

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WESTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL**

Leek, Staffordshire

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124407

Headteacher: Dr David Simpson

Reporting inspector: Mark Woodward  
11049

Dates of inspection: 27 - 29 January 2003

Inspection number: 249612

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 13 to 18 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Westwood Park  
Leek  
Staffordshire

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Appropriate authority: Local education authority

Name of appropriate authority  
representative: Ms M Bennett

Date of previous inspection: 14 April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities (sixth form)	Aspect responsibilities (sixth form)
11049	Mark Woodward	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9744	Peter Brown	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
20729	James Berry	Team inspector	Biology	
25377	Lorna Brown	Team inspector	Art	
22695	Raymond Cardinal	Team inspector	<p>English as an additional language</p> <p>Special educational needs</p> <p>Business education</p> <p>History</p>	
14704	Jeffrey Cooling	Team inspector	Geography	
15163	Eric Deeson	Team inspector	Design and technology	
17015	Lawrence Denholm	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
19414	Janet Flisher	Team inspector	<p>Drama</p> <p>English</p>	
17709	Alan Giles	Team inspector	Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

20619	Jennifer Hazlewood	Team inspector	Health and social care	
4373	Peter McKenzie	Team inspector	French	
22878	George Nolan	Team inspector	Mathematics	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Westwood High School is an average-sized comprehensive community school, serving 875 students aged 13 - 18; girls slightly outnumber boys in all years. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals, at six per cent is below the national average (around 15 per cent) while the proportion of students who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is broadly average. Very few students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and only one student speaks English as an additional language. Around ten per cent of the students are on the register for students with special educational needs (SEN) which is below the national average, and two per cent of students have Statements of Special Educational Needs, mostly for moderate learning difficulties, which is below average for Staffordshire (3.6 per cent). The standards achieved by the students when they enter the school are above average.

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

Westwood High is a very good school. Standards are well above average and they rise as the students move through the school, particularly as a result of: very good teaching; the wide range of academic and other opportunities for learning; and very good leadership and management. The headteacher has made a particularly strong contribution to the school's development. He has maintained qualities that parents have valued over many years while improving other features of the school. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Students achieve very well, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- The quality of teaching is very good and this is well supported by the very good arrangements for staff development and induction.
- The excellent leadership of the headteacher is enabling the school to continue to improve.
- The curriculum is broad and it offers students a wide range of academic and personal development opportunities.
- The individuality of all members of the school community is valued and relationships are excellent; this is underpinned by the house system and mixed age tutor groups.
- Students have very positive attitudes to learning and behave very well.
- The procedures for assessing students' work and monitoring their progress are very good.

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

- The opportunities for students to use information and communication technology (ICT) in a few subjects, particularly business studies.
- Aspects of the accommodation which detract from students' learning experiences.
- The use made of tutor time by some teachers.
- The strategic role of governors.

*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 April 1997. Since then it has made good progress. Standards have risen, particularly at GCSE, teaching has improved, the strengths of the school have been maintained and most of the key issues have been successfully tackled. There has been very good improvement in SEN provision, with support staff now providing enough support for classes and individuals. Resourcing for ICT has also improved substantially.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A
A-levels/AS-levels		A	Not yet available	

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

Standards at the end of Year 9 are above average and students make good progress during this year. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests the results were above average in mathematics and science and below average in English. The school's targets were exceeded in mathematics and science. The targets were not met in English but the results were not typical of the subject's performance in recent years and standards seen during the inspection were above average. The trend of improvement in National Curriculum test results is in line with the national trend. Despite some variation between year groups, girls and boys perform similarly well in comparison with the results of girls and boys nationally.

Students who took GCSE in 2002 made excellent progress in comparison with their results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests; their progress matched the highest five per cent of all schools nationally. The 2002 results were the highest achieved by the school with 70 per cent achieving 5 A\*-C grades, up from 55 per cent in 2001. The proportion of GCSE grades at A\* or A was 20 per cent; this is well above the national average. The achievement of students in English, mathematics and science is very good. GCSE results in art are exceptional; around two thirds of all Year 11 students took GCSE art in both 2001 and 2002 and in each year over half gained A\* or A grades. The school exceeded its GCSE targets except for one, which was only narrowly missed.

Students entered for A level, AS level, AVCE or Advanced GNVQ achieved results that were well above the national average between 1998 and 2001. National comparisons are not yet available for 2002.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Students have very positive attitudes to learning and to the school. This is a major reason for their very good academic achievement.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The very good behaviour of the students reflects their commitment to learning and their respect for the school's ethos.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent; a core strength of the school. Students and staff respect each other and work together to create a stimulating environment for learning.
Attendance	Good. The rate of absence is broadly in line with the national average but the judgement also reflects the very low rate of unauthorised absence and the very good punctuality of students to school and to lessons.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Almost half the lessons seen during the inspection were very good or excellent and this resulted in very good learning overall. Teachers draw on their subject knowledge and use very effective teaching techniques to ensure that students achieve very well, which in turn reinforces students' positive attitudes to learning. Literacy and numeracy are effectively taught and very good support is given to students with SEN. In the great majority of subjects, including English, mathematics and science, challenging work is given to students of all abilities including the most academically able; this is reflected in the very high proportion of students who gain A\* or A GCSE grades. Students are also prepared very well for examinations; they learn what they need to know and understand how to respond to examination questions.

Teaching in Year 9 is slightly less effective than in Years 10 to 13 because some teachers do not engage a small minority of less motivated students as successfully as they do in the later years. Key skills are taught very well in the sixth form, mostly through skilful subject teaching; the school does not monitor the coverage of its key skills provision to ensure that all students receive the same quality of teaching in this area.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is broad, particularly in Years 10 and 11 where a very good choice of GCSE and vocational courses is on offer. This opens up diverse further education, higher education, training and employment opportunities.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Very good. Students make very good progress as shown by their improvement in reading, GCSE results and the very high proportion who continue with full-time education after Year 11.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Very good. Only one student speaks a language other than English as her first language; the school has taken great care in organising a very good level of support for her.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The aim of the school to recognise and develop students and staff as individuals is well reflected in the provision. Diverse and rich opportunities for personal development are offered both in and outside the classroom; this also reveals the high level of staff commitment to the students.
How well the school cares for its students	Good. Students are well cared for by both pastoral and academic staff. Parents appreciate the house system and the continuity of care offered by the mixed age tutoring arrangements. Some tutors do not make good use of tutorial time, which means that learning opportunities are wasted.

The school is held in very high regard by parents, who value both its commitment to high standards and its attention to students' personal development. Parents are given good information about school

policies, arrangements and events and also receive regular and informative reports on students' progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has skilfully led the school forward from a position of strength. The newly formed senior management team has been well recruited and is performing well. Most middle managers are very effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are very supportive of the school. They have made very good senior appointments which have ensured that the school's quality has been maintained. Their role is evolving well but they do not yet have a full understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Quality assurance procedures have improved substantially under the headteacher's leadership. While being evaluative and effective, they are most importantly supportive procedures, which encourage staff to examine their own performance and to suggest ways of making improvements. As a consequence, staff morale is high.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial planning is carefully linked to strategic objectives and the budget is carefully monitored. The headteacher applies best value practices well; governors are developing their understanding of this area.

The school has enough staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. Resources are generally good and major improvements in ICT provision have taken place since the last inspection. The accommodation is unsatisfactory because in a number of areas, indicated later in the report, it impedes teachers from providing a yet more stimulating and high quality learning environment for the students.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The determination of staff to ensure that students achieve well and work hard.</li> <li>• The enjoyment students have of school life.</li> <li>• The progress students make.</li> <li>• The high quality of teaching.</li> <li>• The help given to students to become mature and responsible; students treated as adults.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information about students' progress.</li> <li>• The degree to which the school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• The quantity of homework.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agreed with all the positive comments made by parents. However, inspection findings are that parents are given good information about students' progress, the school works hard to extend its links with them and homework is used well to further students' learning.

## ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM

## WESTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form is bigger than an average sixth form, serving 250 students, with about 10 per cent more girls than boys. A higher than average proportion of Year 11 students continue studying in the sixth form and are joined by students from other schools, who comprise around 20 per cent of the overall intake. The school offers A-level, AS-level, GNVQ, AVCE and GCSE courses. It is one of three providers of post-16 education in the immediate area alongside another high school and a further education college. A small minority of Year 11 students leave to continue studying at the college. Students enter the sixth form with well above average GCSE results.

### HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form is very successful. Standards are well above average; they have risen since the last inspection and the students achieve very well. Very few students fail to complete courses. Teaching and learning are very good in a wide range of academic and vocational courses. This enables students to pursue further and higher education opportunities at the highest level or to make a good start in training and employment. The development of the sixth form has been carefully planned and is well managed. The sixth form provides very good value for money.

#### Strengths

- Students achieve very well in many subjects.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- The sixth form is well managed and organised.
- The curriculum is broad and includes valuable features such as Young Enterprise and the enrichment programme.
- Students are prepared well for application to further and higher education.

#### What could be improved

- Standards in business studies.
- The guidance given to students about careers.
- The suitability and quality of social areas.
- The provision for religious education.

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

### THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	<b>Good.</b> Standards are above average and the students achieve well. Teaching and learning are good and the subject has made good progress since the last inspection.
Biology	<b>Very good.</b> Very good teaching and learning together with a broad curriculum and effective assessment systems enable students to progress well and achieve above average standards.
Design and Technology	<b>Very good.</b> Examination results have been consistently well above

	average over recent years. AS-level module tests suggest that this will continue. Teaching and learning are very good and the subject is very well managed.
<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Overall judgement about provision, with comment</b>
Business studies	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Standards are below average and, while the achievement of students is satisfactory, there is room for improvement. The status of the subject is not as high as that of other subjects in the school. Overall, teaching, learning, leadership and management are all satisfactory.
Computing and Information technology	<b>Good.</b> There has been substantial improvement since the last inspection, and the introduction of AVCE in information technology has attracted substantially increased numbers. Good teaching, committed students and the quality of work observed during the inspection reflect well on this decision; the school now has a strong foundation on which to build.
Physical education	<b>Very good.</b> The excellent leadership of the head of department has improved the quality of provision and enabled standards to rise. Examination results were well above average in 2001 and even better in 2002. Teaching and learning are very good.
Health and Social Care	<b>Very good.</b> Very good provision for work experience enhances the curriculum and helps students to achieve well. Standards are above average, the quality of teaching is very good and the leadership and management of the department are very good.
Art	<b>Very good.</b> Teachers' high levels of expertise and enthusiasm inspire the students to achieve well above average standards. The high proportion of students who choose to study the subject reflects the high quality of the department's work. The department is very well led.
Drama and Theatre studies	<b>Excellent.</b> Results are rising significantly and are better than might be expected from students' GCSE results. A change of syllabus to one including more practical work is providing students with a more relevant experience. Excellent teaching promotes high standards of achievement.
Geography	<b>Very good.</b> Standards are well above average and the achievement of the students is good. The curriculum is well planned and students' progress is monitored thoroughly. Teaching, learning, leadership and management are all good.
History	<b>Very good.</b> The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons are lively and varied and bring the subject to life. Standards are well above average and the students achieve very well. Leadership and management are excellent.
English	<b>Very good.</b> Examination results are well above average and better than would be expected from students' GCSE results. Very good teaching and very positive attitudes of students promote very good achievement. Leadership and management are very good.
French	<b>Very good.</b> Standards are above average and the achievement of the students is very good. Teaching, learning, leadership and management are all very good.

A number of other subjects were sampled during the inspection: chemistry, physics, media studies, philosophy, psychology, German and classics. Overall, standards in these lessons were average and the quality of teaching and learning was good. Some very good teaching was seen in a physics lesson on capacitors where the students made very good progress because the teacher gave very clear explanations and then expected students to answer challenging questions. A very good lesson was also seen in German where the teacher energetically conducted the whole lesson in German, which enabled students to develop their knowledge and understanding of the language very well.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Students choose their tutors which allows them to work with someone with a relevant subject speciality and in whom they have a high level of trust; this is very good practice. Flexible tutoring arrangements enable individual sessions to take place alongside weekly whole group meetings; this practice also works well. The sixth form pastoral team ensures that students are very well prepared for further and higher education application but students are not given enough guidance on making career choices.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The head of sixth form organises and manages the sixth form well. He is well supported by a team of managers and tutors, all of whom have clear and appropriate responsibilities. Students are given much responsibility for managing their own work schedules; this is successful as they respond to the challenge well and tutors quickly tackle under-performance. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. Standards are maintained through the effective whole-school review processes to which sixth form managers make a valuable contribution.

### STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The support given by teachers in helping them with their academic work.</li> <li>• The breadth of courses.</li> <li>• The good quality of the teaching.</li> <li>• They enjoy life in the sixth form.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of careers advice.</li> <li>• The guidance given on which courses to take in the sixth form.</li> <li>• The information about academic progress.</li> <li>• The extra-curricular provision.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with students about all their positive comments. They also agree that the provision for careers education could be improved to match the very good guidance given to students about further and higher education. Inspectors judged the monitoring of students' progress and extra-curricular provision to be very good. They were also confident about the quality of the guidance given to students about choosing sixth form subjects.

### COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Students achieve very well, particularly in Years 10 and 11.**

1. Students enter the school achieving above average standards. Standards at the end of Year 9 are also above average; students make good progress in the year because they consolidate their knowledge, understanding and skills and develop good study habits.
2. In English, for example, students of all abilities show significant gains in learning as a result of teachers' systematic planning. Lesson tasks successfully develop students' skills in all aspects of the National Curriculum for English. Writing tasks, for example, become increasingly challenging, such as the writing of letters to President Putin about the treatment of children in Russian orphanages. Assignments have cover sheets which require students to identify strengths and weaknesses of their work following feedback from teachers. This means that as soon as they join the school they are trained in taking responsibility for their own progress.
3. By the end of Year 11 standards are well above average and the achievement of the students is very good. Students' work in lessons and in their books shows substantial gains in learning from the standards seen in Year 9. This is reflected in the well above average GCSE results.
4. The proportion of students gaining 5A\*-C grades in the GCSE examination in 2002 was 20 percentage points higher than the national average. By a similarly wide margin, the average point score of the students was well above average compared with all students nationally. By taking 11 GCSE examinations the school increases the potential point score of each student but the results are still well above the national average when only eight GCSE examinations are compared with the national figure.
5. Standards seen in lessons during Years 10 and 11 were well above average. In a Year 11 science lesson, for example, half the group were achieving standards equivalent to GCSE A\*, A or B grades. They understood the human reproductive system and its functions and were able to define and explain terms such as Zygote and menstruation.
6. Boys and girls achieve equally well in GCSE examinations and National Curriculum tests when compared with the results of girls and boys nationally. No significant differences in the achievement levels of boys and girls were apparent in the students' work seen.
7. More able students achieve very well. The proportion of students gaining A\* or A GCSE grades in 2002 was 20 per cent, 6 percentage points higher than the national average. In drama, 35 per cent of the students gained A\* or A grades in the 2002 GCSE examination; this high quality was also seen during drama lessons. In a Year 10 lesson, for example, students produced convincing group performances following a well-planned role-play exercise.
8. Students with SEN achieve very well in gains in reading scores and subsequently at GCSE. A very high proportion of SEN students continue with full-time education after Year 11 either in the sixth form or in further education at college.
9. Students achieve particularly well in art. GCSE results have been very high over recent years. In 2002, two-thirds of all the students in Year 11 took the GCSE examination, compared with less than a third of students nationally. Of these, 90 per cent gained A\*-C grades (compared with a national average of 65 per cent) and 51 per cent gained A\* or A grades.

#### **The quality of teaching is very good.**

10. Of the 25 lessons seen in Years 9 to 11, the teaching in 40 per cent was very good or excellent and 80 per cent good or better; these proportions are well above average compared with the

inspection results of schools nationally. They are also significantly better than at the last inspection when 25 per cent of lessons were judged very good or excellent.

11. Teachers are knowledgeable and plan their lessons well. They have a good understanding of examination requirements and prepare students very well for them. In a Year 11 ICT lesson, for example, the teacher had modified materials from a published scheme of work to support students' GNVQ examination preparation more effectively. The result of this was that students were able to confidently use database and spreadsheet programs to fulfil the set tasks.
12. A number of lessons seen featured excellent teaching. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson students were able to analyse and discuss a poem in great depth as a result of the teacher's skilful questioning and direction. They responded enthusiastically to the challenge and developed a very good understanding of the poem.
13. Lessons are characterised by a very positive atmosphere in which teachers and students work productively together to improve learning. This enables teachers to move at a fast pace and therefore to cover schemes of work thoroughly and in good time. In a Year 9 geography lesson, the enthusiasm of both the teacher and the students for the case study on Kenya resulted in very significant gains in learning. Students' understanding about Kenya developed well while they also gained insights into the way that communications mediums such as e-mail affect perceptions.
14. A staff committee to promote teaching and learning (TALC) has influenced the practice of many teachers and enabled good ideas to be shared; good evidence of its influence was seen during the inspection. It has also encouraged teachers to watch each other at work which they have found very beneficial. Students' learning has been enhanced because teachers use more varied methods to gain their interest and involvement in lessons.

**The excellent leadership of the headteacher is enabling the school to continue to improve.**

15. The school was in a very strong position prior to the headteacher's arrival; the last inspection reported above average standards, good teaching and excellent leadership and management. The headteacher has met the daunting challenge to maintain this strong position very successfully and has therefore won the confidence of governors, staff and students.
16. The improvement of review (quality assurance) procedures and better systems for assessing and monitoring students' progress are the two main innovations that have resulted in the school's improvement under the headteacher's leadership.
17. Before his appointment, the culture of achievement, which had long been a feature of the school, ensured that subjects were expected to perform well; however, systems for review of performance were not as formalised. The headteacher has successfully and skilfully introduced quality assurance measures, winning staff confidence in the process by giving them much of the responsibility for identifying issues and providing solutions. This means that they do not feel that judgements and decisions are imposed on them.
18. The quality assurance process involves substantial reviews of performance at three points in the year with fortnightly checks on progress. Examination of reports by middle managers indicates that they are expected to take the lead in the process with senior staff working alongside them to tackle the issues. Reports are evaluative and open, a strong indication of trust between middle and senior managers.
19. Self evaluation is now a strong feature of the way that the school functions. Prior to the inspection, the headteacher and senior managers used Ofsted-style criteria to judge the school's work. There is a close correlation between the school's and the inspection judgements.

**The curriculum is broad and offers students a wide range of academic and personal development opportunities.**

20. The breadth of the curriculum reflects strongly the school's commitment to developing students' individuality. In Year 9 most students take two modern foreign languages and classics as well as the standard National Curriculum subjects and personal and social education. All students also take drama and two classes take Latin. Citizenship has been introduced in line with national orders and co-ordinated with the feeder middle school; it is taught mostly through the personal and social education programme but other subjects, such as English and history, have developed their schemes of work to cover particular elements.
21. In Years 10 and 11 the curriculum becomes even more broad. A programme of vocational courses is added together with business studies and GCSE physical education. The provision of vocational courses in Years 10 to 13 is very good. In Years 10 and 11, students can take a General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) ICT in school. In addition, students can attend the local college to study a range of NVQ level one vocational courses such as hairdressing, childcare, woodwork and engineering. Non National Curriculum subjects such as drama have high status and they recruit well.
22. Learning is valued for its own sake, not just as a means of passing examinations and tests. Good emphasis is given in lessons to examination techniques but not at the expense of developing students' enjoyment of learning. For example, in history teachers give students role-play tasks through which they bring issues to life. This strategy was very successfully used in a Year 9 lesson about the suffragettes; students understanding of the struggle for women's suffrage was dramatically improved by facing the issues so directly.
23. Students in need of learning support are identified prior to and during Year 9 and taught a modified curriculum that continues into Years 10 and 11. Individual Education Plans contain a very good level of detail to inform lesson planning. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good with support staff now providing enough in-class and individual support for students. In addition, funding has been identified to support students on college link courses.
24. The extra-curricular programme is extensive and gives students very good opportunities for personal development. Charitable work, sport, residential visits both at home and abroad and performing arts events are some of the more prominent features of the programme but the range of opportunities is wide, reflecting the high level of staff commitment to the students.

**The individuality of all members of the school community is valued and relationships are excellent; this is underpinned by the house system and mixed age tutor groups.**

25. As discussed in the preceding section, the breadth of the curriculum is one of the major ways in which the school helps students to develop their individual characteristics and skills.
26. Students and parents are very appreciative of the way that staff treat students; in meetings with students and parents this view was consistently expressed, usually unprompted. Students feel that staff respect them and their opinions. They feel that they are treated as adults. The School Council is an active body which has an impact on decision making.
27. The house system, together with the mixed age tutor groups, is successful in integrating the school community. Parents and students appreciate the care that is provided through this pastoral arrangement as it means that heads of house and tutors get to know the students very well.
28. Staff are also treated as individuals. Some have particular teaching styles which are not readily transferable. Where these are effective in promoting students' learning, they are not



compromised by managers insisting that teachers adhere rigidly to all aspects of whole-school policy.

29. Because of the respect shown for all members of the school's community, relationships both inside and outside the classroom are excellent.

### **Students have very positive attitudes to learning and behave very well.**

30. The very positive attitudes to learning of the great majority of students mean that their culture is the prevailing one. Together with the very good practices developed by teachers, this creates a positive momentum for learning. Teachers are able to trust students to behave in a responsible way, which gives them the confidence to use imaginative teaching methods.
31. The positive culture is so strong that students themselves do not allow lessons to be disrupted by the misbehaviour of others. For example, in a Year 11 German lesson two boys made frequent attempts to distract the teacher and the other students. The teacher managed the situation skilfully while the other students ignored their behaviour and were able to take full advantage of the lesson.

### **The procedures for assessing students' work and monitoring their progress are very good.**

32. Assessment procedures enable teachers to measure students' progress against national benchmarks. The great majority of teachers give very good feedback to students about the quality of their work and how it might be improved. Assessment information is carefully recorded and analysed by subject and pastoral staff. This joint approach is successful in identifying those who are not fulfilling their potential and therefore need support.
33. Examination and test results are analysed thoroughly to see how well individual students and groups of students have performed in each subject. The outcomes of this analysis form one of the key planks of the school's strong quality assurance procedures.
34. Subject and whole-school targets for students with SEN are combined very well to reinforce a very good whole-school approach including regular reviews of progress. Support staff are well qualified and meet regularly with the co-ordinator to review individual progress and to agree action when new needs are identified. All staff are appropriately involved in identification procedures. Staff are very well informed about students' special needs and receive comprehensive summaries of provision, targets and review information.

### **The very good arrangements for staff development and induction are very effective in helping to improve the school's work.**

35. Care for the professional development of staff is a prominent feature of the school. Excellent procedures help new staff to settle in well and similar care is given to preparing appointees for their roles in new posts. A good example is the way that the headteacher is currently inviting the two new deputy headteachers to take the lead in deciding how their roles should develop. This devolution of responsibility for performance is a very creative and effective strategy.
36. Staff development is carefully planned to reflect whole-school and departmental priorities. Staff share the outcomes of training with other staff, both formally and informally. The advanced skills teacher leads much school-based work in this area. He provides a strong role model for staff and is well respected.
37. The school has an appropriate performance management policy, which is applied well.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

#### **The opportunities for students to use ICT in some subjects, particularly business studies.**

38. Since the last inspection, the school has made dramatic improvement to its ICT provision. In turn this has raised students' level of ICT competence and they are now able to use ICT to further their learning in most subjects.

39. In some subjects, however, students have limited access to ICT and this impedes their progress. This is particularly an issue in business studies, in which students could benefit greatly from the opportunity to apply and reinforce their understanding through the use of ICT. Access to ICT facilities in business studies is partly restricted because the subject is timetabled in the same option block as ICT. Limited access to ICT also impedes the quality of learning in mathematics, science and history.

### **Aspects of the accommodation which detract from students' learning experiences.**

40. The site is extremely attractive and provides an environment for learning that students and staff very much appreciate, including extensive playing fields. Some of the buildings, however, have limitations which inhibit the standard and range of work that can take place; for example:
- Most of the modern foreign language rooms are too small and have unsatisfactory acoustics; this restricts opportunities for group work and prevents students from gaining the most from speaking and listening activities.
  - The art department does not have enough space to produce three-dimensional work.
  - There are too few science laboratories and one laboratory is in need of modernisation.
  - The mobile classrooms are in poor condition owing to their age and do not provide a good learning environment.
  - Unsatisfactory indoor physical education facilities limit the quality and range of activities that can take place.
  - The Old Hall dining room is in poor condition and in need of replacement; it has been unsuitable for the preparation of food for some time.

### **The use made of form tutor time by some teachers.**

41. Although pastoral care is good, some tutors do not make the best use of tutorial time. In these weaker sessions there is little sense of urgency or purpose. Some tutors complete administrative tasks while students talk among themselves or complete tasks on work sheets without any guidance or discussion. The consequence of this is that in these groups students are less punctual than they are to lessons and they show much less positive attitudes.
42. The majority of tutors take their roles very seriously and work closely with heads of houses to provide high quality tutoring including personal guidance and the monitoring of academic progress. They also follow the plans for tutor time carefully and treat the sessions with as much professionalism as for lessons.

