simple calculations with ease, measure accurately in experimental work and use statistical diagrams sensibly to illustrate their findings. In art, pupils develop their understanding of size and proportion, and readily identify geometric shapes in the objects they observe. GCSE art work is well supported by the pupils' understanding of ratio in relation to their models for small sculptures. The use of formulae in spreadsheets enhances their work in ICT, particularly their GCSE stock control project. The use of number in geography and nautical studies is good. Pupils apply their basic skills well, particularly their presentation of statistical data and its use in project work for GCSE. Numerical skills support satisfactorily the students' work in the sixth form. Students' numerical skills are very well used and enhanced in GNVQ business studies. They calculate revenue and turnover and illustrate their work well graphically.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- The department is well organised.
- A good range of visits and links enrich the curriculum and stimulate learning.
- There is a good mix of teaching styles and strategies.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers need to increase their expectations, to make boys think, have ideas and develop them.
- Better assessment of pupils' work and monitoring of teaching are needed to raise standards.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

147. Attainment in the 2001 National Curriculum tests for Year 9 was well above average for all schools and very high compared to similar schools. Attainment declined in 2002, but remained above the 2001 average. In GCSE examinations in 2001, standards were below average and dropped further in 2002. Observations of lessons and written work show that present standards are similar to those seen in test and examinations in 2001.
148. Pupils' achievement and progress in Years 7 to 9 are satisfactory, but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 when measured against what these pupils achieved at the end of Year 9. The decline in standards in recent years was caused by severe staffing problems, which have now been resolved, and by the entry of the entire range of ability for GCSE in 2002. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The more able boys progress satisfactorily overall, but some of these pupils are not achieving their full potential.
149. By the end of Year 9, boys have greatly improved their practical skills, but their recording of practical sessions is not well developed. Teachers cover work in sufficient detail to allow pupils to achieve at a high level, and this has resulted in above-average performance. By the time they take GCSE, examination syllabuses have been well covered and most pupils have a good working knowledge of scientific processes. However, pupils are not so secure in their understanding of the basic scientific concepts which explain why these processes work. They are good at learning, but not so good at being able to think for themselves. The very good lesson with rubber powered cars points the way to more thought provoking and interesting science.
150. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There were some good lessons, a very good and a poor one. Features of successful teaching are good subject knowledge and the variety of teaching methods employed. Many lessons show good class management, with clear explanations and extension work set for those who finish early. All these qualities lead to good learning. Teachers check and reinforce the previous lesson's knowledge, give clear lesson objectives, and make regular checks on how pupils are learning. Where lessons are less successful, pupils are allowed to chat, the pace is slow, the objectives uncertain and teachers do not check on new learning at the end of the lesson. Weaker features of teaching include a lack of challenge to make boys think for themselves, generate ideas and to develop them, and a lack of rigour to ensure that boys really understand the basic principles and

definitions underpinning their work. For example, few Year 11 pupils doing an experiment on osmosis could explain how this worked, though all knew what it did. The structures some teachers encourage for practical recording do not help pupils develop logical thought.

151. Good use is made of numeracy; boys are encouraged to measure accurately, to use formulae for calculations, and to construct and interpret graphs. The use of literacy is not so well developed and varies between teachers. At best there is a requirement to produce extended writing, to use key words, to spell correctly and to undertake discussions. Good use is made of the library, which for science is a useful source of books and periodicals. ICT resources are well used. Boys can word-process, use Excel for formulae and graphs, and operate data loggers; this will further improve when internet access is more available and the use of smart boards is fully exploited.
152. The department is well led and managed by an enthusiastic teacher. The curriculum is good, and enhanced by links and visits, such as those from a pathologist and forensic scientist and to the Science Museum. The use of assessment is unsatisfactory at present, but new systems are now being launched to remedy this. Staffing, including an excellent technician, is now good after a prolonged and difficult time, which had a bad effect upon standards. The monitoring of teaching is underdeveloped. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. One laboratory is too small, there are not enough laboratories, so some teaching is elsewhere. The benching in two laboratories is unsuitable, with seating facing in all directions. All this detracts from classroom management and interest, and does not promote effective learning.
153. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, particularly in the light of staffing difficulties. Attainment in Years 7 to 9 has risen, although GCSE results have declined slightly. The less able are now achieving better. Progress has been made in improving and evaluating development plans. Sixth form courses are going well. The use of ICT has expanded and there are improved schemes of work, together with sound plans to make fuller use of assessment. The structures and staffing now in place can be expected to raise standards in the future.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- By the end of Year 9, most pupils meet or exceed the standards expected of them.
- GCSE results have been well above national averages.
- Art has made an important contribution to the cultural life of the school. It makes a very impressive contribution to extra-curricular activities.

Areas for improvement

- Slow progress has been made to incorporate ICT into the curriculum for Years 7-9.

154. By the end of Year 9, three-quarters of 14 year olds were reported by the school to have met or exceeded the standards expected. Just under a quarter of these exceeded expectations. Over the past three years the numbers of pupils exceeding the nationally expected level has fluctuated, with as many as a third achieving a higher level. Standards at the end of Year 11 are high. All pupils entered in 2001 attained A* - C grades. The results for 2001 were well above national averages for boys and all pupils. Results for 2002 were similar to those in 2001. Over the last three years, standards in GCSE art have been above or well above national averages.

155. By the end of Year 9, pupils use their study of artists to improve visual ideas and technical skills. In Years 7 and 8, they study artists such as Monet and Morandi to develop the use of brushwork and pencil shading. By Year 9, they can analyse the colour work of post Impressionist artists such as Bonnard and apply vivid and vibrant colour to their own paintings. Pupils are accurate with technical terms when discussing art. They judge the relative size and proportion of objects well

when they sketch from direct observation. Pupils in Years 7-9 make good progress, including those with special educational needs.

156. By the end of the GCSE course, all pupils present thorough preparatory studies and finished art work. They use a variety of visual information and work imaginatively to develop artistic ideas and skills. Year 10 pupils experimented with block printing techniques to produce a range of visually interesting tones and shapes. High standards were achieved by combining novel ideas with good technical skills. All pupils make good progress during the two year GCSE course.
157. The quality of teaching is good overall, and sometimes very good. Teachers are effective in using their subject expertise and make skilful demonstrations to motivate and inspire pupils. Clear lesson objectives are set that pupils can understand. Pupils thrive on the demanding tasks and challenges given. They are keen to learn and succeed, and their behaviour is good. Homework is well used to extend and consolidate class work.
158. Art teachers are very committed to raising standards and to improving the status of the subject. Subject leadership is good. Art makes a very good contribution to the cultural life of the school and the contribution it makes to extra-curricular activities is very impressive. Over the last three years, the department has arranged no less than 39 activities, including visits to galleries and museums, meeting artists, attending art history lectures, guiding for galleries, and etching and sculpture courses. The department makes very good use of the many cultural activities which London offers. The subject development plan has listed accurately the areas for improvement. These include improving the attainment of talented pupils in the younger years. However, the plan needs clearer targets, timescales and success criteria. Good opportunities for in-service training have kept teachers up-to-date with subject knowledge, with the exception of ICT.
159. Good progress in improving standards has been made since the last inspection, though progress in incorporating ICT into the curriculum for younger pupils has been slow. The quantity and quality of computer equipment are unsatisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **unsatisfactory, and fails to meet requirements in Year 7-9.**

Strengths

- Younger pupils have good experience of the range of different materials and technical processes, particularly electronics.
- There is a good choice of GCSE courses, including graphics, electronic control and resistant materials.
- Relationships between teachers and their pupils are good.

