

INSPECTION REPORT

ABBOTSFIELD SCHOOL FOR BOYS

Hillingdon

LEA area: Hillingdon

Unique reference number: 102449

Headteacher: Mr Robert Preston

Reporting inspector: Mrs Roslyn Fox
4617

Dates of inspection: 25th – 29th November 2002

Inspection number 249617

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of students:	11 - 18
Gender of students:	Boys
School address:	Clifton Gardens Hillingdon Middlesex
Postcode:	UB10 0EX
Telephone number:	01895 237350
Fax number:	01895 271995
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body of Abbotsfield School for Boys
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Kevin Munn
Date of previous inspection:	13 th – 14 th December 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities		Aspect responsibilities
			Main school	Sixth form	
4617	Mrs Roslyn Fox	Registered inspector			The school's results and pupils' (main school) and students' (sixth form) achievements. How well are pupils taught?
9391	Dr Norma Ball	Lay inspector			Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2561	Mr Tony Byrne	Team inspector	English	Drama	
27719	Mr Paul Metcalf	Team inspector	Mathematics	Mathematics	
3525	Mr Peter McGregor	Team inspector	Science	Chemistry	
8159	Mr Kevin Wright	Team inspector	Art and design		
2495	Mr Brian Munden	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology (ICT)		
18663	Mr Phil Burchell	Team inspector	Geography		
10761	Dr Patrick Willan	Team inspector	History	Economics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
2496	Dr Tony O'Sullivan	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language		

Team members			Subject responsibilities		Aspect responsibilities
			Main school	Sixth form	
15208	Mr Anthony Briggs	Team inspector	Music		How well is the school led and managed?
30800	Mrs Betty Colley	Team inspector	Physical education	Sociology	
30563	Ms Jackie Pentlow	Team inspector	Religious education		
30597	Mrs Robina Howells	Team inspector	Educational inclusion Special educational needs		
32331	Mr Peter Barnes	Team inspector	Citizenship		
32208	Mr Derek Aitken	Team inspector		German	
11746	Mr Robin Coulthard	Team inspector Registered inspector for Swakeleys School inspection			How well are students taught?
29742	Mrs Patricia Fyans	Team inspector		Physics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
30973	Mr Geoff Hancock	Team inspector		Design and technology	
25073	Mr Stuart Jordan	Team inspector Sixth form coordinator		Geography Business studies	Students' views. How well does the school care for its students?
1522	Mr William Keast	Team inspector		ICT	
3242	Dr Michael Newman	Team inspector		Biology Psychology	Students' attitudes, values and personal development How well is the sixth form led and managed?
9053	Mrs Vivienne Phillips	Lay inspector			Sixth form
27501	Dr Vera MacRae	Team inspector		English	
10817	Mr George Rayner	Team inspector		History	

The inspection contractor was:

e-Qualitas Limited

Langshaw,
Pastens Road,
Limpsfield Chart,
Oxted,
Surrey,
RH8 0RE.
Tel. 01883 723257.

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor.

Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager,
Inspection Quality Division,
The Office for Standards in Education,
Alexandra House,
33 Kingsway,
London.
WC2B 6SE.

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	8
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM	14
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	18
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	22
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	25
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	29
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	32
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	33
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	38
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	40
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	45
PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	70

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Abbotsfield School for Boys, situated in the Borough of Hillingdon, is a smaller than average foundation comprehensive school that caters for boys between the ages of 11 and 18. It has grown in size over the past two years, with 674 pupils currently on roll, 57 of whom are in the sixth form. Students from the neighbouring girls' school, Swakeleys, and boys from Abbotsfield, are taught together in a joint sixth-form centre. All references to the sixth form in this report are to this joint provision. About a third of pupils come from a range of ethnic minority heritages, including Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean and Black African. About a sixth of pupils have English as an additional language, which is higher than national averages, and about three per cent are in the early stage of learning English. The school receives pupils from a large number of primary schools in the area with many from less advantaged social and economic backgrounds. Pupils' attainment on entry is slightly below average and they have below average literacy skills. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. About 21 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need, at about two per cent, is broadly in line with the national average. The range of special needs includes emotional and behavioural difficulties, dyslexia, speech and communication problems, hearing impairment, physical disability and autism. There is high pupil mobility, with 15 per cent of the total number of pupils arriving or departing other than at the normal times of admission and leaving. The school is fully staffed but has had considerable difficulty finding sufficient staff in a number of subject areas, particularly English, mathematics, science, design and technology and modern foreign languages, which is affecting the continuity of the education pupils receive. The school has been awarded a Sportsmark.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Abbotsfield is a school with a few strengths but also a significant number of weaknesses. The headteacher has a clear vision and he and many of his staff are dedicated in their work. Pupils' attainment in Year 11 is well below average and pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory. Although the majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning, the attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils are unsatisfactory – in some cases, poor. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 11 and this is reflected in the quality of learning. Strategies to promote educational inclusion and equality of opportunity are unsatisfactory. Management is unsatisfactory overall with some strengths and a number of weaknesses. The school is not providing an acceptable standard of education and provides poor value for money. The sixth form provides a satisfactory education for its students and is cost effective.

What the school does well

- The headteacher has a clear view of the strategic direction of the school and has very good relations with staff, pupils and parents.
- Most staff are committed to getting the best from their pupils.
- Extracurricular provision in sport and in enrichment classes is good.
- There is some very good teaching in a variety of subjects.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics and science in Years 7 to 9.

What could be improved

- Pupils' achievement, where it is unsatisfactory or poor, particularly in literacy skills, music, English, aspects of design and technology, and in Year 11 science.
- The inadequate support for pupils with English as an additional language, for those with special educational needs and for the gifted and talented, that results in underachievement.
- The unsatisfactory and poor teaching and learning, particularly in Years 8 and 11.
- The poor attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils throughout the school, reflected in unsatisfactory levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Curriculum weaknesses, including the lack of religious education in Years 10 and 11 and below average time in the teaching week, when pupils need to maximise their learning.
- Ineffective management in areas such as using data, promoting literacy and ICT across the curriculum, and weaknesses in governance.

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

In accordance with section 13(7) of the School Inspections Act of 1996, I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected by HMI in December 2000, the proportion of candidates gaining 5 A*-G passes has risen by over 20 per cent. The proportion of candidates achieving five or more grades A*-C has remained about the same, and well below national averages. Attendance has improved but remains below the national average overall and well above national averages for unauthorised absence. The proportion of teaching that is less than satisfactory is about the same as it was in 2000. Although the school has addressed a number of the key issues identified in the last report, not enough has been done to improve literacy skills. A number of further issues remain unresolved: the use of learning targets for pupils with special educational needs; the management of support for pupils for whom English is an additional language; the management of behaviour in lessons; the effectiveness of monitoring to secure improvements and the uneven quality of marking. Overall the school has made unsatisfactory progress. The sixth form has made satisfactory improvement since the 1998 full sixth form inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 and sixth form students at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations. Reliable data for students in the joint sixth form is not available for 2000 and 2002

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	E	D	E	D
A-levels/AS-levels	n/a	C	n/a	

Key	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E
Very low	E*

In the 2002 national tests at the age of 14, overall results were in line with national averages. They were above average when compared with similar schools (that is schools where between 22 and 35 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals) and below when compared with schools whose pupils achieved similar results at the end of Year 6. They were below national averages in science and in line with national averages in English and mathematics. This represented a big improvement in

English, where results were very low compared with national averages in 2001 and improvement in mathematics and science. The trend of improvement for the three core subjects over the five years up to 2002 was broadly similar to the national trend. Teacher assessments undertaken at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicate that standards in the foundation subjects fluctuate considerably, with the highest standards in ICT and physical education and the lowest standards in geography, history and modern foreign languages.

In the 2002 GCSE examinations, results were well below average for all maintained schools and for boys nationally. For the proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A*-C, results were well below the national average, at 26 per cent, in comparison with all schools (50 per cent) and with boys nationally. They were below average for schools where a similar proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. For the proportion of pupils gaining five or more grade A*-G passes, results were above average for all schools and well above compared with similar schools. When considering pupils' prior attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2000, results were well below average for five A*-C grades but well above average for five A*-G grades. The trend of improvement over the five years up to 2002 was above the national trend. In 2002, the school fell short of its target for five A*-C passes by nine per cent and achieved just above its target for five A*-G passes.

In work seen, overall standards were below average in Year 9 and showed some variation from last year's tests. Work in English was below average and represented unsatisfactory progress and achievement. In mathematics and science, it was average, showing good progress and achievement. The highest standards were in art and physical education, and in geography, where pupils are now doing better than last year's cohort. They were lowest in design and technology, history, ICT, modern foreign languages, music and religious education. Achievement overall in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory with some good achievement in physical education. Although standards in ICT and religious education are below expectation, pupils achieve well from their lower starting points. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are well below average overall. They are lowest in science in Year 11, history and modern foreign languages. Highest standards are in art, geography and physical education, where attainment is close to national expectation. Achievement overall in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory. It is good in geography and satisfactory in mathematics, art, ICT and physical education. Achievement is unsatisfactory in English, science, design and technology, history, modern foreign languages and music. Weaknesses in teaching and pupils' unsatisfactory attendance and punctuality have a significant negative impact on their achievement throughout the school.