### **The strategic role of governors.**

43. Governors take a keen interest in the school and are very supportive of its work. They ensure that the aims and values of the school are well maintained and appropriately do not involve themselves in the school's day-to-day management.
44. The headteacher has encouraged governors to become more knowledgeable about the school's work but there is a need for this to develop further. Governors are not yet fully aware of how well each subject performs and what action is being taken by the headteacher and senior staff to build on successful practice and tackle weaknesses.
45. Governors' role in financial planning and in monitoring the budget also needs strengthening. The headteacher applies best value principles well but governors are not as involved in the processes as they might be; for example, they do not know how the school's spending patterns compare with those of similar schools and therefore are not asking all the necessary questions about whether the school is using its budget in the most effective and efficient manner. Governors receive termly progress reports on the budget; this is not frequent enough.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46. In order to raise standards further the headteacher, governors and staff should:
- (1) Improve the access of some subjects, particularly business studies, mathematics, science and history, to ICT facilities.  
*(Paragraphs 38-39)*
  - (2) Improve the accommodation for:
    - modern foreign languages, science, art and physical education;
    - all subjects taught in the mobile classrooms;
    - dining in Old Hall.*(Paragraph 40)*
  - (3) Ensure that all tutors follow school policies for the use of form tutor time.  
*(Paragraphs 41-42)*
  - (4) Improve the strategic role of governors by;
    - ensuring that they have a fuller understanding of how well subjects perform;
    - improving governors' awareness of how the school's financial planning compares with that of similar schools;
    - providing information about the progress of the budget to governors each month.*(Paragraphs 43-45)*

### Sixth form

- (1) Improve standards in business studies and raise the subject's status by:
  - ensuring that students are given challenging activities in all lessons;
  - conducting a review of the department's work and sharing the best practice among all teachers;
  - enabling students to have better access to ICT facilities.*(Paragraphs 55,57,61,133)*
- (2) Improve the guidance given to students about careers by:
  - developing a structured careers programme for all sixth form students;
  - linking guidance on university entrance more closely with guidance on career choices.*(Paragraphs 91,97,99)*
- (3) Improve the quality of sixth form social areas.  
*(Paragraphs 122)*
- (4) Ensure that the provision for religious education meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.  
*(Paragraphs 81, 87)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	Years 9 – 11	25
	Sixth form	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		61

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Years 9 – 11</b>							
Number	1	9	10	4	1	0	0
Percentage	4	36	40	16	4	0	0
<b>Sixth form</b>							
Number	6	21	21	10	0	0	0
Percentage	11	36	36	17	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for Years 9-11 as each lesson represents 4 percentage points while in the sixth form each lesson represents approximately 2 percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y9 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	625	250
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	52	N/a

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y9 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	20	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	89	1

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	40

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.8
National comparative data	7.8

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	1.2

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
	2002	87	108	195

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	41	61	67
	Girls	89	85	91
	Total	130	146	158
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	67 (78)	75 (74)	81 (75)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	25 (46)	52 (49)	42 (42)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	50	67	60
	Girls	85	91	84
	Total	135	158	144
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	69 (83)	81 (77)	74 (67)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	37 (54)	45 (40)	33 (27)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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



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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	86	108	194

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	54	82	84
	Girls	81	104	106
	Total	135	186	190
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	70 (55)	96 (93)	98 (98)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

Percentages 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	47	49	96

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	51	57	108
	Average point score per candidate	17	23	20.1
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	18	17.5

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	47	49	96	5	8	13
	Average point score per candidate	17.4	23.9	20.7	9.6	17.2	14.3
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.7	17.4	9.8	11.4	10.6

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

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

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

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	871	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

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

### ***Financial information***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y9 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	54.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.45

#### **Education support staff: Y9 – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	250

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y9 – Y13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	0.7
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y9 – Y13**

Key Stage 3	24.67
Key Stage 4	25.38

Financial year	2001-02
	£
Total income	2,544,384
Total expenditure	2,493,789
Expenditure per pupil	2,972
Balance brought forward from previous year	121,490
Balance carried forward to next year	172,085

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	14.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	625
Number of questionnaires returned	335

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	52	2	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	50	44	2	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	52	3	1	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	57	10	2	3
The teaching is good.	41	53	2	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	46	16	2	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	37	5	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	35	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	29	48	13	2	7
The school is well led and managed.	41	47	2	0	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	44	3	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	44	4	3	12

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

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

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

47. Between 1998 and 2001 the results of sixth form students in national examinations were well above average. Results rose in 2002 but no national comparisons are yet available. Since the last inspection, results have risen by a similar margin to the rise in national results.
48. The great majority of students complete the courses that they begin and continue their studies into Year 13, in order to gain full A levels. These results are consistently well above average. Very few students fail examinations; in 2002 the pass rate was 96 per cent and it was similar in 2001 and 2000. (The national pass rate in 2001 was 90 per cent. The proportion of students gaining A or B grades was 45 per cent in 2002 and similar in 2001 and 2000, while the proportion of students gaining A or B grades nationally in 2001 was 38 per cent.)
49. The achievement of students in the sixth form is very good. The local education authority value-added analysis for students completing courses in 2002 suggests that they made satisfactory progress; however, this only looks at standards as reflected by examination results. Students make considerable gains in knowledge, understanding and skills which are not fully examined; for example, in learning how to question and debate through the learning opportunities offered in subjects such as drama and history. Overall, students' development of key skills such as communication and problem solving is very good.
50. Students who completed AS levels in 2002 and did not proceed to take full A-level courses gained results that were similar to the 2001 results, which were broadly in line with national results.
51. Advanced vocational results fell in 2002. This was a year in which the examination changed from the Advanced General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) to the Advanced Vocation Certificate of Education (AVCE) and therefore comparing the two year's results is not comparing like with like. The pass rate was 78 per cent, including students who took the examination in Year 14, the most common grade being E. As with A and AS-level results, no national comparative data is currently available.
52. GNVQ intermediate-level results in 2002 were higher than the results in 2001, which were in turn higher than the results obtained nationally; two-thirds of the students gained merits. In 2001 around 18 per cent of students gained merits or distinctions nationally.
53. Two-thirds of the students who took part in the Young Enterprise programme in 2001 gained distinctions and all but three of the remaining students gained merits; this is a high level of performance.
54. Over the past three years the results of girls and boys have been similar in most subjects although in 2001, boys performed less well than girls. Boys in this cohort of students performed relatively less well than girls in the 1999 GCSE examinations.
55. Standards of attainment seen during the inspection were well above average compared with national standards. In the thirteen subjects providing the main focus of the inspection, standards were: well above average in English, design and technology, history, geography and art; above average in mathematics, biology, ICT, French, drama, health and social care and physical education; and below average in business studies.
56. Poems written by Year 13 students tackling a range of challenging subjects such as enchantment, darkness and race illustrate the well above average standards in English. Accompanying the poems are perceptive, concise and sensitive commentaries from other students.

57. The achievement of students in the thirteen subjects providing the main focus of the inspection is: very good in English, biology, design and technology, French, drama, history, art and physical education; good in mathematics, health and social care and geography; and satisfactory in ICT and business studies.
58. The school has a good record of helping students to gain entry to Oxford or Cambridge universities. Very able students gain high A-level grades and are articulate and thoughtful communicators. One such student was able to give good reasons to explain his concerns about the school's application for specialist school status.
59. Support for the small proportion of students with SEN is effective in helping them make very good progress. They are given specialist literacy and numeracy support while subject teachers, particularly in health and social care, take great care to ensure that students are supported effectively.
60. The high quality of work in art provides a good example of how the school helps students to make very good progress and to achieve well above average standards. Teachers show great vitality and enthusiasm for their subject. This rubs off on the students, who work diligently and imaginatively in response to the challenging work that they are set. A very strong feature of the teaching is the way that teachers draw on the work of artists to extend students' understanding and vision about how to develop their own work. The teaching and learning policy is very good. Teachers aim to create rounded artists by developing their visual literacy, imagination, craftsmanship and critical skills; the policy is applied very well. Standards are particularly high in textile work and observational drawing. A-level results between 1999 and 2001 were well above average. There was a fall in the results in 2002 but work seen during the inspection indicates that standards remain well above average.
61. Standards in business studies are below average. Students make satisfactory progress but compared with the good or better progress made in most other subjects, this is a subject in which students could achieve at a higher level. Part of the reason that standards are lower is that the academic abilities of students on courses is lower than for other subjects. Many students take the course as a third or fourth option and the status of the subject in the school is low.

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

62. Attitudes of sixth form students to school are very positive. They demonstrate a strong sense of responsibility for their own progress and in lessons they are enthusiastic and committed. They enthusiastically participate in the enrichment programme and the many extra-curricular activities, while wholeheartedly subscribing to the school's philosophy of encouraging individual responsibility. Virtually all students enjoy the "whole school experience" and find attendance rewarding, in terms of both their academic and personal development.
63. Students take notes during lessons without prompting. The great majority have a keen understanding of what they need to do to achieve well. Teachers foster this positive approach to learning by giving students challenging tasks which make them think.
64. Behaviour throughout the sixth form is consistently very good. Students are attentive in class and respectful to each other, and they work hard to develop a partnership with teachers; this creates a very positive atmosphere for learning in the classroom. No incidents of oppressive behaviour were observed and no sixth form student was excluded in 2001/2.
65. Relationships between students and between students and staff are excellent and provide the bedrock on which learning and personal development is established. Students collaborate extremely well with each other, both academically and within a social context. They are considerate to the needs of others, providing mutual help and support when necessary. Relationships with staff are based on a strong mutual respect for each other and a high level of

shared expectation; the climate is one in which learning and personal development can flourish. These excellent relationships have taken deep root and constitute a major strength of the school.

66. Attendance and punctuality are good. Attendance levels are broadly in line with the national average. The incidence of unauthorised absence is low and falls significantly below national averages. The great majority of students arrive at school punctually and move purposefully between the two sites to ensure that they are in time for the start of lessons. A small minority of students are regularly late and the school takes appropriate measures to tackle the issue.

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

67. The quality of teaching is very good. In the 58 lessons observed, all were satisfactory or better, 83 per cent were good or better and 47 per cent were very good or excellent. The proportions of good, very good and excellent teaching are higher than average proportions of grades awarded during inspections across the country. As a result, the quality of learning is also very good and students make very good progress.
68. The great majority of teachers have very good subject knowledge, plan lessons very well and expect students of all abilities to produce high quality work. Very good relationships in the classroom result in a learning partnership in which the students feel respected. All of these elements help students to learn well. They enjoy the challenge of the work they are set and take an active part in the learning process; for example, meetings of the biological society are well attended and feature intellectual activities which broaden students' biological knowledge and understanding. The key skill of students improving their own learning and performance is developed very well.
69. The high quality of learning in English is illustrated by the poetry anthologies that the students have created. The anthologies include works by poets and the students themselves, together with thoughtful analyses and commentaries (also written by the students). This is the outcome of teaching which gives students the confidence to be creative and to publish their work.
70. The constructive partnership between teachers and students to promote learning enables teachers to use imaginative strategies; for example, in history role play is used very successfully to bring the subject to life. In a Year 13 lesson, students took part in a 'cabinet meeting' to discuss whether Mussolini's Italy should ally itself with Germany or the Western democracies. The learning during the lesson was impressive; students spent around 10 minutes preparing for the role-play and then were able to sustain a high level of debate for over 15 minutes. A similarly high quality lesson using role-play was seen in Year 13 where the students explored the impact on Germany of the post 1918 settlement. These lessons are a good illustration of the very good teaching of key skills. Students are given a wide range of opportunities to develop, for example, thinking, problem solving and communication skills.
71. Learning in geography is enhanced by the good provision of fieldwork and teachers' high expectations of students to conduct research beyond the material presented in lessons. Good access to ICT resources enables students to fulfil these demands and ultimately to achieve high examination results.
72. In drama a very high level of trust has built up between students and the teacher. In this safe environment students gain the confidence to explore their creativity knowing that they can take chances and risk failure. The result is imaginative work of an above average standard. Standards seen during the inspection are higher than recent examination results indicate, reflecting improvements in the quality of teaching. Students and the teacher make frequent visits to theatres and this further enhances the quality of their learning partnership.
73. Students' learning in ICT has improved considerably owing to improvements in the quality of teaching and changes in sixth form courses. Students, particularly girls, are more attracted to



the courses and are making good progress as a result of good whole-class and individual teaching. Teachers monitor students well by checking their progress against agreed targets.