Areas for improvement

- The requirements of the National Curriculum are not met in Years 7-9.
- The information that teachers have, or should have, from their assessments, is not at present being used well enough to encourage pupils to improve their standards and reach their full potential.
- Schemes of work throughout the main school do not at present meet requirements. They do not challenge all pupils, and particularly the most able.
- The organisation of the curriculum is not at present providing the continuity and progression to raise standards further.
- Pupils' graphic and written communications skills need improvement, so that they increase their capabilities to develop their designs further.

160. Standards of attainment for younger pupils by the end of Year 9 are reported by the department as high, but an analysis of what the pupils do in lessons, what they have achieved in their lessons and in their previous work, shows that overall they are not reaching the nationally expected level. This is because the boys do too little design work, so that their design skills are poorly developed. In addition, their graphics skills do not allow them to express their ideas freely and effectively. Too much of their work is teacher-directed and they are given too little opportunity to produce work that shows their thinking. At the end of each successive project task, there is little real difference in what pupils have achieved. The most able are not given the opportunity to develop their capabilities. The lower attaining pupils complete the practical task, but their design and written work shows too little progress.

161. Every younger pupil has experience of resistant materials (wood, metal and plastic), and also of the supporting areas of understanding in mechanisms, control and structures. However, computer aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) areas are not covered as required. Pupils' making skills are sound but they mostly follow the instructions of their teacher rather than apply their knowledge and skills to their own design solutions. The school does not therefore fully meet the requirements of the National Curriculum in Years 7-9.
162. Most older pupils follow a full GCSE course in either graphics, resistant materials or electronic control, with the remainder following a short course. This meets requirements. Last year, too many pupils failed to complete their coursework and were subsequently not entered for the examination. This is unsatisfactory. Overall, 62 per cent of pupils in the year were entered for the three DT subjects in 2001; all passed, but only 39 per cent got grades above a C, significantly lower than the national average. Generally, results in electronic control were the best of these three subjects.
163. In 2001, there were only eight entries for the resistant materials GCSE course, but results were good. However, 24 entered for the short course, but only one candidate managed a C, and this is unsatisfactory. In electronics products, 21 were entered and nine achieved grade C or above, a result overall below the national average.
164. There are two reasons why pupils do not do well enough at GCSE. First, the course for younger pupils in Years 7-9 is inadequate properly to prepare them for the standards expected at GCSE. Second, teachers do not set pupils high enough standards, or guide them sufficiently to complete their coursework systematically.
165. There are three rooms covering different materials and processes, but they are inadequate for their task. They are multi-materials rooms and fail in this because they are not large enough and are poorly equipped in each specific area. Graphic facilities, for example, are limited, with none of the more advanced equipment now required for GCSE work. The use of ICT is sparse, although the old computer system is well used for developmental electronics work.
166. Although pupils like their lessons, too much of their work is allowed to be unchallenging. They cooperate with each other and their teacher so that everyone makes some progress in the task, and their motivation is high. They are taught suitable procedures, for example wearing appropriate protective clothing, although in some lessons their teacher does not set them an example.
167. The quality of teaching and learning in lessons is mainly satisfactory, often good, but there are unsatisfactory features to some lessons. Overall, the teaching programmes are insufficiently planned to meet requirements. Homework is used well to support research, but not the real designing and planning areas. Because of teachers' practical expertise, pupils watch their demonstrations with great interest. For younger pupils, teachers' constant changing of material, usually every 11 weeks, affects standards. Pupils forget what they have learnt and have to relearn basic facts when they restart a particular aspect the next year. Because the teacher plans all the work for them, pupils do not choose which practical skill to use and so cannot ensure they have made secure progress in a particular topic. Teachers' arrangements for recording pupils' DT capability are poor.
168. The technician gives effective support by providing a well organised environment, keeping stocks of materials to the correct level, and carrying out health and safety audits as required. The accommodation and equipment are of a poor quality. There is a good supply of materials for practical work, but modern equipment such as vibrating saws are absent. Book stocks are low.
169. The management of DT is poor and the departmental development plan does not identify all that is really needed. There are outline plans for improving the recording of pupils' achievements and extending the work to offer better access to the higher levels of achievement. These need urgent implementation. There are also good school plans for improving facilities in the longer term. Since the last inspection, standards in examinations have declined. The department has made little progress in improving the issues identified for action, for example department development planning.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Standards of work and GCSE examination results are above or well above average. Achievement is good throughout Years 7 to 11.
- The range and opportunities provided by the fieldwork programme is excellent.
- The subject is well led and competently managed.

Areas for improvement

- A specialist teacher of human geography is needed.
- More specialist and fully equipped teaching rooms are required.
- Better ICT provision is needed over Years 7 to 11.
- The pace and challenge of teaching needs improvement in Years 7 to 9.

170. Standards of work by Year 9 are above average. Pupils' achievement over Years 7 to 9, in relation to their average standards when they join Year 7, is good. These standards are achieved because teaching is sound. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a good grounding in geographical skills. Map work is good. All pupils have an adequate understanding of spatial patterns and processes. Their knowledge of location is satisfactory, except for lowest attainers. Graphical presentation of statistical data is variable but analysis is sound. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language progress as other pupils and some, when provided with specialist support, make good progress. However, not enough learning support is provided for these pupils. Gifted and talented pupils are well challenged in their work. There is no significant variation in the standards of work produced by pupils of different ethnic backgrounds.
171. By Year 11, standards of work are generally well above the national average. As the standard of work at the end of Year 9 was above the national average, this shows good achievement by pupils over Years 10 and 11. Standards in the current Year 11 are lower than recent examination results would indicate, but Year 10 work is more comparable. The best independent study projects for GCSE based on local fieldwork are of very good quality. Pupils are suitably prepared for their GCSEs through a study skills and revision programme of good quality.
172. Recent GCSE A*-C and A*-G grade results, as in 2001, have been above the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the highest grades is well above. Compared with other subjects, GCSE results have been above or well above the average. The 2002 GCSE results have shown further improvement.
173. Pupils' attitudes to learning are mostly positive, although some boys have a low concentration span. Behaviour is generally good, although many boys call out and interrupt the flow of learning. Relationships with teachers are good and boys work harmoniously together.
174. Teaching and learning are sound overall and usually good or very good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers are caring and supportive of pupils in their charge. The management and control in lessons generally, based on the constructive relationships, are of a good standard. On the occasions that this is not so, it is due to the teachers' inexperience. Lessons are usually well planned and structured, with a clear focus, providing a helpful framework for learning. Best teaching occurs when lessons offer a variety of suitable practical activities that incorporate the use of visual aids, such as sketch maps, diagrams, photographs and video extracts in order to clarify the aims of lessons. In a very good Year 10 lesson, using the Mount St Helens earthquake as a case study, the primary and secondary effects of earthquake activity were considered. The teacher thoroughly placed the lesson in the context of previous study, using a range of good visual resources. He questioned skilfully and reinforced pupils' prior knowledge well, so building an impressive foundation of learning that ensured very good understanding during the rest of the lesson.
175. Learning is overall satisfactory. However, pupils' productivity, pace and standards of work need raising in lessons in Years 7 to 9. Learning would be improved if there were far more visual materials used in teaching and more enquiry opportunities for pupils to be involved in their own learning. There is insufficient consolidation and reinforcement of the main teaching points, visually on the board, which would consolidate the learning of the whole class. Literacy skills are satisfactory and numeracy skills good. Work with ICT has been curtailed by the lack of access to computers and the need for a

coherent programme of study over Years 7 to 11. The fieldwork undertaken locally and at Winchelsea, Cuckmere Haven, and the Isle of Wight significantly enriches study and stimulates students' interest in the subject. The range of opportunities offered is excellent.