The attainment of sixth form students is in line with national averages overall. In 2001, performance at A-level was broadly in line with that in other maintained schools and that of all post-16 providers. Standards were generally similar in 2002 and in work seen during the inspection. Achievement overall is satisfactory with good progress in a number of subjects. Progress and achievement are unsatisfactory in a small number of subjects, mainly because of inconsistencies in teaching.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Unsatisfactory. Many pupils have positive attitudes to their school. However, in a significant minority of classes, pupils show unsatisfactory and occasionally poor attitudes to their work, having little interest in learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Unsatisfactory. In some classes, pupils listen to each other and to their teachers attentively. In others, a significant minority of pupils spoil the learning opportunities for the whole class. Whilst many pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, a few behave badly. A number of bullying incidents and aggressive and inappropriate behaviour were seen during the inspection.

Aspect	Comment
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Many staff have good relationships with pupils, which contribute appropriately to their personal development, but relationships between pupils and staff are sometimes tense and unproductive, particularly in Year 11. Most pupils get on well but a significant minority sometimes lack awareness of the impact of their actions on others.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance is below the national level with a high level of unauthorised absence. Punctuality is poor.

Less than half of Year 11 pupils were present at morning assembly during the inspection and a very small number were present in a Year 11 class registration period. Sixth form students' attitudes to learning and their personal development are good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is unsatisfactory overall but is satisfactory in the sixth form. In the main school it was unsatisfactory in 1 in 8 lessons, with a higher proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in Years 8 and 11. Just under a fifth of lessons were very good or excellent, half were good or better. Teaching is good in ICT, as a subject, in personal, health and social education (PHSE) and in physical education. It is good in mathematics and science in Years 7 to 9 and in art, and geography in Years 10 and 11. It was very good in citizenship in the small number of lessons observed. Teaching is unsatisfactory in music and design and technology in both key stages, in science in Year 11 and in English from the evidence of pupils' work over time, although teaching in English is currently satisfactory. Many teachers have good subject knowledge and manage some very challenging behaviour well. Excellent teaching is characterised by very good relationships, very good pace and an inclusive style that integrates every member of the class in the learning activity. Poor teaching results when teachers cannot control groups and a significant minority of pupils interrupt others' learning. In many lessons, work does not meet the needs of particular groups of pupils: those with special educational needs, with English as an additional language and the gifted and talented. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Strategies for teaching numeracy skills across the school are satisfactory and for teaching literacy skills are unsatisfactory. Computers are not used enough in subjects and the teaching of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Similar strengths to those outlined above were seen in sixth form teaching but an occasional weakness was the inconsistent practice where teachers from both schools shared teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory. Good clubs and activities are provided in several areas apart from in music. A good PHSE course is provided throughout the school; key social themes such as health and safety and drugs education are routinely covered. Statutory requirements are not met for cross-curricular ICT, aspects of design and technology, music and religious education in Years 10 and 11. Provision for citizenship is uneven at this early stage. Time available for teaching in Years 10 and 11 is below average.

Aspect	Comment
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory. One-to-one specialist teaching is good but a number of other teachers do not have the strategies to enable them to deal effectively with these pupils. There are too few learning assistants and too little is done to monitor pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Unsatisfactory. Where support is provided in the classroom, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Not all pupils at an early stage of learning English are supported and the school is not meeting their needs adequately.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Unsatisfactory. Provision for social and moral development is unsatisfactory but with some strengths. The school's well-structured behaviour code is not applied consistently and does not fully underpin moral and social provision. Opportunities for cultural development are satisfactory. Spiritual development is unsatisfactory. The school does too little to develop pupils' ability to reflect and to provide a spiritual dimension to lessons. A daily act of collective worship is not provided for all pupils.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Unsatisfactorily. The school has a strong ethos of care and support for pupils. Procedures for child protection are good and the school assigns appropriate priority to the safety of pupils. However, risk assessments are not carried out rigorously enough in some areas. Monitoring of behaviour and punctuality is less effective than it should be. Monitoring of academic progress and using the information gathered to guide planning, are unsatisfactory.
How well the school works in partnership with parents.	Satisfactorily. The school has established effective links with parents. The headteacher and staff have worked consistently to improve the relationships between the school and the parent body and the results of the parents' questionnaire indicate that they have met with a good degree of success. The school provides a satisfactory range of information for parents.

Sixth form curricular opportunities are satisfactory overall and meet the needs of most students. Provision for religious education in the sixth form is unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Unsatisfactory. The headteacher sets high standards of performance and behaviour and is fully committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils. Despite this strong leadership, day-to-day management of the school is unsatisfactory. Not all managers share this vision or have the skills to deliver it. Subject leadership is satisfactory overall.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactorily. Governors are supportive of the school in many ways but do not fulfil their statutory duties or monitor the school with enough rigour. They are not fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They rely too much on information provided by senior managers and only partially fulfil their role of critical friend to the school. The Governors' Action Plan group (GAP) lacks the focus needed to address the problems the school faces now.

Aspect	Comment
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. Priorities for the coming year are appropriate but there are weaknesses in delivering them. Senior managers lack the strategic overview required to deliver them and to move the school forward. Monitoring of teaching and learning is not followed up effectively enough.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school makes satisfactory use of its resources but does not use comparative data enough to analyse effectiveness. Expenditure of specific grants is unsatisfactory because the funding for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils for whom English is an additional language is not spent appropriately. Procedures to ensure that the school obtains best value for money are satisfactory.

Staffing is unsatisfactory; deficiencies in several subject areas are having a detrimental effect on standards. Resources for learning and accommodation are adequate. The sixth form is well led and managed.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their sons are making good progress. • The teaching is good. • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions and problems. • The school works closely with parents. • The school's high expectations. • Standards of leadership and management. • The school's help in enabling pupils to become mature and responsible. 	There were no significant areas identified by parents for improvement.

Parents' responses to the questionnaire and the response of the 32 parents at the parents' meeting show a positive view of the school. They are generally happy with the partnership that has been forged. Inspectors agree with the positive points made by parents about the reception the school gives them and the help provided by staff. Inspectors recognise the influence exerted by the headteacher in establishing a positive ethos for the school. Evidence from the inspection does not endorse the other positive points made by parents. Management, teaching and pupils' progress and achievement were found to be unsatisfactory overall.

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM ABBOTSFIELD AND SWAKELEYS SCHOOLS

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

Approximately 50 per cent of pupils in the Year 11 groups of each school move into the sixth form, which has 192 students on roll with 124 in Year 12. There are many more female students, even though the proportion of boys entering the sixth form has increased significantly in recent years. A wide range of subjects is available at A-level. To follow such a course, students need to have gained a minimum GCSE standard of 5 A* to C grades. Vocational courses in business education at AVCE and intermediate GNVQ levels are popular with students. Students may also re-take GCSE mathematics and English. In Year 12 they are required to take up an extracurricular activity, for example paired reading or classroom support with younger pupils. Students are given comprehensive information and advice on which courses they should follow. Their progress is checked in the first term when they can choose another path. Approximately one fifth leave at the end of Year 12; some will have planned to do this and move into employment, others leave having not achieved their targets. The remaining students return to complete the second part of their course or take up more advanced courses. Attainment on entry, from the data available, is judged to be close to the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Standards are broadly average. Students' achievement and the teaching they receive are satisfactory. Students' attitudes are good overall, and very good in Year 13. Their learning is satisfactory, despite too few opportunities for, and consequently underdeveloped skills in, working independently. Leadership is satisfactory and day-to-day management is good, both of which have contributed to the good improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum meets the needs of most students well, but provision of vocational courses is limited. Monitoring of the effectiveness of what is provided is unsatisfactory; liaison between the two contributory schools is ineffective in some subjects, leading to inconsistencies, and this inhibits development. Resources are satisfactory but the well-equipped learning resource centre is closed for part of the lunchtime. Financial management is good. The sixth form provides satisfactory value for money.

Strengths

- Students achieve well in a number of subjects, attaining above average results in English, business studies, ICT, drama, sociology and psychology.
- The sixth form has an ethos that promotes equality of opportunity and the belief that all students are valued and included. The personal support and guidance provided for students are very good. As a result, students' attitudes, values and personal development are good.
- The management team has worked well to bring about improvements, including financial management and the emerging development plan.

What could be improved

- Some unsatisfactory teaching resulting in inadequate learning and progress by students in some subjects.
- The collection and use of data to set targets for students and to guide teachers' planning.
- Management of subjects that use staff from both schools to ensure that provision is consistently good within individual subjects.