74. Gifted and talented students learn well as a result of the well-targeted teaching in a range of subjects. In physical education, for example, teachers have established very strong links with the local sporting community. This enables students to take part in and develop their specialist sporting skills at a high level.
75. Some teachers are very effective at preparing students for assignments and examination questions. One very effective technique is to use students' work to illustrate how students might tackle assignments and examination questions. This is used to good effect in a number of lessons; for example, in a Year 12 philosophy lesson, one student's response to an examination question was shared with the whole class. The other students then had to mark it according to mark scheme criteria and discuss its merits. The result was a well-focused discussion on how best to tackle such a question, which significantly raised students' understanding of good examination technique.
76. Students' learning is enhanced by the independent study opportunities offered in the library and ICT suite. They are able to use the Internet for research and are also able to draw on the librarian's skill in finding other sources of information. As a result, they develop very good learning skills during their time in the sixth form.
77. Debate about effective teaching and learning has increased following the creation of the teaching and learning committee (TALC). This group of staff has promoted the sharing of good practice and the sharing of knowledge and skills gained when individual teachers attend training courses. This has had a strong impact on students' learning because it has improved their response to the broader range of teaching styles now on offer. The headteacher has taken a strong lead in promoting this key area of the school's work.
78. The Advanced Skills teacher makes a significant contribution to the improvement of teaching and learning. He has led a number of initiatives and supports individual members of staff well. His own teaching provides a very good role model for staff, which gives his advice much credibility.
79. The student with English as an additional language in the sixth form is given very good support by teachers; she is enrolled on examination courses despite having arrived at the school speaking very little English. As a result, she is making very good progress. Students with SEN are also well supported by teachers and make very good progress.

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

80. The sixth form curriculum has a very good range of AS and A-level courses that significantly enable students to build on their learning from previous years and prepare them very well for higher education or employment. This provision is extending to include subjects such as psychology, drama and theatre studies, media studies and English language. In addition, the school has recognised the need to extend its vocational programmes of study into areas such as business, leisure and tourism, and health and social care. This provision ensures that all students are offered opportunities to continue their studies at the school after Year 11.
81. The school has addressed the previous inspection issue on the low number of hours allocated for sixth form subjects. It allows appropriate additional time in Year 12 to ensure adequate emphasis on key skills, including communication and application of number. The school still does not meet the statutory curricular requirement for religious education.
82. Additional enrichment to the curriculum, through subject and external activities, is very well provided for. English and drama provide extensive opportunities for theatre visits and to take part in workshops with actors and other professionals. Students develop their skills further in stage

productions, musicals, writing and editorial groups. A wide range of sporting clubs are available and fixtures undertaken to extend the experiences of all those who are interested. Very good extra-curricular provision is made in science, geography and history where field visits and societies enhance normal curriculum work.

83. The Young Enterprise Scheme is offered to all Year 12 students as part of their key skills programme. These students enthusiastically set up their own companies and create business and marketing plans with the support of teachers, parents and local company representatives. Key skills are well highlighted in a range of subject plans and are an important feature in whole-school and departmental development planning. Further provision is planned by the school, as a key skills centre registered with a national awarding body. This aspect of the school's work reflects its responsiveness to local employment and community issues.
84. The very good features of personal development fostered in the main school are carried through to the sixth form. Many students participate in a range of non-examined courses and activities that underpin relevant skills and personal experiences.
85. Themes in tutor groups are successful in raising moral and social issues. During the week of the inspection these included censorship and the holocaust. Many subjects take opportunities to develop key personal skills in collaborative group work and in students' evaluations of their own performance. Students volunteer to develop these skills further within schemes such as paired reading and sports coaching with younger students, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, the performing arts and public speaking. They also celebrate the school's achievements in their work on the Westwood News. Present Year 13 drama students produced and performed an account of their work with a group of young refugees.
86. Cultural knowledge is developed through a very wide programme of student exchange visits to places like Canada, France, Romania, the Czech republic and Germany and an extensive list of theatre visits. The school has developed extensive international links via the British Council's Comenius Project. European exchange visits to consider the uniqueness of cultures have examined their past and present and speculated on their futures. The content in many subjects enables the students to reflect issues that underpin their work. For example, drama students read extracts from Terry Waite's version of confinement as a prelude to practical work.
87. Spiritual provision is good. Students are given very good opportunities for reflection about the world and their place in it within subjects and through the pastoral programme. The lack of statutory religious education provision weakens provision and, as at the last inspection, the school does not meet the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship.
88. The provision for key skills in the sixth form is good overall and very good for some students. However, the school is aware that not all students benefit equally from the current provision and has established a working party to tackle the matter. At present many students acquire and develop key skills through the high quality of their teaching, which requires them to communicate well, use mathematical data, to utilise information technology, to work with others, to improve their own performance and to solve problems. In some of the best lessons key skills are listed and assessed. Nevertheless, there is no monitoring of what an individual has covered and what needs reinforcing. The Young Enterprise Scheme offers a magnificent opportunity for some Year 12 students with the formation of its Young Enterprise Company; but it has only been possible to take on 25 students this year. It is anticipated that following the report of the present working party the key skills experience of all students will be better and more even.
89. The school provides very well for the student whose first language is not English. Careful attention has been paid to arranging a suitable curriculum programme and to ensuring adequate peer support. Arrangements are appropriately reviewed after a suitable period and modified to effect improvement. The challenging programme includes opportunities to sit external examinations.

90. The school provides very well for sixth form students with SEN, including those with statements. Provision may be for a single student in a particular school year. Students are fully involved in planning provision. The GNVQ health and social care course provides very effective individual support to give prospective students the confidence to stay in an educational environment and they make very good progress. The supportive environment of the course is enhanced by small group sizes. Individual support is carefully considered so that it meets individual needs. It may, for example, be provided primarily to develop literacy and numeracy skills in specified sessions rather than on the course itself. Liaison between support and course staff is good so that, where appropriate, individual support, which primarily develops basic skills, also includes support for course work as well. Individual Education Plans are regularly reviewed. They are appropriately detailed and provide a very good basis to inform lesson planning.
91. Careers provision is unsatisfactory. Students are given good advice on how to progress to further or higher education but long-term employment and career choices are given too little emphasis; students are not given enough opportunity to consider the implications of their choices. A good work experience programme enhances the vocational curriculum.

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

### **Assessment**

92. The procedures for the assessment of students' attainment and progress are very good. A highly effective central organisation collects, collates and analyses assessment information on the basis of which predictions are made about the expected future performance for each student. These are made available to all staff via a computerised database. The system is updated three times each year in line with the student monitoring cycle. Heads of departments, together with class teachers, use this, combined with their individual knowledge of each student, to set and to update personal targets in subjects. The system works well: students know where they are and where they should be. Heads of department, in consultation with senior management, also use this system to set whole departmental targets.
93. The use of information to remedy weaknesses and to guide students' choices for the future is also very good. The academic and pastoral staff work well together.
94. In the sixth form students may choose their own tutors, which allows them to select a close match to their academic needs. Substantial improvement has been made since the last inspection with the introduction of more informed and thorough analysis, leading to more accurate target setting and value added calculation. The availability of up-to-date good information for all staff together with the tutorial system has opened the potential for very effective academic guidance. Whilst there is some variation between different tutors and different departments, most students receive very good guidance.

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

95. Procedures for child protection are very good and are totally appropriate to the needs of the students. Two senior teachers share designated responsibility for child protection matters and both have received formal training in their responsibilities. Other staff have received appropriate instruction and guidance as to common recognition symptoms of child abuse and have been fully familiarised with the procedures to be adopted in the event of suspicions being aroused. Procedures are fully documented and, when necessary, revised.
96. Procedures to protect the welfare of students are good overall. Health and safety arrangements are good and, consequently, the school, including the sixth form, provides a safe and secure environment within which learning can take place. The governing body is effective in monitoring health and safety matters and makes effective use of the specialist expertise available within its members. A part-time buildings officer effectively monitors and promotes health and safety

initiatives on the site generally, and his contribution is effectively complemented by the head of science, who conducts detailed audits within classrooms, laboratories and other learning facilities. A good health and safety policy is in place and all members of the school community are fully aware of appropriate procedures and practices.

97. The school is effective in meeting the pastoral welfare of students. A well-established tutor system is incorporated into a mixed-age house structure which provides good pastoral support to students. House tutors, supported by heads of house, provide good quality guidance and counselling. Tutors have established an excellent rapport with their students which is based on ready accessibility and a willingness to listen to students' concerns with sympathy and care. However, the opportunity to provide pastoral support and guidance at group tutorials is not always exploited to the full. In the sixth form, tutors give very strong support to the students; for example, in one session the tutor spoke with two girls about their participation in the exchange to Toronto and about issues concerning their choice of courses and higher education plans.

The tutor knew the students well and provided them with excellent support. Additional counselling support from the school nurse and connexions personal adviser effectively supplements internal pastoral provision.

98. Support and advice available to students wishing to progress to higher and further education is very good. Ample access to Internet facilities exist, and form tutors provide high quality advice and information. The opportunity for students to select their tutors on a subject basis ensures that the specialist support provided is directly relevant to the needs of the individual.
99. Careers information and advice does not meet the expectations of a significant proportion of sixth form students; there is a need for this matter to be addressed.

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

100. Parents hold the school in very high regard. They rightly believe that students are provided with a very high quality of education within an environment which is both safe and secure. Parents are pleased with the progress that students make and are also pleased that students enjoy attending school. Great satisfaction is expressed with the house and tutoring systems; parents particularly like the fact that tutors stay with the students as they move through the school.
101. The parents guild is run by a small group of committed parents who succeed in raising funds for the school. One of the school's priorities is to increase the numbers of parents involved.
102. Sixth form students are very positive about the school. They are particularly positive about the quality of teaching and the support that teachers give to them. Their main concern is with the quality of careers advice.

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

### **Leadership and management**

103. The sixth form has developed well over recent years. As with the school as a whole, the headteacher has built on the strong position that he inherited to improve the breadth of the sixth form curriculum, taking into account the changing needs of the students. The number of vocational courses has increased, as has the range of courses offered at A and AS-level.
104. The school has good plans in place to develop the sixth form further. Partnerships are being explored to widen the school's responsiveness to the government's plans for post-16 education

while other developments such as the application for specialist school status affect the sixth form as much as the whole school.

105. Governors are supportive of the headteacher's work in developing sixth form provision. Their monitoring of the performance of subjects is largely conducted following the publication of examination results; they do not have a full understanding of the reasons why some subjects perform better than others.
106. The very good support and guidance offered to students in the sixth form is the result of careful planning. Tutors are supported by a management team, all of whom have clear and well-considered roles and responsibilities. Through this structure, care is taken to ensure that all students are given appropriate support; for example, one tutor has specific responsibility for looking after students on vocational courses while two others provide guidance for those wishing to apply for Oxford or Cambridge.
107. The head of sixth form manages the sixth form well. Systems and structures are well defined, which means that tutors and other members of the sixth form management team have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Record-keeping is thorough; detailed information about students' academic and personal development is available to assist tutors and managers in giving them support and guidance. Students are particularly appreciative of the support they receive with their academic work.
108. The responsibility for ensuring that students receive good quality teaching in the sixth form is shared by heads of department, the head of sixth form and other senior staff. These are positive links which promote professional discussions about how best to meet individual students' needs. The high quality of sixth form teaching indicates that review procedures are effective.
109. Subject leadership is a major strength. It is: excellent in history, physical education and drama; very good in English, mathematics, design and technology, French, health and social care and art; good in biology, ICT and geography; and satisfactory in business studies.
110. Racial harmony is promoted well in the sixth form and in the school as a whole. Great care has been taken to support the student whose first language is not English.

## **Resources**

### **Finance**

111. Priorities for the sixth form indicated by the school development plan are appropriately supported by financial plans. There is very good financial planning at leadership level but the governors are not sufficiently strategic in their role. They do not consider alternative budget models and receive reports too infrequently to enable them to fully carry out their monitoring role. Similarly, the school has a best value policy, which is fully applied by the headteacher. The governors, however, are less aware of the policy and the need for it to be embedded at a strategic level.
112. A recent financial audit report highlighted a small number of minor issues, which have been addressed. The school generates good monitoring information of the whole-school budget and has recently developed reports to subject departments to enable them to monitor their spending.
113. Specific grant is efficiently monitored and is appropriately used. The designated budget to support students with SEN is efficiently used and provides good value for money.
114. In the sixth form, income is broadly in line with expenditure, showing that the provision of post-16 education is cost-effective. The school's cost-per-pupil is broadly average, standards are well above average and the education provision is very good; the school provides very good value for money.

## **Staffing**

115. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum in the sixth form is very good. There is one un-filled teaching vacancy in English.
116. Staffing in the department for students with SEN is very good. By using qualified teachers in a learning support role, the school ensures good progress for these students.
117. The induction of newly-qualified teachers of teachers new to the school or to promoted posts and of support staff is excellent. There is a comprehensive programme of support and information and newly qualified teachers take advantage of parts of the training provided by the local education authority.
118. Staff development budgets are delegated to all departments on a formula basis. Development opportunities must reflect whole-school and departmental priorities and outcomes of training, where appropriate, are shared with other staff. The school has fully implemented its policy in performance management. The outcomes have provided evidence towards threshold assessment.