176. The acting head of department has been in post for only six weeks, but has already made an impact. Leadership of the subject is good and the department effectively managed. There is good curriculum planning, but other documentation needs updating and the subject plan needs rigorous monitoring and evaluation. Current staffing is unsatisfactory, as there is no specialist teacher of human geography. The assessment policy is satisfactory overall. Marking is variable with low attainers' work not always being corrected when key words and place names are misspelt. This is unsatisfactory. Pupils need to be more involved in the joint assessment of their work with their teachers and to agree targets to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills. Accommodation is unsatisfactory as it is widely dispersed and limited to one specialist room. The department lacks access to computers and to an overhead projector and video monitor, which should be standard equipment in each teaching room.
177. Overall there has been good progress since the previous inspection, and standards of work have improved. The department has the capacity to improve standards further and to implement the points raised in this report.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good and pupils learn well. Teachers collaborate well and have positive expectations of what their pupils can do.
- There is a clear commitment to raise standards.
- Teachers are responsive and work closely with their pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Improvements are needed in teachers' record keeping, the tracking of pupils' progress, and in target setting for individual pupils.
- The use of ICT needs improvement.

178. In 2001 GCSE results were in line with the national average for boys and slightly below the national average for all maintained schools. In terms of relative performance, pupils' GCSE history grades were below the average of the other subjects which they took by a greater margin than nationally. In 2002 the percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades declined.
179. Overall attainment at the end of Year 9 is in line with the nationally expected level. Pupils have a basic knowledge and understanding of the major historical events and personalities they are studying. They appreciate that history is based on evidence. All, including those with special educational needs, can extract information from a variety of written and pictorial sources. The more able recognise bias. Most pupils have satisfactory oral and listening skills, but writing skills are less assured. Lower attaining pupils can write in simple sentences to describe historical events but their work is flawed by poor sentence construction and spelling errors. Higher attaining pupils write more extensively and with fluency. Most pupils show a developing sense of chronology and can use historical terms appropriately.
180. At the end of Year 11, attainment remains broadly in line with the nationally expected level. Pupils' historical knowledge and understanding have deepened. Able pupils analyse evidence effectively to produce fluent and well reasoned arguments. Lower attaining pupils use sources to support their narratives and can draw simple conclusions. Writing and presentation skills are poor in lower attaining pupils. Boys listen attentively and participate with interest in class discussions, demonstrating good levels of recall. Some pupils, irrespective of their ability, show less diligence in maintaining written work, and thus in organising themselves to succeed. By the end of Year 11, most pupils are still dependent on their teachers for their learning.

181. Pupils arrive at the school with few skills in history. They make satisfactory progress over time, largely owing to the focused teaching of basic skills and the selection of appropriate topics which promote interest. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make similar rates of progress because of focused support from their teachers and mentors.
182. Teaching is good and pupils learn well. One Year 9 lesson seen was of outstanding quality, and pupils learnt with speed, accuracy and enjoyment. Teachers convey sound subject knowledge with confidence. Lessons are clearly structured, purposeful and well paced. Good relationships, based on excellent knowledge of their pupils, underpin firm classroom control. Pupils are appropriately challenged and know what is required of them. Resources of good quality are selected, and these stimulate pupils to learn well, as was seen in the Year 9 lesson cited above, in which video clips of conditions in the First World War trenches were used to increase pupils' understanding. Skilful questioning is used to encourage pupils to think critically. Teachers work well as a team and aim to share good practice. Though assessment procedures are largely satisfactory, there are inconsistencies in teachers' practices. Teachers vary in their approach to correcting errors in literacy and the quality of constructive feedback they give to pupils.
183. The department acknowledges the importance of literacy development in lesson planning. Programmes of study provide opportunities for the development of numeracy. As yet, the subject provides few opportunities to develop ICT skills. This is due to current pressures on a limited number of school computers and the lack of dedicated workstations in history classrooms. Pupils can borrow a range of history books from the department and the school library.
184. The department is well managed by a new head of department in post for only six weeks. There is a strong commitment to raise standards and improve pupil progress, which is reflected in a positive ethos. Developments are underway to improve record keeping and the tracking of pupils' progress. The department also intends to set individual targets, which will be shared with pupils. Appropriate schemes of work are in place. The history area has attractive displays of pupils' work. Some opportunities are lost to enrich the curriculum and develop cultural understanding, as the department arranges few outside visits. Topics of study reflect the ethnic diversity of the classroom and help towards the development of moral and social understanding.
185. Standards of teaching, learning, achievement and attainment remain in line with those recorded at the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Strengths

- Teachers' subject knowledge and planning are good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes and behaviour and their relationships with teachers are good.
- Extra-curricular provision for gifted and talented pupils is good.

Areas for improvement

- National Curriculum teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 is not accurate enough.
- The monitoring of individual pupils' progress needs improvement.
- There is not enough technician support.

186. Assessments made by teachers at the end of Year 9 in 2001 indicate that pupils' attainment is well above average. However, inspection evidence shows that this assessment was too lenient and that standards are actually just above the national average. Standards of attainment in GCSE examinations at grades A*-C in 2001 were below average. There was some improvement on these results in 2002.
187. Standards of work and the quality of learning among pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are satisfactory and improving. The great majority of these pupils are now independent users of ICT tools; for example, Year 8 pupils were able to send e-mail to their teacher. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 use a wide range of computer applications with increasing confidence and effectiveness, for example, when designing a

company logo in Year 10 and modelling a stock control system in Year 11.

188. Pupils' achievement and progress overall are satisfactory, throughout the main school. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated with other pupils in lessons, and their learning is satisfactory. Very good extra-curricular arrangements are made for gifted and talented pupils. For example, in a high-level computer graphics course, pupils produced some stunning artwork, enabling them to apply these skills during normal lesson time. The department provides satisfactory support for pupils' development of literacy skills; for example, key vocabulary is displayed in classrooms. Pupils' use of spreadsheets supports their development of numeracy skills.
189. Across the curriculum, the provision of ICT is satisfactory, except for design and technology where there are currently no resources for teaching computer aided design and manufacture.
190. The quality of teaching during the inspection was never less than satisfactory. The high level of teachers' subject knowledge is a strength of the department. Lessons are well planned and presented, and relationships are very good. However, many opportunities are lost for pupils to collaborate in group or paired work and thus develop their capacity for independent learning. Teachers provide expert technical help and guidance. Non-specialist teachers are well supported by experienced colleagues.
191. The management of the department is satisfactory. Departmental development planning is not yet clearly linked to the main school development plan and consequently some of the targets for attainment are not challenging enough. Pupils' reports identify progress made and broadly what they need to do to improve.
192. A school intranet of high quality continues to be developed by teachers and is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Technical support is currently inadequate and therefore too much time is spent by teachers on routine maintenance of computer systems. There is no spare capacity on the system server designated for curriculum use.
193. Improvements to the ICT scheme of work in Years 7, 8 and 9 are beginning to raise standards. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Teachers make good use of the foreign language in Spanish lessons.
- Activities during the lesson are carefully planned.
- Teachers make good use of resources, and so motivate pupils successfully.
- The challenge and pace of work in Spanish classes is good.

Areas for improvement

- Arrangements for the introduction of a second language in Year 9 are not yet satisfactory.
- There is too wide a range of ability in Year 10 and 11 classes.
- Though the variety of activity in lessons is generally good, it is too limited in some.
- The management of pupils' behaviour in some French classes is impeding good learning.