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

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comments
Mathematics	Satisfactory. Standards are in line with national averages, and achievement is satisfactory, as a result of teachers' good subject knowledge and awareness of examination requirements. However, too little attention is given to the spread of ability in classes and to challenging appropriately the highest-attaining students. There is too little use of computers in mathematics. Overall, teaching and learning are sound.
Chemistry	Unsatisfactory. Low A-level examination results represent poor achievement for some students. Effective teaching from knowledgeable chemists in Year 12 and in some lessons in Year 13 leads to good learning. Some poor teaching and shortage of time in Year 13 result in some underachievement.
Biology	Good. Results were broadly average in 2002, and in line with students' prior attainment. Effective teaching methods, including challenging questioning, motivate students and encourage active and independent learning. Literacy skills are well developed.
Physics	Unsatisfactory. Some good teaching takes place, but half of the course is planned and taught unsatisfactorily, leading to unsatisfactory learning, underachievement and student disillusionment. A-level results were well below national averages in both 2001 and 2002.
Design and technology	Satisfactory. Results in 2001 were above average, but lower in 2002. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Achievement is good over time. Work is carefully marked which leads to helpful individual target setting. Computers are not used enough to aid design.
Business studies	Good. Results have improved over the past four years and students achieve well. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and students work hard and have positive attitudes.
Economics	Good. Results were below the national average in 2001, but better in 2002. Teaching is good. Students learn and achieve well; they value and enjoy their lessons.
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory. Students gained results which were in line with national averages in 2001 but which improved to above average in 2002. Teaching, learning and achievement are satisfactory. The teachers are committed to developing the subject and students' attitudes are good.
Drama	Good. Standards are good and above average results indicate good achievement over time. Teaching and learning are very good in lessons, but students do not always take on as much responsibility for their own learning as they should.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comments
Geography	Unsatisfactory. In 2001 and 2002, students' results were well below the national average. Current attainment is close to the national average, indicating satisfactory achievement. Teaching, though sound overall, varies in quality and this constrains students' learning in important areas. The management of the subject is not effective, resulting in inconsistent practices.
History	Satisfactory. Results were well below average in 2001, but slightly higher in 2002. Students are now achieving in line with course expectations in Years 12 and 13. Teaching is satisfactory and encourages students to develop appropriate skills. Recent results have not reflected the standards achieved in lessons.
Sociology	Good. Results were well above average in 2001, but close to the national average in 2002. Teaching and learning are good and achievement is satisfactory overall, from varying starting points. Students' attitudes are good and they link the theories they learn to topical issues effectively.
Psychology	Very good. Results were well above average in 2001 and higher in 2002. Students are enthusiastic and they learn and achieve very well. The very good teaching employs a good range of methods. The course makes a very good contribution to students' literacy and to their spiritual and cultural development.
English	Good. Results were well above average in 2001 and similar in 2002. Teaching is good and students learn effectively. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, and they mark work constructively. This, along with students' positive approach, enables them to achieve well.
German	Satisfactory. Small numbers take German, but results have included high grades in 2001 and 2002. There are no Year 13 students. Standards in Year 12 are below course expectation, but students' learning and achievement are satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory.

Work was sampled in other subjects. The quality of teaching and learning was good in advanced level art, vocational business studies, physical education and media studies, and very good in business (GNVQ Intermediate). Lessons were well planned to meet the needs of the students and provide interesting activities. As a result, students worked hard and showed positive attitudes. They are achieving well on these courses. Not enough religious education is offered to comply with statutory requirements.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Students value the support and guidance provided throughout Years 12 and 13. They receive very good advice on courses well before entering the sixth form. Their welfare is carefully monitored and they are well known to staff, particularly to the sixth form management team. Those who fall behind, whether as a result of absence or finding the work hard, are helped to catch up. Information from assessment is being used increasingly to predict examination grades, but procedures for monitoring students' academic progress are applied inconsistently across subjects. Students are well informed about career options and opportunities in higher education.

Aspect	Comment
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The sixth form is well led on a day-to-day basis by the management team. The headteachers, coordination committee and governors are soundly planning the future development of the centre. Liaison between teachers from the two feeder schools is inconsistent and results, in some subjects, in unsatisfactory subject planning and choice of teaching methods. Cooperation has improved overall since the last inspection, and the finances of the sixth form are now efficiently managed. The centre functions as a strong social unit where all students are valued. Effective, consistent systems for monitoring the work of the centre have still to be adopted. Further development is restricted by a lack of systems for collecting and analysing information about attainment on entry, target setting or the attainment of students, including those from different ethnic groups, so that planning can be more closely related to students' needs.

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"> • They are well taught and challenged and treated as responsible young adults • The choice of subjects suits their talents and aspirations • They enjoy attending and would recommend it to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities and enrichments

Students are very positive about the sixth form. When consulted during the inspection, they were appreciative of the advice, support and guidance provided. The inspection team endorsed their views of the strengths of the sixth form. They felt that though a good range of AS and A2 courses is offered, the choice of vocational courses is limited. Inspectors agreed that the range of enrichment activities varies across subjects but is unsatisfactory overall. During subject interviews, students showed an awareness of shortcomings in some subjects. They recognised where the work failed to challenge them and, as a consequence, they were less enthusiastic about their learning in those subjects. Inspectors agreed with students that their social area is unsatisfactory, but felt that there is adequate space for private study and that the learning resource centre is under used.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' and students' achievements

1. The standards pupils reach are below national averages overall and well below average by the time they leave the main school. These judgements were broadly reflected in the work seen during the inspection, in national tests and assessments at the end of Year 9 and in the GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11.
2. Pupils enter the school with attainment that is slightly lower than the national average and have below average literacy skills. As they move through to Year 9, they make good progress and achieve well in mathematics and science but work in pupils' books indicated that their achievement in English is unsatisfactory. By the end of Year 11, standards are below average in most subjects and well below in science, history and modern foreign languages, which represents unsatisfactory achievement overall.
3. Results of tests and assessments at the age of 14 in 2002 varied considerably between subjects and in some cases are not the same as current standards. Results in science in 2002 were below average and in English and mathematics they were in line with national averages. This represented a considerable improvement in English, where the results in 2001 were very low in comparison to national averages and improvement in mathematics and, to a lesser extent, science. Standards in teacher assessments for ICT, which were well below national averages in 2001, improved to in line with national averages in 2002; standards in art were slightly below the national average in 2002 and in music they were below average. In geography, history and modern foreign languages, standards were well below national averages. Assessments of design and technology, estimated by teachers to be well above the national average and physical education estimated as above national averages, were judged by inspectors to be inaccurate. Work seen indicates that attainment in design and technology by the end of Year 9 is below the national average and that it is average in physical education.
4. Work seen in lessons and in books indicated that standards in mathematics and science are average in the current Year 9 and show good progress and achievement. In English, however, standards are now below average and represent unsatisfactory progress and achievement. In art and physical education, standards are in line with national expectations, as they are in geography, which is better than the teacher assessments of 2002 and results from better teaching and planning of work. In other subjects, standards are below expectation or occasionally well below, as in history.
5. Over the past five years, the proportion of boys gaining five A*-C passes has remained well below average in comparison with all schools nationally but the proportion of boys gaining five A*-G passes has risen from well below average in 1998 to above average in 2002. The overall trend of improvement over the five years up to 2002 was above the national trend, indicating that a greater proportion of candidates has achieved at least a grade G, year on year. In some subjects, for example geography, the small number of pupils who choose them as a GCSE option have done well. Achievement at GCSE, however, is well below expectation for most boys at the school. Current work broadly reflects the school's GCSE performance in 2002, indicating that pupils' attainment by the end of Year 11 is well below the standards expected nationally. Exceptions to this are in art, geography and physical education, where attainment is in line with expectations.
6. Pupils' achieve satisfactorily in a number of subjects and well in religious education, ICT and physical education in Years 7 to 9. Progress in lessons seen was satisfactory in history and modern foreign languages, but achievement over time in these subjects, and in music, is

unsatisfactory. In Years 10 and 11, pupils achieve well in geography but their achievement is unsatisfactory in English, science, design and technology and music. In history and modern foreign languages, pupils are currently progressing satisfactorily in lessons but their achievement over time is unsatisfactory, largely because of disruptions in teaching in French and some inconsistencies in practice between teachers in history. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs, with English as an additional language and the gifted and talented is unsatisfactory at both key stages, as they often do not work at a pace commensurate with their abilities.

7. The targets set for 2002 for Year 9 were too low. They were well below the national expectation and results exceeded them in all three core subjects. The targets for 2003 have been set at a lower level. At GCSE, the school fell short of its target for five A* - C passes by nine per cent and achieved just above its targets for five A*-G passes. It was eight points down on its target for the average points score.
8. In Years 7 to 11, standards of speaking and listening are below average and reading and writing skills are well below average. Literacy was a key issue for development in the 2000 report, which has not been adequately addressed across the school as a whole. Pupils' numeracy standards are average.