## **Accommodation**

119. The school benefits from accommodation which has aspects of great charm and character. The grounds are a particularly attractive feature and part of Old Hall is a Grade 2 listed building.
120. Creative use has been made of the variable quality of the building; however, aspects of the teaching accommodation do not provide a satisfactory learning environment and this has as much impact on the sixth form as it does on the rest of the school. The number of science laboratories is one short of the required number to support the curriculum and one laboratory is in urgent need of modernisation. The lack of space to create three-dimensional work in the art department restricts an important area of the curriculum. Limited indoor physical education facilities restrict the quality and range of activities that can take place.
121. Most of the modern languages rooms are suitable for the smaller groups in sixth form teaching but too small for whole classes in the pre-16 area of the school, restricting activities such as group work and role-play. The mobile classrooms do not provide a good learning environment.
122. Similarly, there are deficiencies in non-teaching areas. There is a distinct lack of social space for the growing number of students in the sixth form. The Old Hall dining room is a poor-quality building of a time-expired design and construction. It is no longer possible to operate a production kitchen within the building for health and safety reasons.

## **Resources**

123. The provision for learning resources in the sixth form is good. It is very good in modern foreign languages, which have their own dedicated computer suite. What is available in departments is well supplemented by the two learning resource centres with their enthusiastic and qualified staff. Here students can access a good selection of books, periodicals, careers and university material, newspapers and clippings, and information technology, together with advice on what is available and how it might be used. The records show that these centres are well used both for borrowing and as independent study areas. Sixth formers have access to a small computer suite, which enhances their studying opportunities. Some subjects, however, such as business studies, mathematics, science and history do not have enough access to ICT facilities.

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

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

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

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

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	7	86	62	57	15	3.29	1.51
Science	9	100	78	44	27	2.78	2.27
Business Studies	3	100	76	0	12	1.00	1.69
Media Studies	2	100	87	0	28	1.00	n/a
Music	4	75	84	0	29	1.00	2.41
Religious Studies	2	100	85	0	26	3.00	2.38
French	7	71	78	29	13	1.71	1.65
Spanish	1	100	91	100	50	4.00	n/a
Classical Studies	1	100	96	0	55	3.00	n/a

### ***GCE A-level and AGNVQ courses***

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
A-level unless stated		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	13	100	87	46	43	6.46	5.80
Biology	20	100	88	40	34	6.40	5.25
Chemistry	16	94	90	38	43	5.88	5.90
Physics	9	100	88	56	40	6.89	5.67
Design	23	100	91	74	30	8.35	5.38
Business Studies	15	93	92	27	32	4.93	5.50
Business - AGNVQ	4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4.50	10.45
Communication Studies	12	75	93	17	31	4.00	5.53
Physical Education	21	100	92	33	25	6.10	5.09
Leisure and Tourism - AGNVQ	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	16.00	10.06
Health and Social Care - AGNVQ	5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	10.80	10.79
Art	26	100	96	77	46	8.62	6.57
Art and Design - AGNVQ	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	12.00	12.24
Music	2	100	93	50	35	8.00	5.74

Classical Studies	9	100	95	33	49	6.22	6.51
Geography	38	100	92	55	38	6.74	5.74
History	13	100	88	38	35	7.08	5.45
Religious Studies	1	100	92	100	38	8.00	5.84
English Literature	37	100	95	35	37	6.11	5.91
French	11	73	89	45	38	5.64	5.59
German	8	88	91	38	40	5.50	5.81
General Studies	17	94	85	41	30	5.76	4.91

### ***Intermediate vocational qualifications***

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	1	0	43	100	15	0	1
Health and Social Care	5	80	47	0	16	0	1
Leisure and Tourism	4	50	47	50	18	0	1

## **SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS**

### **MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES**

124. The school offers mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics at A and AS level; further mathematics at A level and a GCSE re-sit course in mathematics. Recruitment levels are good, particularly for biology.

#### **Mathematics**

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

##### Strengths

- The quality of the teaching is good.
- The attainment of the students in A/AS-level examinations is above the national average.
- The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject at this level is very good.
- The management of the subject at this level is very good.

##### Areas for improvement

- The recruitment of female students to A/AS-level courses.
- The focus on the needs of individual students on the Year 12 GCSE course.

#### **Standards**

Tests and Examinations	<b>Above average</b>
Seen during the inspection	<b>Above average</b>



*Commentary including explanations for any differences between exam/test results and standards seen:*

The standards of work seen in lessons together with the scrutiny of students' files confirm the above average results achieved in A/AS-level examinations.

A-level results were above the national average in 2001; they were similar in 2002.

Three out of the five candidates passed the AS-level examination in 2002 while all 7 candidates passed in 2001 with a much higher proportion than the national average gaining A or B grades.

Standards achieved by boys and girls are similar.

Since 1999, seven students have taken A-level further mathematics and five of them have gained A grades.

Good use is made of previously learned skills, e.g. algebra.

Students have a good understanding of probability.

Students are able to use ICT well to solve problems; for example, the omni graph.

Homework is an extension of work done in class and the questions set are challenging, containing examples from past papers from the outset of the course.

The students' oral work is good. They co-operate very well with each other in group work, e.g. consolidating rules of probability, they learn from each other in giving answers with reasons to set examples.

Students' attitudes to the subject	<b>Excellent</b>
Students' behaviour	<b>Excellent</b>

### **Achievement and progress**

How well students achieve	<b>Good</b>
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*Statements explaining why students (girls/boys, SEN, most able, EAL) achieve as they do.*

Teaching is good; it is carefully planned with clear objectives.

Students learn well because they are challenged to think hard about their work, for example in a Year 12 lesson on probability.

Lessons proceed with a good pace and contain a high level of challenge for the students.

Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use skilful questioning techniques to stretch students' understanding.

The students are expected to work hard and they do so because they respect the teachers and have very positive attitudes toward the subject.

The marking of the students' work at this level is very good and is well annotated with comments enabling the students to understand what they have to do in order to improve their standards.

The provision for students re-sitting GCSE mathematics is unsatisfactory because work is not matched well enough to students' learning needs.

### **Educational Provision**

Quality of Teaching	<b>Good</b>
Quality of Learning	<b>Good</b>
Quality of the curriculum	<b>Very good</b>

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	<b>Satisfactory</b>
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	<b>Good</b>

### **Leadership and Management**

Leadership and Management	<b>Very good</b>
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	<b>Very good</b>
Adequacy of resources	<b>Satisfactory</b>
Adequacy of accommodation	<b>Good</b>
Improvement since the last inspection	<b>Good</b>



125. The recruitment of boys is higher than that of girls by 2:1; girls do as well as boys in examinations. The syllabuses on offer are appropriate at A/AS level but the GCSE re-sit course is not satisfactory in meeting the needs of all the students. The timetabling arrangements for this course mean that no lesson contains the same combination of students which puts considerable pressure on staff to tailor work to meet the needs of individual students. The department is very well led and has appropriate plans in place for further improvement. Since the last inspection examination results have been maintained while there have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching and the leadership of the subject.

## SCIENCES

126. The inspection covered A and AS-level courses. The focus was on biology, but chemistry and physics were also sampled.

### Biology

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

#### Strengths

- Very good and sometimes excellent teaching promoting high quality learning.
- Very good assessment procedures and analysis leading to an awareness of strengths and the addressing of weaknesses.
- A very good curriculum enhanced by a range of courses and visits and the biological society stimulates interest and enables high grades.

#### Area for improvement

- The standards boys achieve.

### Standards

Tests and Examinations	<b>Above average</b>
Seen during the inspection	<b>Above average</b>

*Commentary including explanations for any differences between exam/test results and standards seen:*

In 2001 A-level results were above average; they were slightly lower in 2002.

In 2001 AS-level results were well above average; they too were slightly lower in 2002.

Whilst standards are good, they have declined slightly over the past three years due mainly to the abilities of different year groups.

In 2002 only one of the students who fully enrolled on the AS-level course failed to complete it; all students completed the A-level course.

Relative to their GCSE performance, students' A-level results in 2001 were very good.

Standards of the present Year 13 students are above average.

The present Year 12 have made a strong start to the AS-level course and are achieving very well.

Taken as a whole, girls achieve better than boys, partly due to their better concentration and more thorough approach to their work.

The standard of biological drawing is often poor with no scales and inappropriate shading; some students are not very adept at using a microscope.

Students' attitudes to the subject	<b>Very good</b>
Students' behaviour	<b>Very good</b>

### Achievement and progress

How well students achieve	<b>Very good</b>
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*Statements explaining why students (girls/boys, SEN, most able, EAL) achieve as they do.*

Students of all abilities, including those who are more able, achieve very well.

Three main factors contribute to the above average standards:

1. The teaching is a major strength; it stimulates and informs students very well. It is at its best when all students are involved with developing a topic, rather than just learning about it. This is especially true of lessons where they are utilising many key skills to bring this about. Under these conditions much very good and enjoyable learning takes place; for example, in a Year 13 lesson on Xerophytes.
2. The assessment system, which keeps students up to date on their attainment, is very effectively used by both teachers and students to tackle weaknesses and to plan for the future.

The very good curriculum, with its visits, courses and biological society, is a significant factor contributing to the very good learning. Lessons are taught in enough depth to allow access to high grades and the enhancement activities are intellectually stimulating and bring the subject to life.

All these factors enable students to work hard to cope well with most tasks and to be confident to ask when they need help. Relationships with teachers are both warm and productive.

## Educational Provision

Quality of Teaching	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of Learning	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of the curriculum	<b>Very good</b>

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	<b>Good</b>
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	<b>Very good</b>

## Leadership and Management

Leadership and Management	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	<b>Good</b>
Adequacy of resources	<b>Good</b>
Adequacy of accommodation	<b>Good</b>
Improvement since the last inspection	<b>Very good</b>

127. All in all this is a very effective department: it stimulates and develops its students very well. Numbers opting for sixth form biology are rising and there are at present 32 biologists.

### Chemistry

128. One lesson was seen. It was competently taught and the students made good progress with understanding the concepts of equilibrium constants, such as  $K_c$  and  $K_p$ . A-level results in 2001 were average; 2002 saw them decline slightly.

### Physics

129. One very well taught lesson was seen, in which students understood how to derive the formulae used to consider capacitors in series and in parallel. A-level results in 2001 were above average and they remained at a similar level in 2002.

## ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

130. Design and technology is offered at A and AS level, although the course is largely intended to run as a two year course to A level. It is a popular subject, with 22 students taking the A-level examination in 2002.

## Design and technology

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

### Strengths

- Advanced Level examination results are well above average.
- The subject is very well led.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Students' attitudes to learning are very good.

### Areas for improvement

- There is not enough technician time to support teachers' work.

## Standards

Tests and Examinations	<b>Well above average</b>
Seen during the inspection	<b>Well above average</b>

*Commentary including explanations for any differences between exam/test results and standards seen:*

In 2001 the A-level results were very high in comparison with the national average; they were at a similar level in 2002.

A-level results have been consistently well above national averages. In the last four years, not one candidate has failed to achieve a pass, while over half have reached the top grades of A and B; nationally, around a third of students gain A or B grades.

The subject is popular owing to the high standards achieved and the quality of provision; on average more than 25 students are entered for A level each year.

A-level results have risen sharply since the last inspection.

The current sixth form students are generally on line to achieve similar levels of success at the end of their courses. Their particular strengths are: an unusually good grasp of design and making processes; a flexible attitude to changing designs based on research and proto-typing; often high quality work with a wide range of materials; and meticulously presented coursework folders.

Students' attitudes to the subject	<b>Very good</b>
Students' behaviour	<b>Very good</b>

## Achievement and progress

How well students achieve	<b>Very good</b>
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*Statements explaining why students (girls/boys, SEN, most able, EAL) achieve as they do.*

Students make very good progress; this applies to their development of practical skills, and their growing knowledge and understanding of the subject's underpinning theory and of how professional designers work.

Boys and girls achieve equally; there are generally equal numbers in the sixth form classes, and they work well together.

Students have very positive attitudes to design and technology. They listen unusually well when their teacher presents the theory of the subject, often think hard about what they hear and keep up a good pace of working during practical lessons. Many do more work at home than is common and some drop in to the design and technology rooms out of lesson time to get on with their work.

One of the main reasons for students' very good achievement is the very good quality of the teaching. Teachers help the students to become independent learners, even though they are always around to provide support that can be of the highest quality; for example, in a Year 13 lesson where students were continuing with their final design project.

Teachers keep detailed notes on what each student is doing and thus have a clear knowledge of individuals' levels and progress.