194. In French, the attainment of Year 9 pupils is below the nationally expected level. Pupils' attainment in Spanish is close to that expected nationally. After only a few weeks of learning, Year 9 Spanish pupils make satisfactory progress and many higher attainers achieve well. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' attainment in French is below the national average. Although GCSE percentage pass rates are above national figures for 2001 and close to them in 2002 only small numbers were entered for French in these years. When this is taken into account, pupils' attainment is less good than the pass rates suggest. In Spanish in Years 10 and 11, standards attained are better than in French. GCSE results are close to national averages in 2001 and 2002. Pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to the time spent studying this language. Across the whole school the overall trend is towards improved attainment in languages, particularly in Spanish.

195. At the time of the inspection most Year 9 pupils had been studying Spanish for only a short period of time. In these few weeks, higher and average attainers have developed good listening skills and have accurate pronunciation. Lower attainers also acquire a good range of vocabulary. In a Year 9 Spanish lesson, pupils listened to tapes and confidently identified dates of birthdays. Their teacher used fluent Spanish throughout the lesson. As a result they listened carefully and attentively. Detailed planning of activities and rapid pace maintained concentration. Excellent use was made of the interactive white board and resources produced by the teacher. These provided attractive visual materials and motivated pupils. High expectations and careful checking led to good pronunciation. Homework was carefully and clearly set. Exercise books were marked in detail using National Curriculum levels to help pupils progress.
196. In other Spanish classes, younger pupils acquired a satisfactory amount of new language about hobbies and pastimes. This resulted from a good range of practice activities. Pupils were less confident, however, in speaking at greater length. This skill requires more practice across the different year groups in the school.
197. In French, younger pupils learn a satisfactory amount of new vocabulary but lack confidence in written and spoken French. Lower attainers do not achieve well. In a few lessons there is some unsatisfactory behaviour. This results from passive activities such as copying, labelling and filling in work sheets. These lower pupils' expectations of what they will achieve and so reduce pace.

198. In Years 10 and 11, pupils make satisfactory progress in reading and listening to Spanish. In a Year 11 class, pupils understood instructions given in rapid Spanish. They listened to tape recordings and picked out key details confidently. In French in Years 10 and 11 overall achievement is lower than in Spanish. However, some higher attainers produced good written work. In letters to penfriends, they described their families accurately and in good detail. They used past tenses well to write about holidays abroad. Their work is carefully marked, in helpful detail. Average and lower attainers, however, are not confident in speaking. They need a good deal of support and prompting to make short statements. In some classes there is too wide a range of ability to ensure that everyone can make good progress. In spite of careful planning, this restricts pupils' activities and achievement.
199. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There are examples of good and very good lessons in Spanish. These lessons show careful planning and extensive use of the foreign language. A range of activities and equipment is used to motivate pupils, including the use of computers and software for language learning. In French, some teachers are setting too slow a pace and relying too much on the textbook. Pupils' progress and attainment in modern languages are restricted by some features of the curriculum. Not enough time is given to French and Spanish in Year 9 to maintain good continuity in these languages. This is also true for pupils taking a new language to GCSE in Years 10 and 11. There is a need to review the way the second language is introduced.
200. Teachers work cooperatively together. They are well supported by clear guidance from the head of department and detailed schemes of work. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant improvement in the number of pupils entering and achieving a GSCE pass in languages.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- GCSE results are well above the national average for the relatively small number taking the examination.
- More boys take instrumental lessons than the national average.
- The choir has a good reputation and represents the school very well.
- Attitudes and behaviour are good.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are too low in lessons.
- Work is not well planned for all levels of attainment.
- The curriculum is not well balanced, and schemes of work are unsatisfactory in some respects.
- Assessment procedures are not well developed.

201. The music department has some good features, but also weaknesses in certain areas.
202. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 produce work in line with nationally expected levels of attainment. They sing a broad repertoire of songs and perform solos without hesitation. They listen well, show knowledge and understanding of musical terms and can express themselves in technical vocabulary. However, there is no evidence of their ability to compose music, either from tapes or written records. In addition, Year 9 pupils have some difficulty describing and analysing the musical extracts they hear. Over their first three years, pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory.
203. A small number of pupils study music in Years 10 and 11. These pupils show considerable performing skill and between them play a wide range of instruments, from trumpet to piano accordion. The standard is high, as is their ability to talk about music from different times and places. No compositions are however available to indicate the range or standard of work achieved. GCSE results are well above the national average for boys' maintained schools. Pupils' achievement and progress are good in the GCSE years.
204. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language produce work at a level compatible with their individual abilities and make similar progress to others in their classes.

205. Pupils' response to music is good and in some year groups, very good. Pupils work with concentration and listen well to each other's efforts. In Year 11 pupils show responsibility for the organisation of resources and commitment to practising independently when necessary.
206. Teaching, though it varies from good to unsatisfactory, is satisfactory overall. Its strengths are excellent subject knowledge and very good classroom management. These were seen, for example, in a Year 11 practical session, in which pupils responded positively to the chance to work together and support each others' practical skills. However, these strengths are not always displayed, and sometimes teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve are too low. For example, in a Year 9 singing lesson, the teacher did not encourage pupils to improve their postures, so that the result was less successful than it should have been. Sometimes, the material given to pupils is not adjusted in any way to pupils' different levels of ability, and therefore the less able pupils struggle on occasions. For example, teachers do not help pupils enough when pupils find the words of hymns difficult to read. Work sheets are clear and relevant, but there are no additional questions for the more able.
207. Assessment procedures need improving. At present, pupils are assessed each September on the basis of aural awareness and overall progress. There is, however, no written or recorded evidence of their ability to perform, compose or appraise. The departmental handbook describes national policies but does not relate these to the school or department. Schemes of work outline the programme for each term but there is too little detail in terms of lesson planning. The allocation of time for music meets statutory requirements for the National Curriculum. Pupils work in class groups for Years 7, 8 and 9 and in a variety of individual, combined or whole-class groupings in Years 10 and 11.
208. Eighty-seven pupils take instrumental lessons, provided by visiting tutors, and a few boys attend the London-wide Centre for Young Musicians. In total over 15 per cent of boys in Years 7 to 11 take instrumental lessons, above the national average. Timetables for visiting instrumental teachers are well organised and clearly displayed. Two visiting teachers were observed providing very good instruction, in one case a demonstration of brass instruments to a Year 7 class.
209. Extra-curricular opportunities are provided regularly and the four-part choir contributes to a number of key events each year, for example services at St Paul's and Southwark Cathedrals. Choir rehearsals are well supported by pupils and there is a small wind-band. The music department makes a significant contribution to the social and cultural life of the school and supports important events in the school calendar. It plays a good role in preparing pupils to sing the hymns in assembly. For example, classes in Years 7 and 8 were rehearsing the naval hymn, *Eternal Father, strong to save*, during the inspection.
210. Resources are generally good and access to ICT has improved since the last inspection. Although keyboards are in good supply, there is only one computer for pupils' use, insufficient for the needs of GCSE pupils in particular. Accommodation is limited. Although there is a number of practice rooms, the main classroom is only just large enough to take a whole class of boys and there is not enough space to set up and leave keyboards ready for use. There is no technical support on a regular basis.
211. Since the last inspection there has been improvement in GCSE results and the overall standards for younger pupils. There is no evidence for improvement in composing, as no records are kept. Assessment procedures are undeveloped. The use of ICT has improved.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

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

Strengths

- Several pupils are performing well beyond the levels expected for their ages.
- Standards in swimming are very high.
- Standards are high in the GCSE PE course.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and expectations. Their teaching of swimming is particularly effective.
- Sports and recreational activities outside lesson times, helped by many visiting coaches, is a strength of the department and school.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of performance among the less able or motivated younger pupils need to be increased.
- Accommodation for sports and PE on the school site is much in need of improvement.