Sixth form

9. The attainment of sixth form students is in line with national averages. In 2001, the school's performance at A-level was broadly in line overall with that in other maintained schools and in all post-16 providers. Students' attainment was well above average in English literature, drama, psychology and sociology. It was above average in design and technology and in line with national averages in ICT, mathematics, business studies and biology. It was below average in economics, well below in geography, physics and history and very low in chemistry. In some subjects, numbers entered were too small for comparisons to be made with national averages. Results, however, included the higher grades. For example, in German in 2001, half of the candidates gained A or B grades and the remainder C or D grades.
10. Results were generally similar in the current year, 2002. No national data is available for comparison, but indications are that results were better in German, ICT, economics, business studies, psychology and history. They remained the same in biology, geography, physics, and chemistry and were lower in design and technology, and in sociology, though still average. No students of mathematics from the AS course in 2001 continued with the subject to A2-level.
11. Standards in work seen generally reflect the examination results, with the exception of physics, where standards are currently below average, not well below, and geography and history, where current attainment is higher than both the 2001 and 2002 results. Students make good progress and achieve well in a number of subjects and particularly in English, business studies, economics, drama and psychology. This results from good or very good teaching, characterised by high expectations of students, good lesson planning and teachers' secure subject knowledge. Inspectors saw work of good quality in subjects such as business studies, drama, sociology, psychology and English. Students achieve less well and standards are lower in chemistry, physics and geography, and this is mainly because of inconsistencies in the teaching of the subject and, in the case of chemistry, because students receive only four hours teaching time in Year 13. Students with special educational needs, gifted and talented students and those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress.

PUPILS' AND STUDENTS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

12. Many pupils have positive attitudes to their school and many parents are pleased that their children like school. However, in a significant minority of classes, pupils showed unsatisfactory and occasionally, poor attitudes to their work.
13. Involvement in out-of-class activities is satisfactory, especially in sporting opportunities, which are keenly followed by many pupils. In lessons too, when teaching is good and pupils are engaged in interesting tasks and their behaviour is well managed, they show positive involvement and enjoy their work. In a Year 10 food technology class, pupils worked well on their bread making and even asked if they could continue through the break period. Such positive attitudes were seen in just over half the lessons observed. In a number of lessons, however, a positive climate for learning is not being established, pupils show little regard for the accepted codes of behaviour encouraged in the school and, as a result, their learning is unsatisfactory. Many pupils come with a sincere wish to learn and achieve well in their time in the school but are prevented from doing as well as they would like in lessons which are disrupted by inattentive and unsatisfactory behaviour.
14. Attitudes are less positive than at the time of the last inspection when they were found to be satisfactory or better in nine out of ten lessons. During this inspection, attitudes were judged to be less than satisfactory in around 15 per cent of lessons; the proportion was more than double that figure in Year 11 lessons. The school has done much to put in place procedures to address the pastoral needs of pupils, particularly those who, through displays of misbehaviour or poor attendance, express their vulnerability. Such support contributes to the pupils' inclusion. However, not every teacher is skilled enough in implementing these procedures. Many of these pupils are not making enough progress in class because work is not being adapted to meet their needs and teaching strategies do not adequately match their style of learning.
15. Behaviour in classes and around the school is unsatisfactory. During the inspection, a number of incidents of bullying, aggressive and inappropriate behaviour were seen, around the school, at lunchtime and at break. For example, sparring and silly behaviour was observed, which deteriorated into a serious fight that drew a crowd of onlookers eager to spur on each party. The behaviour code of the school is clear and aggressive behaviour or abusive language to a member of staff does result in exclusion. In the past school year there were 71 fixed period and 2 permanent exclusions. The number of exclusions has been decreasing in recent years and this downward trend was also noted at the time of the last report. In classes where behaviour was satisfactory or better, pupils listened attentively to the teacher and to each other in class discussions, worked sensibly, either independently or in small groups and this supported their learning. However, in classes where behaviour was not well managed, pupils were often disrespectful towards the teacher, argued when instructions were given and showed a persistent lack of willingness to settle to their work. Although a variety of behaviour management strategies and sanctions for poor behaviour are employed with some classes, a significant minority of pupils refuse to comply and the learning opportunities for the whole class are spoilt. In a Year 8 PHSE class, for example, a minority of pupils refused every effort made by the teacher to engage them in the lesson and the learning of the whole class was unsatisfactory because of this.
16. The personal development and relationships of pupils are satisfactory. There is a school forum where pupils from all year groups are able to contribute their ideas on a variety of topics relating to the school but this has not met recently. Sound personal development happens through participation in school events and charity initiatives. The PHSE programme has many elements that contribute to the sound promotion of self-awareness and helps pupils understand the feelings of others. Examples of good relationships were seen between some staff and pupils around the school and in some classes, where the good relationships made a positive

contribution to the productive learning atmosphere in the lesson. For example in a Year 7 science lesson, where the pupils and teacher shared a lively game based on food chains in nature, pupils made good learning gains. In food technology lessons, team leaders for kitchens directed the work well and took clear responsibility for small groups. However, in a few classes, pupils showed little respect for their teacher or fellow pupils, were rude and uncooperative and did not listen to what was said. Relationships between teachers and pupils became tense and unproductive. On a number of occasions, a significant minority of pupils showed an unsatisfactory awareness of the impact of their actions on others. When at leisure, racist and homophobic remarks were made by pupils who showed no concern for the feelings of the recipient of these remarks.

17. Attendance is below the national average and is judged unsatisfactory. Unauthorised absence, although decreasing gradually, is higher than that seen nationally. The school works very hard to try to increase levels of attendance but meets with only limited success, particularly in Year 11 where attendance continues to be below 90 per cent. The low levels of attendance in Year 11 were noted in the previous report. The school seeks to dissuade parents from taking holidays in term time, but is often unsuccessful. A very caring approach is taken to ensuring that pupils who have left are not removed from the register until it is certain that they are located in another school. Both of these factors have the effect of inflating the unauthorised absence figures. Punctuality is unsatisfactory. Although some journeys to school may be affected by transport problems on particular bus routes, nevertheless a significant number of pupils arrive after the official start of the day. Accurate records are kept of late arrivals and on one morning during the inspection, 58 pupils were recorded as late. Punctuality to lessons is also unsatisfactory; many teachers do not take a register at the start of lessons. In one Year 11 registration period observed during the inspection, only three pupils were present in their class at the start of registration.

Sixth form

18. Students' attitudes to the school and their work are good. In the 54 lessons observed, attitudes were almost always good and often very good. In no lessons were they unsatisfactory. There were many examples of good student attitudes, such as happy and productive work in mathematics, very good group cooperation in biology, good relationships with tutors, very good relationships in some chemistry lessons, and good attitudes in physics, even where the teaching was unsatisfactory.
19. Students' personal development is good and flows strongly from the ethos set by the sixth form senior managers. Relationships observed in the vast majority of cases were good or very good, both between students and between students and teachers. Students feel well supported by tutors and teachers. The atmosphere of inclusion is strong and cooperation between individuals and all groups in the school community is good. Racial harmony was a good feature of the groups containing students from different ethnic backgrounds. Where students were critical of some aspects of teaching, or of variations in teaching quality, their comments were moderately expressed, reflected a mature attitude and were, in general, accurate. Students' views of the sixth form were very positive overall. In some cases where they were less so, for example in chemistry, their comments were perceptive.
20. The development of personal and learning skills was sound overall, and stronger in Year 13 than in Year 12. Various good examples were noted of students responding well to very challenging work because of their very positive attitudes. These included subjects such as biology and psychology, where students explicitly mentioned how they valued developing their skills in independent work. Such attitudes were evident in high quality presentations and essays. In a few cases, for example in mathematics, geography, physics and chemistry, some teaching hampered student development because there was not enough challenge and opportunity for

independent work. As a result, some students lost concentration and initiative and were too dependent on the teacher. This was also the case in some otherwise satisfactory lessons, for example in English. Some students in Year 12 lack confidence and have had difficulties in making the transition from GCSE. Some others lack discussion skills. In some instances where students lacked practical skills, for example in ICT, this resulted in lower productivity than was desirable.