Teachers expect students to produce high quality work, and have up-to-date subject knowledge which enables students to learn quickly and effectively and gain a good grasp of what to do in any given design or making context.

The team of teachers is highly committed and works well together; relationships with the students are very good and this enables a productive yet relaxed atmosphere in classrooms and workshops.

Design in general, graphics, and working with resistant materials are the main thrusts of the A-level course at this school. However, there are plenty of opportunities also to work with other materials, while students wishing to specialise in textiles can do so.

### **Educational Provision**

Quality of Teaching	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of Learning	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of the curriculum	<b>Good</b>
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	<b>Good</b>
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	<b>Very good</b>

### **Leadership and Management**

Leadership and Management	<b>Very good</b>
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	<b>Very good</b>
Adequacy of resources	<b>Good</b>
Adequacy of accommodation	<b>Good</b>
Improvement since the last inspection	<b>Very Good</b>

131. The department is led very well: the subject head has worked extremely hard over the years to develop and maintain the overall high standards. Relationships, communication, consultation and delegation are all strong, and the resulting team-work makes resource management effective and monitoring of the department's work very effective.

132. Technical support, however, is unusually low for a department of this size and activity; teachers have to spend too much time on work best carried out by technicians.

### **BUSINESS**

133. Business studies is offered at A and AS level. AVCE is no longer offered; the last student is studying in Year 13. Group sizes are average except for AVCE. Young Enterprise has been run since 1998 and is a major contribution to sixth form provision.



## Business studies

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

### Strengths

- Teachers give good support to students with a wide range of ability.
- Courses are well organised and supported by a good range of resources.
- Good use is made of links with local businesses.

### Areas for improvement

- Some lessons do not provide students with work that is challenging enough.
- The sharing of good practice to enhance students' learning is not given enough emphasis in planning and development.
- Students do not have enough access to ICT facilities.

## Standards

Tests and Examinations	<b>Below average</b>
Seen during the inspection	<b>Below average</b>

*Commentary including explanations for any differences between exam/test results and standards seen:*

A and AS-level results were below average in 2001 and the students did relatively worse in the subject than they did in their other subjects. Results in 2002 were at a similar level.

Most students pass examinations but achieve relatively low grades.

Results have declined in relation to the national average since 1998.

There is no significant difference between girls' and boys' results.

AVCE results have also declined and this course has now been discontinued.

Retention rates are good; the great majority of students who start courses complete them.

Students have a good understanding of real business situations because of the case studies discussed in lessons.

Project work seen during the inspection was in the average to above average range.

Students use ICT well to present their work and the level of detail, including research, is impressive.

In lessons, students use and apply previously learned terminology well.

Numeracy is a weaker area; some students complete calculations without understanding their purpose.

Literacy skills are variable and some students are much better than others in showing initiative and taking notes during discussion and in extracting key points from case study material.

Students' attitudes to the subject	<b>Good</b>
Students' behaviour	<b>Excellent</b>

## Achievement and progress

How well students achieve	<b>Satisfactory</b>
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*Statements explaining why students (girls/boys, SEN, most able, EAL) achieve as they do*

Students receive good individual support in lessons and this helps lower attainers, for example, overcome any lack of confidence in completing tasks.

Case studies and topical issues are frequently incorporated into lesson planning, which helps students develop a good awareness of the business world around them. Awareness is further enhanced by the school's Young Enterprise programme, with groups of students involved in running companies each year.

Access to computing facilities is limited and this restricts opportunities to incorporate into lesson including numeracy-related topics where there are weaknesses in attainment.

In lessons the secure knowledge of staff and good quality resources give students a clear structure for their learning. The level of challenge, however, is variable. In some lessons too much time is spent on individual and group tasks that lack challenge. Students are simply not worked hard enough by some activities. The problem is compounded in some group discussion sessions when time is then spent on reporting back on tasks when students have achieved only a very basic level of understanding.

In some lessons whole-class teaching and discussion relies too much on voluntary contributions from higher ability students without checks being made on individual understanding through questioning or assessed tasks.

### **Educational Provision**

Quality of Teaching	<b>Satisfactory</b>
Quality of Learning	<b>Satisfactory</b>
Quality of the curriculum	<b>Good</b>

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	<b>Satisfactory</b>
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	<b>Good</b>

### **Leadership and Management**

Leadership and Management	<b>Satisfactory</b>
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	<b>Satisfactory</b>
Adequacy of resources	<b>Good</b>
Adequacy of accommodation	<b>Satisfactory</b>
Improvement since the last inspection	<b>Satisfactory</b>

134. Provision is well organised and gives students a good understanding of course requirements. Standards and the quality of teaching are similar to those seen at the time of the last inspection. Resources have been developed well to incorporate realistic examples and good links established with local businesses. The department is effective in supporting a wide range of students, some of whom may choose the subject because it mixes well with their more favoured choices, but should review how the subject is portrayed to potential students. The department is less effective in evaluating and developing its current provision, including identifying and sharing best practice in teaching and learning that will further raise standards. Access to ICT facilities is unsatisfactory. (This is a whole-school issue and not within the control of the department).

### **Young Enterprise**

135. A very high standard of work was seen from students involved in this programme. The school has regularly gained awards; for example, Best Company and Best Company Presentation in 2001. Nottingham University uses students' work as exemplar materials. Twenty five students are currently enrolled and they receive one lesson per week plus additional time after school hours; two co-ordinators provide guidance to the three companies which in turn are generously supported by local businesses.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

136. The focus was on ICT, in which the school offers mainly AVCE provision in the sixth form. There is one small Year 13 group completing work leading to GCE A-level ICT. A-level computing was dropped some years ago, and results in AS and A-level ICT have been disappointing. However, the introduction of AVCE in information technology has attracted substantially increased numbers. Good teaching, committed students and the quality of work observed during the inspection suggest this was the right decision and that the school now has a strong foundation on which to build.

### Information and communication technology

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

#### Strengths

- Quality of teaching, with students challenged, productive and motivated.
- Much improved curricular provision, using new vocational programmes.
- Strong departmental management, targeted on curriculum and achievement.
- Very good feedback to students and encouragement to improve their work.
- High quality coursework and classwork, with helpful feedback and tracking of performance
- Good use of ICT in major areas.
- Good provision of hardware and robust networking, with strong technician support.

#### Areas for improvement

- Evidence of improved attainment has yet to feed into examination statistics.
- Access to ICT resource for all departments.
- Further development of subject based links and resources on the school's intranet.

### Standards

Examinations	<b>Below average</b>
Seen during the inspection	<b>Above average</b>

#### *Commentary including explanations for differences between exam/test results and standards seen*

Provision in ICT is now much more coherent and relevant to students' needs and interests. The replacement of A-level programmes in Computing with an AVCE course has led to an increase both in the number following the subject and in the effectiveness of their learning; over 70 students are enrolled in Years 12 and 13.

The quality of work seen during the inspection was above average overall and included some work of a very high standard.

Students are skilled users of the main applications software.

Many students have designed the user interface for their database projects very successfully.

Historical results in computing are below average; of the three candidates who took the examination in 2002, two gained B grades and the other failed.

Eleven candidates took the examination in 2002; none gained a grade higher than D and three failed. The results were similarly low in 2001.

Students' attitudes to the subject	<b>Good</b>
Students' behaviour	<b>Good</b>
Development of personal and learning skills	<b>Satisfactory</b>

### Achievement and progress

How well students achieve	<b>Good</b>
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*Commentary including explanations for differences between exam/test results and standards seen:*

The new provision now attracts a much higher proportion of girls to the subject.

A number of extremely able students have chosen to follow the AVCE; some of the coursework they have produced to date is stunningly good and results in early units of the course confirm the strong upward trend in achievement.

Most teaching seen was good or better, with thorough planning (both of overall course plans and for the lessons themselves) leading to very effective learning. The range of subject skills in the department (technology, business, programming) is a particular strength.

The best teaching is demanding, but teachers are generous with praise and encouragement, creating positive, friendly and productive lessons.

Students use the Internet effectively for research. One group, for example, found images of animals for the children's colouring book around which their project was based.

Students understand the examination board criteria against which their work is judged as a result of teachers' careful planning.

Teachers monitor individual students' progress well and agree targets with them; this helps to ensure that the work they produce is of an appropriately high standard.

Well-developed schemes of work, closely informed by exam board specifications, contribute to a coherent ICT learning programme for sixth form students.

### **Educational Provision**

Quality of Teaching	<b>Good</b>
Quality of Learning	<b>Good</b>
Quality of the curriculum	<b>Good</b>
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	<b>Good</b>
Quality of assessment and progress monitoring	<b>Satisfactory</b>

### **Leadership and Management**

Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	<b>Good</b>
Adequacy of resources	<b>Satisfactory</b>
Adequacy of accommodation	<b>Good</b>
Improvement since the last inspection	<b>Very good</b>

Summary – outlining how effective the subject is and the reasons why.

137. There has been substantial improvement in ICT resources and provision since the last inspection. Major investment in equipment and staff training has provided the school with well skilled staff and at 5:1 a student to computer ratio which is now better than the national average. Sixth form students are provided with a good number of terminals for individual access, and they are well used. Students habitually work with and help each other, and co-operate on project work using the available resources. Being encouraged to work in pairs and in groups helps break away from the possible isolation of computer usage.
138. Leadership and management of the department, both at classroom level and in whole school strategic planning, are now much stronger. The school has been able to attract a team of qualified and well-motivated staff. Fortnightly meetings and regular formal reviews provide personal and structural support and maintain staff motivation. A good start has been made in establishing a school intranet, and some work is accessible on line from home.

## **HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL**

139. Physical education is offered at A level, leisure and recreation at AVCE and leisure and tourism at GNVQ intermediate. No lessons were observed or work scrutinised leisure and recreation or leisure and tourism.

## Physical Education

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

### Strengths

- Very good teaching.
- Well above national average standards.
- Excellent leadership establishing growing reputation for sixth form provision.

### Areas for improvement

- Continued development of teaching taking into account differences in students' learning styles and opinions.
- Further development of links with external agencies to compensate for limited on-site facilities.

## Standards

Tests and Examinations	<b>Well above average</b>
Seen during the inspection	<b>Above average</b>

*Commentary including explanations for any differences between exam/test results and standards seen:*

Results in 2002 maintained the trend of above average standards achieved over the last five years.

A-level results in 2001 were well above the national average. The percentage of students gaining grade A was also well above the national average.

Present Year 13 students are achieving standards above those expected nationally but below those of previous years. Their recent AS-level results were well above the national average and many achieved beyond expectations, based on their GCSE scores.

Above average standards are maintained across all areas of study. Students are particularly adept at relating physiological and psychological theory to their practical work; for example in a Year 12 netball session.

Students' personal performance profiles are of a very high standard.

Although more boys than girls choose to study the course, the results of girls were just as good.

Students' attitudes and commitment to the subject contribute strongly to the very good standards achieved.

Students' attitudes to the subject	<b>Very good</b>
Students' behaviour	<b>Very good</b>

## Achievement and progress

How well students achieve	<b>Very good</b>
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*Statements explaining why students (girls/boys, SEN, most able, EAL) achieve as they do.*

The majority of students in the present AS and A-level groups make very good progress. A minority struggle to cope with the standards of A-level work and to maintain the very high results they achieved at GCSE level.

Very good extra-curricular provision improves standards, allowing students to refine their skills at advanced levels.

Involvement in community sports enables students to be assessed in their strongest areas, despite the limiting factors of on-site accommodation.

Gifted and talented students are given very good opportunities to reach their potential and they achieve very well.

Assessment procedures are very good, enabling teachers to track in detail the progress made by all students, and refine teaching and the curriculum where necessary.

Teaching is consistently very good. This provision is greatly enhanced by teachers' subject expertise and by the effectiveness of varied teaching methods; this enhances students' learning.

The students are very positive about their courses. Their perceptive views regarding the course would aid future department developments.

### **Educational Provision**

Quality of Teaching	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of Learning	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of the curriculum	<b>Very good</b>

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	<b>Very good</b>

### **Leadership and Management**

Leadership and Management	<b>Excellent</b>
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	<b>Very good</b>
Adequacy of resources	<b>Good</b>
Adequacy of accommodation	<b>Satisfactory</b>
Improvement since the last inspection	<b>Very good</b>

140. The very good quality of provision reported at the last inspection has been maintained and the head of department has expertly guided developmental change when needed. He has excellent leadership qualities. Very good procedures are in place for the evaluation of the quality of the department's work and a strong collective will to succeed. The school supports the work of the department very well. A continuous programme of staff development has enabled the department to acquire considerable expertise in sixth form provision and an enviable local reputation.

### **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

141. Health and social care is offered at AVCE and intermediate GNVQ. Year 12 and Year 13 students are taught at the same time in AVCE, the group size being relatively low.