212. In the first three years, standards are in line with nationally expected levels. In the GCSE years, the attainment of most pupils is in line with these standards, with some pupils achieving below this. At all levels, there are several pupils working well beyond nationally expected levels, and some exceptional performance. Support for gifted and talented pupils is readily available and additional coaches help to identify and develop individual talent. High participation rates ensure that all pupils are included in PE activities and that everyone has access to a wide range of activities. The quality of attainment for the less able or motivated pupils, especially in the GCSE years, is below average, and these pupils need help to raise the quality of their work and become more skilful. With this exception, all pupils achieve at least satisfactory results and progress. However, there is scope for improvement amongst the less able as the school is hoping to become a specialist sports college.
213. Standards in swimming are very high. Many pupils enter the school with low level of ability in the pool, but a focused teaching programme helps them make rapid progress. By the end of Year 7, most can swim safely and demonstrate a range of strokes. Many are able to perform with good technique and some can tumble-turn. Competence in the water enables boys to join the range of water-based activities offered in nautical studies in Year 9 with confidence. A comprehensive range of activities and a generous time allocation enable pupils to develop skill in gymnastics and team games. Understanding of techniques and tactics is sound, but there needs to be a greater focus on the quality of performance in these activities.
214. Those pupils taking GCSE benefit from more generous timetabling. Their standards of work, especially written work, are high. Those pupils who do not wish to avail themselves of the very good off-site facilities demonstrate a wide range of skill. In basketball, some have a limited understanding of tactics, and their passing and shooting are often inaccurate. However, some boys display a high level of skill, passing with speed, fluency and accuracy. All pupils enjoy the lessons. Opportunities to play in games allow for skills to be further developed and a sense of achievement gained.
215. Teaching is at least satisfactory, with some good and very good practice, especially in swimming. Lessons have a clear structure, objectives being shared with the boys. All teachers have good subject knowledge. Relationships are good and staff have high expectations of behaviour. A good learning climate is generated and boys feel secure with the routines and procedures. Open-ended questioning is used to further pupil learning. More attention needs to be given to constructive feedback, ensuring that praise exemplifies not just why it is good, but challenges the more able by telling them how to make it even better. When opportunities are given for pupils to evaluate the work of others, as in swimming and gymnastics, they can do so competently, identifying key faults and what is needed to improve. Opportunities for personal reflection about their own performance would help pupils to progress and to consider their performance across the different aspects of the subject.
216. Departmental documentation is well linked with whole-school policies on literacy and numeracy and in lessons boys have opportunities to practise skills of speaking and listening.
217. The head of department has recently become the partnership development manager for the LEA school sports coordinator initiative, and there is an acting head of department at present. The school needs to consider how this initiative and the potential specialist college status will impact on the school and to plan effectively to continue to build on existing good practice.
218. Sports facilities on the school site are tired, but the gym, though dilapidated, is a good size and the playground offers a place for curricular and extra-curricular activities. The school benefits from extensive facilities of high quality off the site, some of it offering specialist expertise, for example rowing. During and after lessons, visiting coaches provide a very extensive range of expertise which supports and enriches the department's teaching.
219. PE makes a significant contribution to school life and promotes its aims well, especially those of a healthy lifestyle, self-esteem, character, teamwork and partnership. Competitive sports offer representative opportunities at class, year and school level in swimming, cricket, athletics and football. The development of GCSE for more pupils and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme will further

enhance pupils' personal growth and development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The department offers a good range of courses.
- There is an upward trend in examination results.
- The department makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.

Areas for improvement

- The pace and expectations in some lessons could be better.
- Sometimes, work is not well designed for all levels of ability in the class.
- Some lessons do not contain enough structured exercises such as extended writing.

220. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 11 in the GCSE short course in 2001 were rather below the national average. They were a little higher in 2002. Also, in 2002, 28 pupils were entered for this examination early, achieving very good results. Results show a rising trend over recent years.
221. Standards of work seen during the inspection are also broadly in line with the standards expected nationally. Pupils have a sound basic knowledge of the subject, for example issues on God, morality, key beliefs and ultimate questions. Pupils can adequately discuss these issues from the perspective of Christianity and other world religions. They are good at giving oral responses and can fluently express their own opinions. Their ability to reflect and reach conclusions is good. Their written skills are less developed. The amount of extended writing achieved is below that expected.
222. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 are broadly in line with the standards indicated in the Agreed Syllabus, though they are sometimes below this. Pupils have a basic grasp of many aspects of world religions, including Christianity. They are familiar with the way in which many world religions express themselves at the personal level, as in rites of passage, and on the community level, as in a knowledge and understanding of festivals and community worship. Their understanding of some of the central beliefs and people of world religions is not well developed. Pupils are good in making oral responses and in reflecting on a range of religious and moral issues. Their written skills are less marked, particularly in written work in class time. The amount of written work done over time is not very significant.
223. Overall, the achievement and progress of pupils in the main school are satisfactory. Pupils who have special educational needs and have English as an additional language are also making satisfactory progress. Some pupils find the work set for the whole class difficult, and do not get material well designed for their abilities. Gifted and talented pupils would benefit from more flexibly presented work.
224. Pupils' response is satisfactory overall. They are mainly well behaved and concentrate on their work. However, sometimes they are unable to maintain their concentration, particularly when the teaching is too wordy and where they are not given opportunities to do structured work. This enables them to become distracted and to lose interest. Some general misbehaviour is the result. A negative attitude to the subject is being fostered by some homework tasks, which pupils find too time-consuming and difficult to complete. Otherwise, the pupils show an interest in their work and are respectful of their teachers. They are also respectful of other people's viewpoints and opinions.
225. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. All lessons are well prepared and the teachers have a good subject knowledge. The objectives of the lesson are clear to the teachers, but this is not always communicated to the pupils themselves, so that the purpose of the lesson is not as clear as it might be. Insufficient use of the board in clearly setting out lesson goals hinders good learning. Teachers use a variety of methods, but at times they talk for too long and place too little emphasis on written work. Marking is not always consistent and so pupils are sometimes unsure as to how their learning could be improved. Teaching makes a good contribution to literacy in the school. Teaching also makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.
226. Leadership is satisfactory, although the monitoring of the department's work is not strong enough. The statutory requirements of the Agreed Syllabus are met. The department has good documentation.

Though resources are satisfactory, accommodation is unsatisfactory. Progress since the last inspection has been limited, as the provision of extended writing is still an issue, but the quality of documentation has improved.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

NAUTICAL STUDIES

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

Strengths

- Standards of work seen and recent GCSE examinations are well above average.
- Achievement throughout the course is very good.
- Teaching and learning are good and often very good. They are enriched with an excellent extra-curricular activities programme.
- The subject contributes significantly to the nautical atmosphere and ethos of the school.

Areas for improvement

- The assessment of pupils' work, including pupils' self-assessment, needs developing.
- More varied use of ICT within the course is needed.