21. Attendance is satisfactory and well monitored on an individual basis. Records are kept using registers and signing-in sheets, and all subject teachers keep class records. Students are given a great deal of leeway for home study in 'verified periods', which they welcome, since it allows them the freedom to organise extended work at home. Tutors keep oversight of attendance and home study and can remove the privilege if it is not serving the interests of learning or if the individual's attendance falls below 85 per cent. Students are generally punctual, but the start of some lessons was delayed by late arrivals. Despite some variation between tutors and occasional weak record keeping, the system works well for most students and they warrant the trust given to them.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS AND STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22. Teaching in Years 7 to 11 is unsatisfactory. The overall proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has remained about the same as it was for the previous inspection with one in eight lessons graded less than satisfactory. However, this proportion is much higher in some year groups, for example, Year 11, where teaching in over a quarter of lessons seen was judged to be less than satisfactory or Year 8, where the proportion was a fifth. Less than a fifth of lessons were graded very good or better with a few excellent lessons. About half of lessons seen were graded good or better. The quality of learning broadly matches the quality of teaching. The behaviour of a significant minority of pupils adversely affects the learning of the majority throughout the school.
23. Teaching is good in mathematics and science in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in English. It is satisfactory in mathematics in Years 10 and 11 and unsatisfactory in science, where although the teaching in Year 10 is good, the teaching in Year 11 is poor. In English, although teaching is currently satisfactory, there is evidence of unsatisfactory teaching in the work completed over time, resulting in unsatisfactory learning because pupils' approach to their work lacks firm foundations. Teaching is good across the school in the specialist teaching of ICT, in physical education and in PHSE. It is unsatisfactory in design and technology and music. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is satisfactory in art, geography, history, French and religious education. In Years 10 and 11, teaching was very good in citizenship in the small number of lessons observed, it is good in art and geography and satisfactory in history and French. There were instances of very good teaching in English, mathematics, science, ICT, food technology, physical education, and PHSE.
24. Excellent lessons, which were seen in PHSE, were characterised by very good relationships between pupils and teachers, very good pace and an inclusive style that involved and included every member of the class in the learning activity. As a result of clear learning objectives in these lessons, very good planning and class management, there were excellent outcomes and progress, with pupils reaching a high level of understanding of, for example, the British voting system. In physical education, where the teaching is almost uniformly good, pupils behave well almost without exception; every boy is included in activities and wants to do well. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to model the work required and to demonstrate particular skills. Planning is particularly good and guarantees good, progressive learning, where pupils develop skills and increase their understanding well. In several science lessons, particularly in Year 9, very good relationships, high expectations and good preparation, ensured that pupils made good progress in understanding, for example, the concept of how plants make food.

25. Poor teaching was observed in English, in PHSE and in science and unsatisfactory teaching was observed in several subjects. Where teaching was poor, it was because teachers could not control their groups; a significant number of pupils interrupted throughout, demanding attention and disrupting the learning of others. In a Year 11 science lesson on the Haber process, the lesson was not related to pupils' prior learning and understanding. No reference was made to what had been covered previously to help pupils recall what they already knew. The lesson was dominated by teacher talk with no questioning of pupils to establish what it was they were learning. Despite the presence of a senior manager at the back of the class, at no point in the lesson was the full attention of every pupil engaged and chatter continued in the background. As a result, progress in the lesson was poor and attainment was very low in relation to national expectations for this stage of the course.
26. There is very little teaching of literacy in subjects other than English. Although pupils' writing standards are well below average, the National Literacy Strategy is not followed consistently in English lessons or in other subjects. In some subjects, such as French, where pupils sometimes use their listening, speaking and writing skills effectively in combination, individual teachers do focus on activities, which help to develop literacy skills. In music, in Years 10 and 11 however, pupils do not write anything because they do not have exercise, manuscript or note books, which prevents them from improving their writing skills. In mathematics, pupils' writing skills are marred by incorrect spellings and pupils in a Year 10 lesson had difficulty understanding the word "divisible" because it had not been properly explained to them.
27. Pupils' number skills are regularly reinforced in mathematics lessons but there has been no recent whole school training for the promotion of numeracy skills and there is no whole school policy. Overall, teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils to experience the use of dimensions of length and temperature, graphs and charts.
28. Planning is variable from one subject to another but is satisfactory overall. In ICT, careful structuring of programmes of work and individual lessons enables students of all ability levels to develop knowledge and understanding effectively. In French, planning between teachers is consistent and ensures that pupils progress in a steady manner. In mathematics, lesson planning is always full but does not always anticipate the resources required to enhance learning, such as the provision of triangular prisms for a lesson on calculating their surface areas. In design and technology, in a significant proportion of the unsatisfactory lessons seen, teachers' planning lacked detail and as a result, pupils' work was not sufficiently structured to enable them to learn. In one design and technology lesson in Year 7, the teacher had not planned the lesson adequately and began without the required materials. As a result, pupils wasted a considerable amount of time waiting for them to be provided. In music, the mid-term and long-term plans fail to address the full requirements of the National Curriculum and so large chunks of musical knowledge are left out; individual lesson plans fail to cater for all pupils' needs.
29. Many teachers have good subject knowledge. In a science lesson on the specialised function of cells, for example, a video camera was used to very good effect to show different plant cells. Such work represented excellent use of ICT. Most teachers use an appropriate range of teaching and learning approaches. Group work is used successfully in some English lessons, resulting in good learning for all pupils. In subjects such as geography, teachers do not have a wide enough range of strategies to cater for pupils' different learning and thinking styles. As a result, some pupils have poor attitudes to work that slow the pace for others. Relationships between most of the pupils and staff are good. Many teachers take time with pupils to help them in their work and manage some very challenging behaviour well. Support staff also provide a valuable contribution in this area.
30. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. There are subject areas where teachers are well aware of pupils' individual needs and prepare the work accordingly. In physical education, for example, group work is used well as a basis for setting tasks that meet

the individual needs of pupils so that all pupils are able to progress and see their next target. In art, pupils with special educational needs particularly benefit from the one-to-one intervention of the teacher. A number of teachers, however, are not aware of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and in many subjects, these pupils do not learn satisfactorily. As a result of this lack of knowledge, few teachers use specific strategies to help pupils to maintain their concentration and to remain on task. Learning support assistants are not given enough guidance to ensure that they can help when pupils do not understand what it is they are supposed to do. In a Year 8 English lesson, the learning assistant pointed to the correct place in the text after a section of 'The Demon Headmaster' had been read aloud, but did not attempt to explain to the pupils what was going on. Although the teacher reclarified the lesson objectives with the class half way through the lesson, nothing was written down which meant that many pupils remained unclear about what it was they were supposed to do. Some teachers manage pupils who have considerable behavioural difficulties well, but in many lessons, the behaviour of a significant minority of such pupils is adversely affecting the learning of the majority of pupils.

31. Very little has been done to identify the gifted and talented in the school and in many subjects their particular needs are not addressed. Lists were provided during the course of the inspection, which had been drawn up by subject leaders, but some subjects, such as mathematics and modern languages, have no specific strategy for pupils who are gifted and talented with the result that able pupils are not identified and sufficiently challenged in the classroom. In science, teachers are not given enough guidance in schemes of work to guide teaching and learning for the extremes of ability in the school.
32. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is unsatisfactory overall. The day-to-day classroom support is satisfactory. Pupils are assessed and reviewed annually and the complete register of those at the various early stages of learning English is made available to all teachers. However, no routine records are kept of their achievement and progress in lessons. A small number of pupils, assessed as having the greatest need, receive individual support. A Year 10 pupil, for example, made satisfactory progress consistent with the rest of his group in an experiment on insulation and heat transfer with the encouragement of the specialist support teacher. In just under half of the lessons where pupils at an early stage of learning English were identified, their progress and the quality of their learning were satisfactory. In more than half, covering a range of eight subjects, their learning and progress gave cause for concern; teachers did not have clear strategies for providing effective support. This is despite a commitment in the current school development plan for staff to engage in raising the self-esteem of this relatively large group of pupils.

Sixth form

33. Sixth form teaching is satisfactory overall. It was at least satisfactory in more than nine out of every ten lessons. Just over half of the teaching was good, and nearly three lessons in ten were very good or excellent. Teaching was very good in drama and psychology, and good in biology, business studies, economics, English and sociology. It was satisfactory in the remainder, except for chemistry and physics, where some poor teaching led to an unsatisfactory picture. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, when no excellent teaching was reported.
34. Students' conduct is managed at least satisfactorily in all lessons, and usually well or very well. Teachers' good relationships with students were a common feature and a strong motivating factor in many lessons. This was particularly true in drama, where the teacher's supportive manner encouraged students to be creative with confidence, for example when female students wrote monologues from a feminist standpoint. The friendly ethos of the lesson enabled students to accept the teacher's constructive criticism as a positive aid to their development. In an intermediate GNVQ business studies lesson, the good relationships helped students to achieve very well. Support was generally in the form of questions to elicit deeper thought and

understanding about motivational theories in the workplace. Knowledge of each student's needs was thorough and assistance was laced with good humour, which increased students' confidence and willingness to learn. Carefully targeted one-to-one support and rigorous questioning were regular features of the more successful teaching. In the small number of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory or poor, students were inadequately challenged or did not understand the material, a learning method was inappropriate or the lesson's objective was not achieved.