### **Health and Social Care**

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

#### **Strengths**

- Teaching is very good; teachers have excellent subject knowledge.
- Students achieve well in both intermediate and advanced level examinations.
- The subject co-ordinator provides strong leadership for the subject.
- A wide range of opportunities is provided for students to take part in work experience and learn

through visits to providers of health and social care.

Areas for improvement

- A fixed subject base, which will improve access to resources by students.
- Schemes of work, to meet the new specifications and support new teachers.

## Standards

Tests and Examinations	Advanced level - <b>Average</b> Intermediate level - <b>Well above average</b>
Seen during the inspection	<b>Above average</b>

*Commentary including explanations for any differences between exam/test results and standards seen:*

In 2001 all five candidates who completed the advanced level GNVQ course gained distinctions, results were well above national averages. Two students did not finish the course within the set time but teachers encouraged them to continue their studies after Year 13 and both eventually managed to gain distinctions.

In the first year of the AVCE double award course (2002), three of the four students passed the course – national comparisons are not yet available.

In 2002, intermediate level results were well above the national average with three of the five students gaining merits. Results were lower in 2001 owing to the lower ability profile of the students.

Test results have improved, since these were taken later in the course when students had a greater understanding of how to apply theoretical understanding in health and social care contexts.

Students' portfolios reveal above average understanding of core concepts; for example, one in which the student had conducted wide-ranging research and had produced a detailed analysis of nutrition data.

All students have passed certificates in Basic Emergency First Aid, and Foundation Certificate in Food Hygiene.

Students' attitudes to the subject	<b>Excellent</b>
Students' behaviour	<b>Very good</b>

### **Achievement and progress**

How well students achieve	<b>Good</b>
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*Statements explaining why students (girls/boys, SEN, most able, EAL) achieve as they do.*

Teachers are aware of all individual needs and ensure that students make good progress through a range of activities to extend learning.

Teachers stem from a range of backgrounds such as food technology, science and business/information technology, and the school uses their strengths and subject knowledge well in order to widen the range of units offered and to improve students' learning.

Students make good progress in developing their understanding of the needs of different groups of people; for example, elderly people and those with Alzheimers disease.

Students with special educational needs are provided with extra support and make very good progress.

Support for literacy development is strong, through the use of key words at intermediate level and the consistent application of subject terminology in all lessons.

An induction course, developed with the support of a local hospital, and regular opportunities for work experience with a large range of providers offer great breadth and widen the horizons for students.

Schemes of work are undergoing appropriate development, to incorporate changes in the subject specification, and to specify teaching and learning activities.

Health and social care is taught in a number of rooms (including food technology room, which is inappropriate). This prevents students from having access to resources outside of lesson times which restricts their learning opportunities.

### **Educational Provision**

Quality of Teaching	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of Learning	<b>Good</b>
Quality of the curriculum	<b>Very good</b>

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	<b>Good</b>
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	<b>Very good</b>

### **Leadership and Management**



Leadership and Management	<b>Very good</b>
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	<b>Very good</b>
Adequacy of resources	<b>Satisfactory</b>
Adequacy of accommodation	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
Improvement since the last inspection	<b>Good</b>

142. Health and social care has continued to improve since the last inspection. The co-ordinator leads the department very well; students are given a wide variety of educational opportunities that reflect real world experience.

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

143. Art is offered at A and AS level and as an AVCE course while drama and media studies are offered at A and AS level; courses are well-subscribed.

### **Art**

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

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching is very good with high levels of expertise and enthusiasm among all staff.</li> <li>• All students achieve very well.</li> <li>• The assessment of students' work and guidance for improvement are very good.</li> <li>• Regular after-school classes, for extension activities or additional help, are provided.</li> </ul> <p>Areas for improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater provision for three-dimensional work.</li> <li>• Additional basic literacy support for some students.</li> <li>• More organised visits to art galleries.</li> </ul>
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### **Standards**

Tests and Examinations	<b>Well above average</b>
Seen during the inspection	<b>Well above average</b>

*Commentary including explanations for any differences between exam/test results and standards seen:*

Standards are well above average; students' work is imaginative and well crafted.

The A-level course is popular: 26 students took the examination in 2001 and 34 in 2002.

A-level results were consistently well above average between 1999 and 2001; in 2001 17 of the 26 candidates gained A grades.

A-level results in 2002 were slightly lower but this is a relative position; 47 per cent still gained A or B grades. The marginal fall in results in 2002 was the result of structural changes to the examinations, which put less emphasis on aspects which are strengths of the department's work (historical perspective; knowledge of artists' work). An appropriate adjustment to teaching has been made for students entered in 2003.

Students are extremely knowledgeable about artistic influences upon their work, and take pride in describing the processes of creating their portfolios. They understand their strengths and weaknesses and know how to address them to maximise their potential.

The drawing skills of boys are generally better than those of the girls but girls achieve particularly well in art textiles.

Some boys show considerable artistic maturity, particularly in their life-drawings in pen, ink or charcoal, achieved during after school classes.

Girls showed particular skill in their creative use of colour and texture to design fabric and wallhangings.

Direct observational drawing and painting is of an exceptionally high standard.

Students' attitudes to the subject	<b>Excellent</b>
Students' behaviour	<b>Excellent</b>

### **Achievement and progress**

How well students achieve	<b>Very good</b>
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*Statements explaining why students (girls/boys, SEN, most able, EAL) achieve as they do.*

Teachers expect students to produce work of a very high standard; this is the key reason for their very good achievement. Underpinning the high expectations of the teachers are their considerable expertise and charisma. Lessons are highly stimulating and give students a profound learning experience.

Students of all abilities achieve very well. Both timetabled lessons and those organised out of school hours provide great opportunities for all students, including the most able, to progress their learning very well.

Students are set very challenging work which is focused around their individual interests and skills while fully meeting examination requirements. Teachers' meticulous understanding of examination requirements ensures that students are very well prepared.

The work displayed around the school encourages students to be justly proud of their achievements.

Students enjoy art and work hard at school and at home to develop their skills.

Boys are sometimes less motivated than girls but achieve very well owing to the pressure and encouragement offered by teachers.

Writing is a barrier to achievement for some students, particularly boys who are underconfident in expressing themselves in written commentaries about their work.

The use of ICT is good in art and could be used more frequently to describe the thought processes and development of ideas.

Students have limited opportunities to create three-dimensional work.

### **Educational Provision**

Quality of Teaching	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of Learning	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of the curriculum	<b>Very good</b>

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	<b>Very good</b>
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Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	<b>Very good</b>
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### **Leadership and Management**

Leadership and Management	<b>Very good</b>
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	<b>Very good</b>
Adequacy of resources	<b>Good</b>
Adequacy of accommodation	<b>Good</b>
Improvement since the last inspection	<b>Very good</b>

144. The school is committed to a bid for art college status. The quality of provision, particularly teaching, is very good and very good progress has been made since the last inspection; on this basis the application is very well founded. A successful bid would necessitate greater curriculum breadth, particularly in ceramics and possibly photography, which could build on its current provision for digital photography. Resources are adequate for the present provision, but for art college status the accommodation, staffing and learning resources would need to be improved.

## Drama and theatre studies

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

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standards are rising significantly.</li> <li>Teaching is excellent and this leads to excellent achievement.</li> <li>Students display excellent attitudes towards drama.</li> <li>There is an outstanding programme of extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>Leadership and management of the department are excellent.</li> </ul> <p>Areas for improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No areas for further improvement were identified during the inspection.</li> </ul>
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## Standards

Tests and Examinations	<b>Average</b>
Seen during the inspection	<b>Above average</b>

<p><i>Commentary including explanations for any differences between exam/test results and standards seen:</i></p> <p>The results of A-level examinations in 2002 showed a substantial improvement on the 2001 results. Changes to the syllabus for 2002 enabled students with stronger practical skills to achieve higher grades.</p> <p>All four students passed the AS-level examination in 2002 with grades ranging from B to E.</p> <p>In 2002 A-level examinations students gained on average almost one full grade higher than predicted by their GCSE performance.</p> <p>The 2001 A-level results were well below national averages but were in line with the grades predicted for the students owing to their relatively low ability profile.</p> <p>Significant numbers of students continue their studies into higher education and employment.</p> <p>Students' practical work is of a high standard; they are able to experiment and come up with original and exciting ways to present their ideas.</p> <p>Movement and vocal skills are excellent.</p> <p>Written work is of a very high standard from script-writing to the analysis of professional performances.</p> <p>Students have a very good knowledge of the current dramatic and theatrical scene.</p>
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Students' attitudes to the subject	<b>Excellent</b>
Students' behaviour	<b>Excellent</b>

## Achievement and progress

How well students achieve	<b>Very good</b>
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*Statements explaining why students (girls/boys, SEN, most able, EAL) achieve as they do.*

Consistently excellent and challenging teaching involves students in planning, developing and evaluating their own work; this produces high quality results.

Relationships between students and the teacher are excellent; the working relationship is that of equals collaborating and stimulating each other to create imaginative and intellectually satisfying work. More able students achieve very well. The demanding level of work results in their having an excellent insight into, for example, the hidden depths of text.

The teacher's use of assessment in lessons, showing students how to improve their work, promotes high standards of achievement.

The excellent attitudes displayed by students towards drama contribute significantly to their achievement.

Schemes of work are well-crafted, ensuring that students make very good progress. Challenging tasks are set which take full account of students' previous learning.

The outstanding programme of extra-curricular activities contributes both to students' achievement and to their personal development.

### **Educational Provision**

Quality of Teaching	<b>Excellent</b>
Quality of Learning	<b>Excellent</b>
Quality of the curriculum	<b>Excellent</b>
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	<b>Excellent</b>
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	<b>Excellent</b>

### **Leadership and Management**

Leadership and Management	<b>Excellent</b>
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	<b>Excellent</b>
Adequacy of resources	<b>Good</b>
Adequacy of accommodation	<b>Very good</b>
Improvement since the last inspection	<b>Good</b>

145. The provision for drama and theatre studies has shown good improvement since the previous inspection. The head of department has undertaken training with one of the best drama educationalists currently working and consequently has revised schemes of work, which build more effectively on earlier work and move students rapidly forwards. She has changed the GCE A-level syllabus to one that provides better continuity from the GCSE course and a more practical experience for students. This is an excellent department; teacher and students work together with a real sense of common purpose.

### **Media Studies**

146. One lesson was observed in Year 12. This was well taught, stimulating the students through the analysis of the features of a video game (which was projected from a laptop onto a whiteboard). Students responded well to the lesson's content, particularly the boys.

### **HUMANITIES**

147. Geography, history, philosophy, psychology and classical studies are offered at A and AS level. All the courses attract good numbers of students. Philosophy will be examined for the first time at A-level in 2003 while the first group of student to take psychology in the sixth form started in September 2002.

## Geography

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

### Strengths

- Students achieve well and standards at advanced level are well above the national average.
- Good teaching is supported by very good subject knowledge and understanding of examination requirements.
- The curriculum is well planned and arrangements for assessment and monitoring students' progress are very good.
- Relationships are excellent and students demonstrate very positive attitudes.

### Areas for improvement

- Further development of the variety of teaching strategies to promote students' active involvement in lessons.
- The size and balance of teaching groups.

## Standards

Tests and Examinations	<b>Well above average</b>
Seen during the inspection	<b>Well above average</b>

*Commentary including explanations for any differences between exam/test results and standards seen:*

Current provision in geography caters for 47 students following AS and A-level courses. The subject is popular and reflects the high take-up and high standards achieved at GCSE in Year 11.

Standards are well above average. Over the last four years on average half of entries have gained passes at the highest grades of A and B at A level. In the most recent examinations all but one of the students gained a pass grade and two-fifths of the 25 students gained grades A and B.

While in 2002 the results of boys at the highest grades were better than those of girls, in the last few years there has been no significant difference in their results.

The results of examinations are reflected in the standards students achieve in lessons, in analysis of samples of their work and in discussions with them.

Course work based on fieldwork and research demonstrates a secure grasp of geographical concepts and skills and leads to examination assignments that are above average in standards.

Students' attitudes to the subject	<b>Excellent</b>
Students' behaviour	<b>Excellent</b>

## Achievement and progress

How well students achieve	<b>Good</b>
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*Statements explaining why students (girls/boys, SEN, most able, EAL) achieve as they do.*

Students make good progress because of the very good foundations of knowledge, understanding and skills developed before beginning the AS and A-level courses.

Lesson planning is based upon very good subject knowledge and an excellent understanding of the well-chosen AS and A-level syllabuses.

In the most effective lessons students are provided with not only a range of resources but also a stimulating variety of activities that actively engage them in the learning; for example, in a Year 13 lesson a potentially dull task was transformed into a lively and successful lesson by the skilful way in which small group work was used.