227. Standards of work by Year 9 are above and, for many pupils, well above the expected level. Younger pupils' achievement and progress over their first three years is very good, in relation to their grasp of the subject when they joined the school. These high standards are the result of an imaginative and practical programme of study which integrates theory and practice well. There is much challenging and stimulating work provided. This allows pupils to make significant progress, as in the individual project in Year 8 on the *Titanic* disaster. Pupils of all attainment levels, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make very good progress.
228. By the end of Year 11 standards of work are well above those expected. Achievement and progress over Years 10 and 11 are very good. Standards of work in some lessons do not quite match the exceptionally high GCSE results of recent years as pupils do not contribute as much as one would expect to discussions, and rely heavily on the teachers. Finished work is of excellent quality, for example the GCSE project work on a passage plan for a projected journey from Portland Harbour to Poole Harbour. Pupils show an impressive ability to apply knowledge and to interpret and evaluate a range of factors including the shipping forecast, pilot-book information, tide-tables and charts. The GCSE project work also shows an unusually high level of understanding of the practical skills involved in planning and implementing a passage plan. This high standard of work demonstrates that teaching is effective in motivating pupils to produce course work above that expected for their attainment level. In other words, this course adds significant value to pupils' achievements.
229. Recent GCSE examination results have been very high, with over nine in every ten pupils attaining A*-C grades in 2001. The 2002 GCSE results were also well above those in other subjects taken by these pupils. The proportion of pupils achieving the highest grades is very high compared with the national average.
230. Pupils apply themselves well to their learning and many display a real interest and enthusiasm in their work. They work conscientiously and are keen to learn. Many display real pride in the presentation of their project work. Pupils' behaviour is consistently very good. Relationships with teachers and with other boys are very good.
231. Teaching and learning are good overall. It was never less than good and mostly very good in lessons seen in Years 7 to 9. Classroom management and control is very good and built on a foundation of firm discipline, blended with care and support for pupils. Teachers have a very secure knowledge base. Teaching of this subject is very successful for boys, as it is largely practical in content and presented in an interesting way which encourages real enthusiasm for the subject as early as Year 7. The best teaching occurs when lessons use demonstrations, with visual aids such as sketch maps, artefacts and models. Lessons are well planned and structured, with good challenge. Pupils learn well from the good teaching, gaining high motivation. Highly skilful teaching, drawing on experience, anticipates

pupils' potential difficulties very well and identifies pitfalls and solutions helpfully. At times, the consolidation of learning suffers because of imprecise timekeeping. While lessons have clear aims, these do not always fit the content of what is being taught.

232. The course incorporates an extensive range of excellent practical activities. These are a major strength of the course as they enrich study and stimulate pupils' interest. They include a residential course at the Bradwell Outdoor Education Centre, visits to the Marine Society Training Vessels, the Portsmouth RN Base, the Royal Marines Portsmouth, *HMS Collingwood, Belfast, and Richmond*, together with several sail experience training visits such as Sail France. Good use is made of the Docklands Sailing Centre for dingy and canoe sailing. While some of these activities are part of the course, others are extra-curricular in nature and involve staff outside the department. ICT is not integrated into the course curriculum as much as it should and is an area for development.
233. Leadership of the subject is good. The department handbook needs updating in many areas such as the extra-curricular provision, although implementation of policies have in practice been generally good. Assessment procedures are good overall. However, the quality of day-to-day marking varies. Most course work is thoroughly marked, but extensive areas of course books are often not marked, which is unsatisfactory. The department needs to use baseline assessment more in targeting pupils' progress. The Royal Yachting Association's procedures for course self-appraisal and review need to be used more extensively elsewhere in the course as a model for involving pupils more in assessing their learning targets. Teaching is undertaken by two well qualified, experienced and competent staff who work cooperatively together, providing a very good and balanced team. The specialist teaching room is spacious, with good displays, artefacts, models and charts etc. and provides an effective place to learn. Teaching resources are very good and the chart collection excellent.
234. The nautical studies course is a specialist and distinctive course studied in Years 7 to 9 and in Year 11. There is no course currently running in Year 10 owing to the examining body's having withdrawn GCSE certification for the course. This is highly regrettable, given the success and significance of the course to the school and the national move to expand vocational GCSE courses. (The school plans to integrate aspects of the course in its sports college status submission.) The subject adds breadth and balance to the school curriculum. It sums up much that the school does. Its tone and ethos projects the nautical training elements of the school's foundation very well indeed.

BUSINESS STUDIES

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

Strengths

- Teaching is of high quality and enables pupils to make good progress.
- Most pupils achieve very good examination results.
- Very good relationships enable pupils to work effectively and ask for help where required.

Areas for improvement

- A more formalised scheme of work is needed, which includes the integrated use of ICT and educational visits.
- Better accommodation is required, with ready access to ICT.
- The department needs to develop an approach which ensures that all candidates achieve a GCSE grade.

235. In the last three years, the percentage of GCSE passes at grades A*-C has been well above the national average. The number of pupils who pass the examination with any grade is at, or just below, the national average. Attainment is good in lessons and in current work. The subject does not regularly use ICT to enhance pupils' work further. As spreadsheets and databases are regularly used in business, their absence in these lessons is a weakness.
236. In Year 11, the quality of teaching is very good. The teacher is new, and has developed good relationships with the pupils. He is very knowledgeable and is developing sound schemes of work, though none was available when he arrived. A wider range of activities, visits and links to businesses is needed, to embed the lessons in the context of the real world outside school.

237. Learning is good in lessons. Relationships are very good and pupils listen well to their teachers, joining in the lessons with enthusiasm. The teacher asks searching questions and they respond willingly. The teacher sets up a good dialogue, which enables ideas to be developed and refined. Pupils follow instructions well and complete their tasks quickly and effectively. Lessons have very good pace and pupils work hard to keep up. They have confidence in their teacher and ask questions when they do not fully understand. The teacher responds to their needs, and gives suitable explanations, ensuring understanding. Because the pupils are given strong challenges and teachers have high expectations, the coursework is completed well. Homework is regularly set and is appropriately challenging.
238. Accommodation and resources are very poor and there is no dedicated room for business studies with computers and business equipment. This is a weakness. In addition, the range of teaching methods is restricted because there are no effective modern teaching aids. Co-ordination and management of the subject are improving dramatically.
239. Overall then, since the last inspection, improvement has been good.

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

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

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

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	10	20	69	0	29	0.8	2.1
Chemistry	7	86	85	29	37	4.9	2.7
Biology	11	55	82	27	30	4.0	2.4
Physics	4	0	85	0	37	0	2.7
Business studies	23	83	90	13	30	2.7	2.6
Information and communication technology (computing)	16	81	82	6	23	3.4	2.2
Art	4	75	80	0	33	2.5	2.5
Geography	14	50	90	33	33	2.3	2.7
History	9	100	94	33	41	6.4	3.0
English	12	83	92	25	33	4.5	2.7
French	4	50	89	25	40	2.5	2.9

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	8	50	86	0	40	1.8	5.6
Chemistry	2	100	89	0	40	3.0	5.7
Biology	2	50	86	30	29	3.0	4.9
Business studies	8	75	93	25	32	4.5	5.5
Information and communication technology (computing)	15	53	86	0	22	1.9	4.6
Art	3	100	95	0	40	2.0	6.1
Geography	4	100	91	25	33	5.0	5.4
History	2	100	89	0	35	4.0	5.4
English	4	100	95	0	37	4.0	5.9

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification	% gaining merit	Average point distinction

		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business	3	33	76	0	-	-	-

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The focus of the inspection was on mathematics and biology.

In mathematics, the inspection covered the A2-level and the AS-level courses offered by the school. Students cover modules in pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics. There is satisfactory provision for those students re-sitting GCSE mathematics, in which one lesson was sampled. Currently, there is no provision outside specialist mathematics lessons for the key skill of application of number.