35. Students' learning is satisfactory overall. In the better lessons, teachers plan very thoroughly and make very good use of time. The inclusive nature of the sixth form means that all students are usually well catered for in teachers' planning. Students from ethnic minority backgrounds benefit, along with all students, from the individual assistance which teachers provide. Students work willingly, and, where teachers' planning includes careful time allocations, they maintain a good pace of work. In general, though, students lack the skills and confidence to work independently, preferring to respond to the guidance of the teachers and to conform to the pace of work set by teachers. Where teachers planned effectively and rigorously challenged students, there were examples of very good learning by students over the whole range of attainment, for example in biology and psychology. Gifted and talented students made very good use of opportunities to work independently in these lessons.
36. The teaching of key skills is satisfactory overall, but inconsistent across subjects. Students' presentation of research results is effective in biology, and regularly carried out with the use of ICT. Key skills are developed well in business studies, both in lessons and in homework. Good group discussions in psychology enabled students to develop and express their views articulately. Opportunities for research and the selection and summarising of evidence made a good contribution to students' development of literacy skills. In physics, the development of key skills is an area for improvement; students usually present their work in note form with little explanation. Opportunities for using computers and developing writing skills in physics are not identified in a significant proportion of the planning. In sociology, students do not refine their key skills, for example by amplifying written work following feedback on assignments. This means that their work is not completed in a form appropriate for efficient revision.
37. Monitoring of teaching is unsatisfactory. As a result, the qualities seen in the most effective teaching are not shared sufficiently. Where teachers from both contributory schools teach the same subject, teaching styles are, in general, inadequately coordinated. Information from assessment is not systematically used to set targets for students, and some students are given different target grades by teachers in the same subject. As a result, teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are inconsistent and often not high enough. This inconsistency of approach means that in the substantial amount of teaching that was satisfactory overall, teaching had very varied strengths and weaknesses. In design and technology, a lesson was well planned and achieved a good pace, but the teacher dominated discussion excessively. In a geography lesson, despite good resources and clear objectives, the pace was too slow, which resulted in students being inadequately challenged. In English literature, the teacher's very good knowledge of a Jacobean drama and carefully phrased questions, in a lesson that was well-structured and where time was carefully apportioned, only received short answers from the group, because expectations were not communicated strongly enough to the students.

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

38. The quality and range of learning opportunities are unsatisfactory at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Statutory requirements with regard to ICT across the curriculum, music, aspects of the design and technology syllabus and religious education in Years 10 and 11 are not met. Citizenship does not yet fulfil all the requirements as the course is still being developed. The promotion of pupils' numeracy skills is satisfactory but not enough has been done to improve pupils' literacy

skills across the school. A number of pupils do not have equal access to the curriculum because the needs of particular groups of pupils such as those with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and the gifted and talented, are not always met.

39. The school operates a five-period day with the exception of Tuesday, when there are four periods. As a result, although the teaching time in Years 7 to 9 is broadly in line with recommendations, the teaching time in Years 10 and 11 is less than that normally found in other schools. This has an adverse impact on provision in several subjects, for example in modern foreign languages that are taught in eight per cent of the teaching time per week whereas the recommended allocation is ten per cent. Over the two key stages this means that pupils are receiving far less time than their counterparts in other schools and is one of the reasons why standards in French are so low.
40. In Years 7 to 9, all National Curriculum subjects are offered and most programmes of study, in terms of delivery of specific subjects, have satisfactory breadth and balance. The Key Stage 3 literacy strategy has been introduced through a literacy hour, and so additional time is given to English. This is not yet having sufficient impact on the learning and has not been incorporated into the provision in other subjects. In geography, for example, although the development of literacy is noted in the development plan, little was seen in lessons to show that these objectives are being put into practice. As a result, provision for literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The Key Stage 3 strategy has yet to be introduced fully in mathematics and science, although on the whole, the science curriculum is well planned and mathematics has additional time, during time allocated for music, to deliver the numeracy requirements in Year 7. The use of ICT is good in English and science. However, in many other subjects such as mathematics, history and music, provision is inadequate and statutory requirements are not being met.
41. In Years 10 and 11, the time allocated is broadly in line with recommendations although it is low in French and art. The requirement of the Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus for religious education is not met. The popular motor vehicle maintenance course has ceased despite excellent in-school facilities. In addition to the vocational course in building construction run in the school, other vocational opportunities are provided through links with a local college.
42. The school has carried out an audit to identify where the existing curriculum can contribute to the delivery of citizenship and has begun to identify those areas where it is already happening. These incidental contributions are not highlighted within departmental schemes of work, and specific learning objectives have not been identified. As a result, current provision for citizenship is unsatisfactory at both key stages.
43. Schemes of work vary considerably across departments. In science, curriculum planning is good, with helpful schemes of work being rewritten, backed up by detailed lesson plans; references are made to the use of ICT, and structured, demanding homeworks are included as part of the planning. In English, the scheme of work is too detailed to be of help to teachers who are working under considerable pressure and the handbook does little to alleviate the problems since it requires revision. In mathematics and in several other curriculum areas, schemes of work are slow in being developed. In design and technology; the scheme of work is inadequate and is not sufficiently focused on design related activities. In music, documentation for the subject is very poor. The scheme of work lacks detail and is unsatisfactory as an aid to planning successful lessons. Pupils do not make enough musical progress during lessons and over time because there is no systematic planning to cover all areas of the National Curriculum.
44. Provision for PHSE is good. A commercially-produced scheme provides a sound basis for the curriculum. This has been supplemented by other resources such as The Real Game, used in Year 8, and a good range of video and other supporting materials. Visiting speakers, such as the police, enrich the programme and ICT is being used increasingly and appropriately. Teachers'

and pupils' views are sought in evaluation of the course. This has resulted, for example, in extension of the provision for sex and relationships education. Other key social themes, such as health and safety and drugs education, are routinely covered. The overall management and coordination of the programme are good. In the lessons seen, teaching was good and sometimes excellent. The quality of pupils' learning matched the quality of teaching. However, some poor teaching was seen in PHSE, pointing to a need to monitor the overall quality of teaching more carefully.

45. With the exception of music, where there are very few opportunities, extra curricular activities in most subject areas are good. Pupils are taken to France on day trips, there is a variety of sporting activities and the lunchtime information technology club is very well attended. The recently formed history club enables all pupils, including the more able, to develop their interest in history and there are opportunities for organised visits to galleries and museums in art and performances in drama. Many subjects provide revision classes for GCSE and there is a Saturday catering course at the local college. Sixth form students help with a variety of activities including subject support, paired reading and sports coaching. In geography, however, although it was identified in the previous report, there continues to be no fieldwork in Years 7 to 9, which does not meet statutory regulations.
46. Careers education is satisfactory. Knowledge and skills are built up appropriately within the PHSE programme. For example, pupils are helped to develop curricula vitae, personal profiles and letters of application to an employer. Careers education is focused on Years 9, 10 and 11, although some preparatory work is done in Year 8. Pupils have the opportunity of specialist advice from the local education authority's careers service in interviews. Placements for work experience for all Year 10 pupils are organised by the pupils, and the school, with the assistance of the local authority's careers service and their database of employers. In a questionnaire circulated following their work experience, 96 per cent of Year 11 pupils indicated that it was a positive experience. Some departments have external links. For example, physical education has links with an outdoor activity unit that helps with placements of some pupils. The careers library provides a satisfactory source of information for pupils but is not accessible after school unless an appointment is made. This resource is well supported by network programs such as Kudos and Key Clips. Strong links have developed between the school and the Connexions Service. The school has provided a good base for the adviser, which is shared with the local education authority's behavioural support team. Pupils with special educational needs have extra support from the adviser on career prospects. He attends review meetings and, in some cases, together with the school, arranges for Year 10 and Year 11 pupils to follow an alternative curriculum comprising four vocational courses and extended work experience.
47. Satisfactory links have been developed with a number of primary feeder schools. The head of Year 7 attaches a high priority to visiting and maintaining productive links with the feeder schools. Pupils are well prepared for their arrival at school and there is an effective transfer of information between primary and secondary schools to help support pupils as they settle into their new school. A number of pupils attend the local college for vocational courses, and this provides an important opportunity to extend their learning and develop more practical skills.
48. Pupils are provided with satisfactory opportunities for social development in many lessons, with good opportunities for group and pair work in some subjects. Extracurricular provision also contributes well to the social development of pupils. The well-structured behaviour code clearly identifies right and wrong. However, this code and the good monitoring procedures supporting it, are less effective than they should be in promoting good social and moral development in pupils, because of the lack of consistency in their application. Many staff provide good role models treating pupils with respect and consideration. The pupil office is a good feature of the school in this respect and staff there have a calm and considerate attitude towards all pupils, treating their problems and requests with kindness and courtesy. Some pupils are clear on the standards of behaviour expected of them and how they should treat other

people. A significant minority of pupils, however, have challenging behaviour and their breaches of the accepted code of behaviour are not always treated in the same way. Pupils are very aware of the variations in approach to unsatisfactory behaviour and whilst some exploit it, others perceive a level of unfairness. This diminishes the value and impact of the behaviour code. The school's promotion of social and moral development is unsatisfactory overall.