Occasionally, where the teaching uses a narrower range of methods and lesson activities there is less opportunity for students to participate. This leads to an over-reliance on the teacher and inhibits the growth of greater independence on the part of the student.

The curriculum provided for the AS and A-level courses have been well planned and organised; there is good provision for fieldwork.

Throughout the courses key skills are reinforced. Skills such as communication in writing and speaking, using statistics and numbers, appropriate use of ICT, and tasks that involve problem solving and working effectively with other people contribute to the wider personal and social development of the students.

Students are provided with good support by their teachers so that they have a clear understanding of the syllabus and examination requirements.

Opportunities are created for students to develop greater responsibility for independent study using a range of resources including good access to ICT.

As a result of the regular marking and assessment of their work, students receive constructive feedback and this increases their understanding of how to improve and achieve greater success.

Nearly all the students continue from AS to A level and the completion rates are good.

### **Educational Provision**

Quality of Teaching	<b>Good</b>
Quality of Learning	<b>Good</b>
Quality of the curriculum	<b>Very good</b>

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	<b>Good</b>
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	<b>Very good</b>

### **Leadership and Management**

Leadership and Management	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	<b>Good</b>
Adequacy of resources	<b>Good</b>
Adequacy of accommodation	<b>Satisfactory</b>
Improvement since the last inspection	<b>Good</b>

148. Leadership and management are good. The department works well as a team and has access to a good range of resources. As a result of the option systems and timetable structure, the two groups in Year 12 are very imbalanced. One group has six girls, the other group is mixed and contains seventeen students. In the smaller group there remains the potential for passivity and limited involvement in the lessons noted in the last inspection report. Overall, since the last inspection the department has made good progress. Students now have more opportunity to develop skills in information and communication technology. The allocation of time for teaching in Year 13 is now adequate and outside lessons there is appropriate provision to encourage independent study.

## History

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

### Strengths

- The standard of teaching is very good.
- Students achieve very well.
- The department provides very good “extras” that enhance achievement.
- Management of the subject has very successfully achieved a distinctive ethos for learning.

### Areas for improvement

- The programme of study is relatively narrow.
- Self-assessment by students is in place but needs further development.
- The use of ICT is in place but needs further development.

## Standards

Tests and Examinations	<b>Well above average</b>
Seen during the inspection	<b>Well above average</b>

*Commentary including explanations for any differences between exam/test results and standards seen:*

A-level results were well above average in 2001 and similarly high in 2002.

The two students who took AS level in 2002 gained B grades.

With the exception of one year when results were above average the department has sustained a well above average profile over the past five years, with an above average proportion of students achieving the highest grade in four of the five years.

Students make the transition from GCSE to advanced level study very well. The current high achieving Year 13 group sustained their high proportion of top GCSE grades in their AS-level results.

In discussion students use a wide range of sources to convincingly adopt positions and argue particular points of view. They use initiative very well to note new points arising in discussion.

The well above average standards achieved in oral work are replicated in students' writing. Convincing arguments, well referenced to evidence sources, and well-reasoned conclusions are features of written work. Students evaluate evidence very well, for example, to argue the extent to which Peterloo was a massacre or a blunder.

Students' attitudes to the subject	<b>Excellent</b>
Students' behaviour	<b>Excellent</b>

## Achievement and progress

How well students achieve	<b>Very good</b>
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*Statements explaining why students (girls/boys, SEN, most able, EAL) achieve as they do.*

The principal reason for students' very good achievement is the consistently high level of challenge in the teaching. Class discussion is very well structured; teachers constantly challenge students to consider evidence and to adopt and argue positions. Very good use is made of students' previous learning so that they are confident to engage in discussion.

The students themselves recognise how well discussion prepares them for written work and they are highly motivated to engage in discussion. In one lesson seen both the panel and the audience took part in a lively Question Time discussion about Germany at the end of World War I. In another example the whole class participated in a meeting of the Italian cabinet attended by Mussolini. Student participation in such lessons is very impressive, with students not only adopting attitudes expressed at the time but convincingly arguing positions adopted by key figures. Teachers also adopt positions in role and students are constantly being put on the spot to justify a particular point. This approach gives a great deal of scope to all students including high achievers to develop their understanding and assemble their ideas for written work.

Each lesson builds very well on the previous one so that there is a significant amount of new learning. This methodology prepares students very well for essay assignments.

Students' achievement is also enhanced by a Year 12 induction programme that provides very good opportunities to develop relevant skills.

The very good range of extra-curricular activities further enhances both motivation and achievement.

### **Educational Provision**

Quality of Teaching	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of Learning	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of the curriculum	<b>Good</b>

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	<b>Very good</b>

### **Leadership and Management**

Leadership and Management	<b>Excellent</b>
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	<b>Excellent</b>
Adequacy of resources	<b>Good</b>
Adequacy of accommodation	<b>Good</b>
Improvement since the last inspection	<b>Very good</b>

149. The impact of leadership and management on students' progress is excellent. The ethos for learning created engages students very well and provides them with a high degree of motivation. The subject is a popular choice for university. There is a "living history" feel about the subject, not only through the very wide range of extra-curricular activities but more fundamentally because of the teaching methods used in the classroom. Areas for improvement are already under consideration by the department. Assessment has been very well developed, although student self-assessment needs further refinement with regard to the level of detail in targets. ICT opportunities need to be further enhanced and the narrow time period covered by the choice of syllabus further reviewed. The very good improvement from the last inspection includes improvements in teaching and management.

### **Psychology**

150. Provision for psychology is satisfactory and standards are average. In its first year as a sixth form subject good relationships are being established and key skills feature prominently in departmental planning. Teaching is satisfactory but a greater emphasis and challenge is needed to underpin psychological theory in students' learning.

## Philosophy

151. One lesson was observed in Year 12. Standards are slightly below average, reflecting the ability profile of the students. The quality of teaching is good; a particular strength in the lesson seen was the teacher's use of students' work to show the whole group how to tackle examination questions. Students took responsibility for their own learning by taking notes when the teacher gave information or advice.

## Classical Studies

152. One lesson was observed in Year 12, which was well taught. The teacher planned the lesson well and gained the interest of the students by expanding upon the texts, thus revealing good subject knowledge. Students have very positive attitudes and are achieving standards that are broadly average.

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

153. A and AS-level courses are offered in English, French, German and Spanish. Over 40 students are enrolled in English courses in each year group while language courses also recruit well. No lessons were observed in Spanish.

## English

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

### Strengths

- Teaching overall is very good.
- Standards in GCE AS and A-level examinations are very good.
- Students achieve very well.
- Students have very positive attitudes to the subject and work very hard.
- The head of department leads the development of the subject very effectively.

### Areas for improvement

- The opportunity for students to discuss their work independently in some lessons.

## Standards

Tests and Examinations	<b>Above average</b>
Seen during the inspection	<b>Well above average</b>

*Commentary including explanations for any differences between exam/test results and standards seen:*

The subject is popular, with 37 students taking the A-level examination in 2001 and 44 in 2002.

Results in 2002 A-level examinations showed significant improvement on the 2001 results, which were above the national average.

On average, students in 2002 gained almost one full grade higher than predicted by their GCSE results; 48 per cent of students gained grade A or B.

All students entered for A level in 2001 and 2002 passed the examination.

All five students entered for the AS-level examination in 2002 passed, achieving grades between B and D.

Standards observed in students' course work are well above average. In the course work element of AS-level examinations, five students gained full marks and 15 achieved grade A.

Most students show very good insight into texts and demonstrate their understanding in work of high quality.

Students' attitudes to the subject	<b>Very good</b>
Students' behaviour	<b>Very good</b>

## Achievement and progress

How well students achieve	<b>Very good</b>
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*Statements explaining why students (girls/boys, SEN, most able, EAL) achieve as they do.*

Teachers' excellent knowledge of their subject ensures that students are presented with very good intellectual challenge.

Good use of group work in most lessons encourages students to develop their own interpretations and approaches to texts; very occasionally teachers take over and do too much of the talking.

Assignments enable students to pursue their individual skills and interests within syllabus requirements. This results in distinctive and imaginative portfolios of work.

Students' work is assessed very well and they are given very good guidance on how to improve.

Teachers ensure that students have a very good understanding of the requirements of the examination syllabus and this helps them to gain high marks.

The most able students make excellent progress and achieve very high standards. This is supported by the enrichment activities, such as the creative writing group, provided by the department.

Students are given a wide range of stimulating activities in lessons and through the extra-curricular provision; for example, the hosting of a writer's workshop led by a BBC script-writer.

Opportunities to develop the department's ICT provision are limited by problems of dampness in the classrooms.

Students' very good attitudes to their work contribute to the progress they make. For example, they have compiled poetry anthologies of their own and others' work including commentaries and analysis; this is not a course requirement.

## Educational Provision

Quality of Teaching	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of Learning	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of the curriculum	<b>Very good</b>

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	<b>Very good</b>

## Leadership and Management

Leadership and Management	<b>Very good</b>
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	<b>Very good</b>
Adequacy of resources	<b>Good</b>
Adequacy of accommodation	<b>Satisfactory</b>
Improvement since the last inspection	<b>Good</b>

154. This is a very effective department, which has maintained the high standards observed during the previous inspection through very good teamwork. Time for the subject has improved, staffing has been strengthened and the department has broadened its provision by offering media studies. Teachers are well qualified and very good in-service training adds to their effectiveness. The head of department leads the subject very well but is over-stretched in fulfilling this role alongside his responsibilities as an advanced skills teacher; this situation is being tackled. The department is well placed to effect further improvement.

## French

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

### Strengths

- Quality of teaching.
- Students' attitudes, commitment and intellectual effort.

- The use of ICT in teaching and learning.

Areas for improvement

- Students' relative standards in speaking.
- Increasing the proportion of students attaining grade A in examinations.

## Standards

Tests and Examinations	<b>Above average</b>
Seen during the inspection	<b>Above average</b>

*Commentary including explanations for any differences between exam/test results and standards seen:*

A-level French results in 2001 were in line with national averages; results were above national averages in 1999 and 2000.

A-level results improved in 2002, 50 per cent of the 12 students entered gaining A or B grades

AS-level French results in 2001 were above the national averages and were at a similar level in 2002.

Examination results have declined slightly since the last inspection.

Boys and girls attain similar standards.

Standards seen during the inspection were in line with examination results.

Comprehension skills are above average, as seen in a Year 12 lesson on multimedia.

Students' vocabulary is good as a result of teachers' strong focus on extending it through dialogue and written tasks.

There is a large majority of girls in the Year 13 group but the Year 12 group is more evenly balanced.

Speaking is less well-developed than reading, writing or listening.

Students' attitudes to the subject	<b>Very good</b>
Students' behaviour	<b>Very good</b>

## Achievement and progress

How well students achieve	<b>Very good</b>
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*Statements explaining why students (girls/boys, SEN, most able, EAL) achieve as they do.*

Teaching is very good; it gives real communicative experience to students, challenging them to understand, discuss and write about topics of interest and importance through use of the language.

The extension of language knowledge and skills is seen to progress lesson by lesson.

The use of ICT in language learning is well-developed and provides challenging experiences for students.

Teaching is based on very good mutual teacher-student relationships and a style which commands respect.

Teachers are very good linguists and make full use of their language skills in their teaching. Teachers mark students' work with great attention to detail and provide a basis for improvement.

Students make particularly impressive progress from GCSE to the early stages of the AS-level course.

The most able are given every support to meet their full potential and those who find progress relatively difficult are also given appropriate help; individual learning programmes using the department's very good ICT resources are a key element of this provision.

Attitudes to work and language learning are very positive; students may not be fully skilled in spoken language but they make every effort to speak with fluency; they work in French whenever expected and they respond positively to the teaching.

The accommodation is unsatisfactory because activities are restricted by the size of some of the teaching rooms and their poor acoustics; the impact of this is most felt in Years 9 to 11 but it is also a factor in the sixth form.

## Educational Provision

Quality of Teaching	<b>Very good</b>
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Quality of Learning	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of the curriculum	<b>Very good</b>
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision	<b>Good</b>
Quality of assessment & progress monitoring	<b>Very good</b>

### **Leadership and Management**

Leadership and Management	<b>Very good</b>
Effectiveness of action to improve quality	<b>Very good</b>
Adequacy of resources	<b>Very good</b>
Adequacy of accommodation	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
Improvement since the last inspection	<b>Satisfactory</b>

155. The department is well-managed, with responsibilities carried by different members of the team; the head of department leads well and draws all the strands together effectively.

### **German**

156. One lesson was observed in Year 12. The lesson was very well taught, the teacher using German throughout thus stretching students' understanding and presenting a very strong language model. Students responded very well to the challenge. Standards are above average.