In science, the focus was on biology, but chemistry and physics were also sampled. Owing to very small cohort sizes in chemistry and physics, it is not possible to make statistically reliable comparisons with results nationally. Two chemistry lessons were observed; both were taught well. They were characterised by practical work that neatly dovetailed with the theory that students were studying. This led to good quality learning. It was not possible to observe any physics teaching. Nonetheless, an analysis of the work in students' files indicated good quality teaching and good learning. Experimental work was recorded well, with appropriate graphical representations.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Individual students achieved higher results than expected in the 2002 A2-level examinations.
- Relationships between teachers and students are good. Students have confidence in their teachers.
- Most students re-taking GCSE mathematics make good progress.
- Mathematics is becoming a more popular subject. There is a significant increase in the number of students studying AS-level courses in Year 12.

Areas for improvement

- Too many students have been unsuccessful in the AS-level modules.
- The monitoring of the students' day-to-day progress in mathematics is not rigorous enough.
- There are too few resources for students' independent study of mathematics.

240. The number of students studying AS-level and A/A2- level mathematics courses in the sixth form has been small. As a result, it is not possible to make valid national comparisons. However, overall standards achieved are lower than average, partly reflecting the students' starting points. Individual students have had some success, exceeding expectations based on prior attainment in GCSE examinations. Nevertheless, in AS-level examinations too few students have been successful in achieving a pass grade. Neither of the two students taking the examination in 2002 was successful. In the 2000 and 2001 A-level examinations, no student achieved an A or B grade, and in 2001 half the students were unsuccessful. However, the 2002 provisional results indicate that in the A2-level examinations, three of the five students obtained an A to E grade and two exceeded their targets, obtaining A and B grades. Most students re-sitting GCSE mathematics in 2002 improved their grades significantly, with over 60 per cent obtaining a pass grade.

241. The standard of work seen in lessons and in students' notebooks in the current Years 12 and 13 confirms a wide range of attainment which is overall below average. The quality of the students' written work is often careless and reflects an emphasis on routine skills. Fourteen students in Year 12 have begun the AS-level course in mathematics. Currently, they are concentrating on pure mathematics modules. Some of these students have limited manipulative algebra skills, and this hampers their work. Generally, even able students show little inclination to pursue topics beyond the minimum expected by their teachers. In Year 13, the two pupils were observed in a pure mathematics and a

statistics class. They applied themselves very well to their work. In a statistics lessons, the students clearly understood their work on probability through the use of Venn diagrams. They reported finding greater difficulty with their work in mechanics than with pure mathematics or statistics, but this module was not observed. Given their starting points, these students are making satisfactory progress.

242. In the GCSE mathematics class observed, students' application to their work, good individual support and the teacher's diagnosis of their needs, enabled them to approach their work with confidence. They improved their skills on a range of topics, including sequences and probability. Several students showed good thinking skills, and although sometimes confused by routine methods, were able to use non-standard routes to obtain solutions.
243. Teaching is good overall. All teachers have good subject knowledge and understand examination requirements clearly. The best lessons are carefully structured and give careful thought to the development of the pupils' thinking skills, as in a lesson on graph sketching. Some teaching, however, is over-directed, so that students, particularly in Year 12, rely heavily on their teachers and become passive learners. Teachers' short-term assessment of students' learning is not rigorous enough, and students' unfinished work is not always followed up. Some students are uncertain as to how well they are doing.
244. The department's provision for post-16 mathematics has expanded since the last inspection and is generally well managed. Within the constraints of a small sixth form, teachers strive to satisfy individual needs. There has been rapid growth this term in the number of students studying AS-level mathematics. The department needs to review its monitoring procedures for this group so that there is early identification of the students' learning needs. Resources to support the students' independent study are scarce and do not encourage them to adopt a scholarly approach to their work.

BIOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Results showed a marked improvement in 2002, with the average points score for biology being better than for other subjects.
- Lessons have lively question and answer sessions that help pupils' learning.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have a secure knowledge of, and an enthusiasm for, their subject.
- Students have good knowledge of the standard of their work, in terms of potential A-level grades, through the regular feedback given by teachers.

Areas for improvement

- More resources are needed for the greatly increased number of students.
- There is currently no specialist A-level working area.

245. The GCE A-level examination results in 2002 showed a significant improvement, with students scoring more highly in biology than in any other subject. In relation to their GCSE results, they performed better than expected, Three quarters of candidates entered, obtained either A or B grades. Male and female candidates performed equally well. National comparative data for 2002 are not yet available.
246. The standard of work of current students is broadly average. In Year 13, students are achieving appropriately in relation to predictions based on their GCSE results. In the lessons seen, their learning was good. They have developed good knowledge and understanding of nitrogen fixation and can debate the merits and demerits of factory and organic farming cogently. Regular testing reinforces their learning well.
247. In Year 12, with students only a little way into their course, standards are as expected. While they are making good progress in their microscope work, they are impeded by having to share microscopes. Their knowledge of polysaccharides and cell structures is appropriate.
248. Teaching is good and is complemented by good learning. Lessons have a brisk pace, with plenty of discussion in question and answer sessions to revise previous work and explore new areas. Teachers

show good knowledge and understanding; their enthusiasm is communicated well to the students, who reflect it accordingly. In a lively debate on the benefits of genetically modified foods, students were encouraged to use appropriate technical vocabulary to assist their learning. They showed perceptiveness in discussing possible benefits of “cold tolerant crops” created by inserting an “antifreeze” gene from fish. Learning is not helped by the lack of a dedicated A-level teaching area; indeed, some lessons take place in an art room and other practical sessions are conducted at the back of a classroom occupied by younger pupils.

249. Students have positive attitudes to their work; they enjoy biology and this aids learning. Relationships are good. Students approach their work maturely and work independently. They present their work appropriately in their files. However, some basic technical terms are spelled incorrectly.
250. The subject is well led and managed by the head of science, who teaches some of the A-level biology, and the head of biology. There is a commitment to improving standards. Students are well aware of their present levels of achievement and their targets for improvement. The subject has improved well since the last inspection.

BUSINESS

The focus of the inspection was on business studies, which is taught at AS and A2 level, and also as an intermediate level subject for the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ). Six lessons were seen, covering all these areas. The school does not offer any further courses in this area of the curriculum.

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

Strengths

- Last year's results have shown a marked improvement over previous years.
- The new GNVQ examination has provided a clear pathway for lower attaining students entering the sixth form to progress very well and gain access to A-level courses.
- Teaching is very good, with teachers working hard to provide an appropriate scheme of work.
- The very good quality of relationships between teachers and their students.

Areas for improvement

- Departmental teaching materials, including a complete departmental handbook, need to be produced.
- Improvement is needed in the quality of the department's accommodation and resources.
- Better use of ICT is needed.

251. In the last three years, results at A-level have been variable, with the results in 2000 being very good when compared with national statistics, and in the other years below. However, when compared with their previous attainments, students progress well and achieve results at least in line with levels expected for them. In 2002, though no comparable national statistics are yet available, A-level results were once again in line with those expected when considering students' prior attainment. But in the AS examination, results were very good, with high grades and only one pupil failing to achieve a pass, a remarkable achievement. This was mirrored in the GNVQ examination, where lower attaining students, on entry to the course, nevertheless achieved well and well above the level expected for them.
252. In the sixth form, the quality of teaching is always good, often very good and on occasions it is excellent. This is because both members of staff have high technical expertise and a good range of teaching strategies. Their styles and specialisms contrast to make an excellent team approach. They are also demanding, accepting nothing less than the highest standards of behaviour and concentration from their students. Lessons are taught at a cracking pace, but with very good opportunities for reflection and the development of personal ideas. Each student contributes to the lesson without hesitation. For both teachers and students, learning is a partnership, both sharing the responsibility of making the lesson a success. Coursework tasks are well written and supportively marked. Homework is regularly set and its regular use enables good outcomes to be achieved, preparing students well for their coursework assignments.
253. Learning is good, and often very good in lessons. Students concentrate, listening well to their

teachers. They join in willingly in pair and group work. For example, in a GNVQ lesson in Year 12, students explored in pairs the roles of interviewer and interviewee for a job. Not a moment was wasted and the teacher just needed to watch and listen. Later, students presented their interviews to the rest of the class; there was respectful listening and thoughtful comment as they explored the moral, social and cultural issues to do with employment, which the teacher drew out well. Some of these students had only just joined the school, and all had been in the sixth form for a month, a remarkable achievement.