49. Overall, provision for cultural development is satisfactory. The school values all pupils and facilitates meetings for groups of pupils, such as the Moslem prayer group, which convenes daily and promotes and celebrates cultural diversity. In physical education and food technology, there were good examples of consideration of other cultural traditions and, in mathematics, Maori stitches were used as an example of a particular pattern. In religious education, there is appropriate recognition of the richness of other faiths. Racial incidents do occur in the school. An accurate record is kept of reported incidents but the clear message the school conveys of recognising and valuing all groups within the school community is not yet followed as well as the school would wish by a minority of pupils. There is a sound focus on the appreciation of western culture, especially through art and music, and visiting artists are well used to promote this development.
50. Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory. The school acknowledge that it does not meet fully the legal requirements for a daily act of worship although assemblies do take place on a regular basis. Within lessons there were no planned moments of deep reflection. In PHSE, religious education, geography and history, pupils have some opportunities to reflect on their own and other people's lives but these opportunities are not well developed or used effectively to enrich and foster deeper insight in pupils. Without awe-inspiring moments in lessons and assemblies, or discussions of what is remarkable and special in life, other than in religious education, pupils are not well placed to reflect deeply on their own experiences and inner feelings.

Sixth form

51. The overall quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory. The school currently offers seventeen A-levels covering a good range of subjects and students have access to other A-levels, such as law, through links with a local college of further education. Mathematics is offered at AS-level, but currently there is no Year 13 course. Opportunities are available to resit GCSE English and mathematics. The school also provides vocational courses in business studies at intermediate and advanced levels. Year 11 students not fully catered for by the sixth form curriculum follow vocational courses in hairdressing, catering, plumbing or motor vehicle studies at the local college of further education, or take up employment opportunities, often provided by the proximity of Heathrow airport.
52. Examples of very good planning of courses at departmental level were seen, for example in drama and psychology, and good schemes and systems were noted in sociology, business studies, biology and ICT. Some weaknesses in planning were apparent in physics and geography. Students have access to a well-planned course in PHSE. Planning for religious education provides for a one-day conference on aspects of the holocaust, but this does not meet statutory requirements and is therefore unsatisfactory.
53. Overall, key skills are developed satisfactorily and in a variety of ways. Eighty Year 12 students follow an ICT course. Many subjects use computers as part of their work but less use is made of these as a learning aid in mathematics and drama. Communication skills are supplemented through the personal development programme. This arrangement was working satisfactorily in the majority of areas, with strengths in psychology, English, business studies and biology and weaknesses in physics and geography. Most subjects make some contribution to the development of numeracy skills, in particular mathematics, physics and business studies.

54. Courses are planned for Year 12 so that no student has too much private study time. They have access to the learning resource area to work at these times, as well as the sixth form common room and other rooms nearby if they are empty. In Year 13, students can have permission to study at home for specified periods. Students from all types of sixth form courses felt that they had a lot of work to do and no-one thought that he or she had too much free time.
55. All Year 12 students undertake a worthwhile extracurricular activity. They choose from charity work, subject support or paired reading in the lower school, or sports coaching, at school or for local clubs. In addition there are opportunities to take part in a Young Enterprise scheme. Year 13 provides the executive members of the school council and students have the opportunity to participate in the UK Youth Parliament. Enrichment programmes within subject areas vary, but there are satisfactory opportunities to attend lectures and to join trips abroad, although costs prevent some students from participating.
56. The overall curriculum and development planning is undertaken jointly to meet the needs of the students of both feeder schools. Weaknesses remain in the planning for several subjects due to the shared responsibility for subjects and the resulting unclear accountability.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

57. Procedures for child protection are good. The school pays due attention to the care, welfare and safety of pupils. Good procedures for monitoring all aspects of behaviour, attendance and personal development are less effective than they should be because not all staff are implementing them. Overall monitoring of academic progress, using the information gathered to guide planning, is unsatisfactory.
58. A good number of staff are trained in first aid, and members of the pupil office administrative staff supervise pupils who are unwell, efficiently and kindly. Safe practice is generally promoted well in lessons. In physical education, for example, pupils are aware of the vulnerability of bare feet when returning equipment to a small storage area. However, in design and technology, risk assessments are not carried out rigorously enough to ensure health and safety standards in workshops. Some health and safety concerns in areas such as design and technology and science laboratories were reported to the school during the inspection.
59. Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development are satisfactory overall. Tutors and heads of year know the pupils in their care well and keep notes of important aspects of their personal development. Especially supportive is the arrangement whereby year heads move with their year groups from Years 8 to 11 and build up their relationships and knowledge about the pupils in their care. The head of Year 7 has a network of supportive links with local primary schools and coordinates effectively the smooth transition of new pupils into Year 7. The PHSE programme is suitably structured and covers a number of important subjects valuable to promoting the personal development of pupils.
60. Three members of the senior management team have responsibility for overseeing the school's pastoral care programme and the implementation of its educational inclusion policy. The school is clear about its obligation to ensure the educational inclusion of all its pupils. It is conscious of the need for pupils to feel safe. Not all pupils however, are confident that procedures to address incidents of bullying, including verbal abuse and racist remarks, are implemented immediately. Instances were seen during the inspection of pupils reporting incidents to teachers, which were not dealt with. Tutors have prepared personal development plans for all pupils and targets, which are reviewed at intervals, have been set to help pupils to focus on their study skills and behaviour. The local behaviour support team provides counselling and anger management programmes for more persistent offenders. In extreme cases, pupils are excluded. While the short-term exclusion rate is high, there have been no permanent exclusions for some time because the school puts in place planned return-to-school procedures including meetings

with parents/carers, home school agreements and contact books, and behaviour contracts. Sometimes an alternative curriculum with extended work experience is offered. The carers and social workers of fostered pupils work closely with the school and these pupils benefit from the pupil education plans that are prepared and reviewed regularly. Pupils new to the school, including refugee pupils, are made to feel welcome and have regular reviews while they settle in. A home-school liaison person appropriately supports pupils experiencing difficulties at home, or whose attendance is poor.

61. Poor behaviour is recorded and heads of year monitor carefully the behaviour within their year groups. The code of behaviour is very clear and well known within the school. Sanctions and rewards are clear; merits and credits for good work and behaviour are eagerly sought, especially by younger pupils. Heads of year have some flexibility in the way in which they deal with poor behaviour and the strategies they use to encourage improvement. This means that pupils can be treated on an individual basis and systems can be put in place that reflect their particular needs. However, behaviour management is not as effective as it should be because staff are not consistent in applying the sanctions and rewards. For example, one sanction for poor behaviour in class is a short cooling off period outside the classroom. During the inspection, on two occasions, pupils were seen to remain outside classrooms for very long periods of time.

Assessment (including the assessment of pupils with special educational needs)

62. Whole school responsibilities for assessment are unclear and procedures are not sufficiently rigorous to identify and act upon underachievement. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory and inconsistent in science, history and ICT, and inaccurate in design and technology and physical education in Years 7 to 9. Although some assessment is carried out in religious education, it does not follow the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. There is no assessment in citizenship, and in music, the quality and effectiveness of assessment is very poor because there are no systems in place to inform pupils of how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve. Target setting has been introduced and there is some confusion over how examination results can be used to set realistic, yet challenging targets for future performance. Exceptions to this are in physical education, where pupils are provided with exemplification of good practice in order to target improvement. In English, there is currently an emphasis on improved use of assessment, including pupils' understanding of the criteria for improving their work. As yet, marking and report writing in English often fail to clarify what needs to be done for pupils to make better progress.
63. Senior managers provide a substantial amount of assessment data, but it is not in an easily accessible form and is underused. The school has effective arrangements for collecting termly information on pupils' attainment. This information is collated and returned to staff but not in a form that allows it to be easily analysed, monitored or evaluated. The school does not monitor the results of its assessments in terms of different groups such as ethnicity, special educational needs or English as an additional language.
64. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are understood and identified correctly but individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs do not contain specific, measurable targets to enable teachers to make good use of them and to ensure that support is appropriate. Teachers do not always ensure that the work meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs in mixed ability classes. The special educational needs coordinator collates information about pupils who have a variety of learning difficulties, including behaviour related difficulties and there is a register of pupils for whom English is an additional language with a record of their stage of development. However, there are no means of measuring or recording pupils' progress in subjects and there are no separate lists of data for the other groups of pupils who have additional or particular needs. Without assessment and analysis of the progress of individuals and groups in all subjects, the school cannot effectively evaluate or amend its practice and so ensure the educational inclusion of all its pupils. The

review process for statemented pupils is good; appropriate assessments are made and satisfactory action taken.

Sixth form

Assessment

65. Despite good or satisfactory procedures in most subjects, the assessment and monitoring of students' academic performance is unsatisfactory overall because of inconsistencies in application. Some good practice was seen in mathematics, biology, design and technology, economics, drama, history, psychology and English. However, in physics, geography, and German, practice is currently unsatisfactory. This is because there is no commonly accepted marking policy, so practice and quality vary too much.
66. The use of data in predicting attainment and setting targets that are specific and attainable is not sufficiently developed. Information systems currently in place fail to ensure the reliability and usefulness of target setting. For example, in chemistry and mathematics, individuals can have as many as three different and conflicting minimum target grades. Target setting is unsatisfactory in geography and German. Inconsistent practices in these areas relate to the way subjects are managed and monitored.
67. The assessment, verification and moderation procedures of awarding bodies are met, for example in business studies and economics. The use made of assessment information in guiding planning is satisfactory overall, but not all subject areas evaluate teaching and learning in any systematic and rigorous manner. Data from assessment is insufficiently analysed to be of assistance in planning developments in ICT.