254. Good relationships in the classroom give students' confidence in themselves. When they do not understand, they can readily ask their teachers to explain further. There is good humour too, and a relaxed yet busy atmosphere.
255. The new head of department is producing good plans for the teaching programme and the head of sixth form works with him both as a teacher, and in her pastoral role, to set good standards of teaching and learning.
256. The accommodation and resources are very poor and there is no dedicated room for business studies. The department therefore lacks computers and business equipment, and this is a considerable weakness. Some teaching takes place in very unsatisfactory conditions. In addition, the range of teaching strategies is restricted because there are insufficient effective modern teaching aids. There has been a significant improvement in the co-ordination and management of the subject of late. However, the schemes of work are not yet formalised, although lessons plans are very good. Staffing has been a problem but is now very well resolved, so that rapid development is taking place. Overall then, since the last inspection, progress has been good.

COMPUTING

The focus of the inspection was on information and communication technology (ICT), which is taught at AS and A2 levels. The school does not offer any further courses in this area of the curriculum. During the inspection, three lessons were seen, covering the course in both years, at both levels.

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

Strengths

- Teachers' subject knowledge and planning are good.
- Students have positive attitudes to learning.
- Relationships between teachers and students are good.

Areas for improvement

- The monitoring of individual students' progress needs improving.

257. The most recent results for AS and A2 examinations have been below national averages, both for the proportion of students achieving a pass and for that achieving the higher grades. Results are now better than they were at the time of the last inspection. They have improved each year over the last three years.
258. The work of students seen in lessons, in their portfolios and in conversations confirms that standards are overall at about the level expected nationally and that achievement is satisfactory. Students confidently write simple programs in "Pascal", create complex data systems using linked spreadsheets with macros and data entry screens, and are designing and starting to create relational databases.
259. All students show interest and enthusiasm for the subject. When working individually on computers, they are good at helping each other and often discuss relevant problems together, so helping each other learn. Many students work on computers at home. No students reported any difficulty in gaining access to the resources or equipment they needed.
260. Overall, teaching is satisfactory and occasionally good. Teachers have a very good command of their subject. They transmit their enthusiasm for the subject to their students. They are good at anticipating aspects which are likely to be misunderstood and make good use of questioning to check

on students' understanding. When students are working individually, teachers help them make good use of their time, discussing work with them. On a few occasions, teachers missed the chance to help students by asking them challenging questions or showing them further possibilities.

261. Subject leadership is satisfactory. There is a system for recording the progress of individual students, but written commentary during the course is in need of improvement.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The school provides a course in art to AS and A2 level. Results at both levels in 2001 were below the national average. Two lessons were seen. Teaching was satisfactory in both, but was not demanding enough on students who are artistically talented. Students were not always set clearly defined tasks. Teaching emphasised the development of artistic ideas rather than technical skills. Students' progress during a project was not monitored systematically. Art makes a very good contribution to the cultural life of the school. The subject development plan accurately lists the areas for improvement.

HUMANITIES

Courses are provided to AS and A2 levels in history, geography and religious education. Three lessons in geography, at both levels, and two in religious education at AS level, were seen. History was not inspected at this level.

In geography, recent A-level results have been below the national average. However, in most years, the small number of students entered has made statistical comparisons unreliable. The 2002 AS-level and A-level examination results show a similar pattern to that of previous years. Achievement on these courses is just satisfactory. Teaching in lessons sampled varied from unsatisfactory to good. A-level students have not developed independent learning techniques sufficiently and rely too heavily on their teachers. The result is that learning in some lessons is unsatisfactory.

Provision for religious studies, both examination and core, is good. No students took AS or A2 examinations in 2001. The statutory requirements of the Agreed Syllabus are met. Teaching in the AS lessons seen was good. Students responded well, making good progress.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus for the inspection was on English, in which four lessons were seen, at AS and A2 levels.

In modern foreign languages, lessons in French and Spanish were seen in Year 12. In past years, numbers of students have been too small to make valid comparisons with national average results. In Spanish, students' attainment is satisfactory with listening skills well developed. Students make good progress as a result of careful planning and the good use of resources. In French, students continue to build on their attainment at GCSE but would benefit from a greater range of stimulating activities.

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

Strengths

- A level results in 2002 were considerably higher than in previous years.
- Teachers and students enjoy good relationships, so that students' motivation to learn is strong.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers do not encourage discussion enough, so those students do not gain real independence of thought.
- The organisation of students' essays needs to be clearer.

262. Standards have generally been lower than those expected of sixth form students nationally. Results in AS level examinations were at the national average in 2001, but below in 2002. Results at A level were well below national average levels in 2001, but rose in 2002. Compared with results in other subjects, results in A level English were worse in 2000, but better in the last two years. The number choosing to

stay on is very high in the current year, but has been low until now. In the current Year 13 only two students remain out of the fourteen who began the AS course in 2001.

263. Standards observed in lessons are in line with recent results. The Year 12 class contains a wide range of ability. All are struggling to understand the language of *Dr Faustus*, puzzled by the classical allusions and archaisms, but most could grasp the key issues of the play and made perceptive comments about the ambitions of Faustus himself. However, many are still weak in their own handling of the English language. They have very little idea how to organise material for an essay.

Some students can write fluently and persuasively. They know how to develop an argument, incorporate apt quotations, and bring their essay to a neat conclusion. But most are still floundering.

264. The two students of Year 13 have done much conscientious work. They know the texts well. They make shrewd comments about the language and symbolism used in *Brave New World*, and can compare it with similar works such as *1984* and *The Handmaid's Tale*. They write at great length, though sometimes with a lack of precision. Poor paragraphing and vague generalisations tend to make it difficult for the reader to follow the argument. In analysing some of Blake's poems, they were ingenious in their interpretations, seeing eighteenth century industry as the worm that flies in the night to invade and destroy the rose of humanity.

265. Teaching is generally good; learning satisfactory. Teachers possess a deep level of subject knowledge. They are at pains to support their students by detailed marking of essays. They are readily available for advice after lessons. They challenge their students well in the questions they ask. And (in two lessons at least) their interjections moved the discussion along at a brisk pace. Teachers' weakness lies in getting students to argue with each other. Tables in the classroom are so arranged that interplay of ideas is restricted. Even when there were only two students in the room, they never talked to each other. There is little encouragement to read more widely, and engage in research. Students become over-dependent on the teacher and are in danger of losing habits of original thought. As a result they do not learn as much as they might.

266. Students spoke enthusiastically about their experience of studying English. It appealed to their more reflective and creative needs, particularly when they combined English (as many did) with subjects such as mathematics, physics or computing. They found it stimulating and reckoned it would give them a sound foundation for future careers in the law or media. They warmly appreciated the help their teachers gave them. They had chosen English because they had enjoyed it in earlier years. They had no regrets about that choice.

267. There was no sixth form English at the time of the last report. The current large number taking AS level gives hope for successful development of the subject in the sixth form. It will help if teachers can give more guidance about the writing of essays, encourage their students to read more widely, and give them the confidence to become more independent learners.