Advice, support and guidance

68. Comprehensive advice and guidance are provided for pupils in Year 11 where staff take care to match the aspirations and needs of pupils to the sixth form courses available. Not all pupils are suited to the A-level courses and a relatively high proportion of students leave at the end of Years 11 and 12.
69. Tutors monitor and guide students in terms of both their academic and personal development. Each term, information on progress and attainment is made available to students and parents. However, while the personal support and guidance are good, the monitoring and support of students' academic progress is less effective because of inconsistent use of assessment systems.
70. In discussions, students were keen to draw attention to the important role played by tutors, even where tutors were less experienced in working with senior pupils or were new to the schools. They value the advice and guidance provided. Evidence from the PHSE lessons observed supports their confidence.
71. Senior managers know the students well and are able to supplement the work done by the tutors. They are very accessible to and supportive of the students. They have very good knowledge of agencies that might help in any particular situation and have established good links. The well-planned tutorial programme covers careers, examination techniques, financial management and citizenship; the latter provides many opportunities for students' moral and social development. Senior managers work well with tutors and subject teachers to monitor and support the students. Individual records are kept and shared with parents in reports or if there is a problem.
72. Careers education is good for all students whether proceeding to higher education or leaving and moving into employment or some other alternative. The UCAS procedures begin in Year 12 and involve visits to and by higher education providers. Students not intending to move into

higher education or proceed with A2 courses are identified early and additional arrangements are made through the local 'Connexions' branch. Students expressed satisfaction with the arrangements made and feel they are well supported.

Community links

73. The school has established a satisfactory range of links with the community which are used appropriately to support the learning and personal development of pupils. For example, local volunteers have worked with pupils in paired reading and extensive links have been developed with local businesses through the work experience programme organised by Hillingdon Education and Business Partnership. Writing application forms, attending interviews and working in the area are important points in the development of pupils. There are sound links with a local supermarket and a high street bank is supportive of the pupils and the school in their contributions to fundraising. In the PHSE programme, practical contributions are made by outside speakers that provide a valuable extension to classroom work. The school is rightly proud of the environmental area created in the grounds, which has benefited from parents' help as well as from support from industry. When it is finished, this resource will not only be of value to the pupils to extend their learning in science but will be available to local schools and will also benefit the local community. In sporting activities, pupils profit from the skills of a visiting Rugby Football Union coach and links with the local rugby club. The school premises are not extensively let but there are regular weekly woodwork classes, the Hillingdon Borough Music centre is based in the school and there are other occasional lettings.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

74. Overall, the school has established effective links with parents and this is an improvement on the last report when the partnership with parents was not well developed. The headteacher and staff have worked consistently to improve the relationships between the school and the parent body and the results of the parents' questionnaire indicate that they have met with a good degree of success. Attendance at parents' evenings is still about 70 per cent and the school is actively working on improving this. For example, invitations to Year 11 parents were posted and this has proved more successful in attracting parents to attend. Pastoral staff work consistently to establish good links with home to support the development of pupils in school and work closely with parents if there are problems or concerns.
75. About a quarter of parents and carers returned the questionnaire about the school prior to the inspection. In these, parents had a positive view of the school. They were pleased that their sons are expected to work hard and achieve their best and that they are helped to become mature and responsible. Parents feel that the school is well managed and they are comfortable to come and discuss problems and concerns with the school. Some parents were concerned about the amount of homework given but the inspection found that the amount of homework is satisfactory. Although these parents felt that teaching and pupils' progress was good, inspection findings did not substantiate those views.
76. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory. A positive feature has been the parents' support of the development of the environment area in the school grounds through the parents' association. This contribution has been especially valued, as it will provide a very good resource for the school that will contribute to learning, particularly in science. The parents' association is very supportive of the school and increasingly active in organising social and fund-raising events. Not all parents make good use of the link book between school and home and, at the parents' meeting, some said that not all teachers use it regularly. Where it is used, it enables parents to keep in good touch with their sons' day-to-day activities and progress.

77. The school provides a satisfactory range of information for parents. The prospectus and annual report of governors to parents are informative and provide parents with a clear outline of the progress of the school and any issues there might be. Less informative is the annual report parents receive on their son's progress. The quality of reports is variable with inconsistent reporting styles and grading systems between subjects. The reports are not clear on the National Curriculum levels and the likely target GCSE grades pupils will attain and comments do not indicate clearly what students should do to improve.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

78. The leadership of the headteacher is strong; he has a clear view of the strategic direction of the school. Positive, purposeful and effective action has been taken to bring about improvements to the overall ethos of the school in the past four years. The headteacher is passionate about the school and its pupils and is highly regarded by the staff team, parents and pupils. He enjoys the trust and support of the governing body. The headteacher has succeeded in improving the school's reputation in the community and more parents now wish to send their pupils to the school.
79. Not all managers, however, share this vision or have the skills to deliver it. As a result, the day-to-day management of the school is unsatisfactory because the school's good policies and procedures are not being consistently applied or adequately monitored. Many key areas have not improved since the last inspection because the headteacher does not receive enough support from the other members of the senior management team. Staff with specific responsibilities now have clear job descriptions but there continue to be weaknesses in carrying out those responsibilities assigned specifically to the senior management team. One area for example, is the way that assessment is analysed and used. During the inspection, inspectors had great difficulties accessing information so as to be able to assess pupils' attainment on entry. In addition, monitoring of the National Curriculum is weak and has resulted in statutory requirements not being met in several areas including the use of ICT within subjects. Monitoring of the implementation of the literacy strategy is unsatisfactory and the provision for pupils with English as an additional language, special educational needs and the gifted and talented is unsatisfactory. Monitoring of behaviour and punctuality is an area which is particularly weak and which is having a significant impact upon the work of the school as a whole. These weaknesses are exacerbated because senior managers have taken on added subject management roles as a result of the significant turnover of staff and vacancies in several key posts, and are struggling to fulfil their increased responsibilities.
80. Senior managers check informally on what is happening in classrooms by regularly walking around the school. The school operates an open door policy that allows senior managers to wander in and out of lessons when necessary. This gives them some idea of particular areas of concern and unacceptable behaviour. All teachers have been observed teaching by the headteacher and there is a well-structured programme of termly monitoring visits. This has made senior managers aware of strengths and weaknesses but not enough has been done to compile a comprehensive picture of the particular strategies required by individual teachers to enable them to deal with discipline problems for themselves.
81. The failure to check that routines, such as implementing the school behaviour policy or the marking of class registers, are being carried out consistently by staff, is leading to a breakdown in discipline. Pupils are not always told when their behaviour is unacceptable so they push the boundaries of what they can get away with. Most experienced teachers cope with this, but inexperienced teachers have difficulties and some lessons are disrupted, particularly in Years 8 and 11. As a result, the school is failing to meet its aims of encouraging the development of "high moral standards, based on respect for oneself and for others" and the maintenance of "a

purposeful, safe and caring environment based on self-discipline and courtesy". The school recognises, in its improvement plan, a continuing priority for improving teaching and learning. However, the failure to implement the plan in detail means that this priority remains an issue, with a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, particularly in Year 11.

82. Although governors are very supportive of the school, and particularly of the headteacher, they rely too much on information provided by senior managers and only partially fulfil their role as critical friend. A number of committees are in place that operate effectively in receiving and analysing information, including a Governors Action Plan group (GAP) but this group lacks the focus needed to address the problems the school faces now. Overall, governors do not fulfil their statutory duties adequately nor do they monitor the management of the school with enough rigour.
83. The leadership and management of most subjects are satisfactory and of some, for example art, modern foreign languages and physical education, are good. Leadership in science is very good. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory in English because of staffing difficulties; a limited improvement plan has been distilled from previous plans but there has been too little focus on the key issues of the 2000 inspection. A new head of department has been appointed from January 2003. In religious education, there is efficient delivery on a day-to-day basis but many aspects of the management of the subject are not being delivered. The current arrangements for covering for the lack of a head of department for design and technology do not ensure adequate management of the curriculum area. In music, management is poor but this is largely due to the lack of monitoring and support the subject receives from senior management.
84. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory and is currently not being managed appropriately. Sound procedures for the identification, support and review of pupils with special educational needs are being established but as yet are not systematic or rigorous enough. A contributory factor to this unsatisfactory provision is the fact that the designated additional funding is not all made available for the support of these pupils and as a result there are too few learning assistants in lessons. Teachers have details of pupils' needs but not all pupils have clearly identified targets, to ensure that the support is appropriate. Staff have not been given enough guidance on the strategies that can be used in supporting individual pupils. The four available learning assistants provide effective support in lessons, although they are not always informed in advance of the lesson's learning outcomes, or of what they can do to help. Not enough is done to monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs or the quality of support that they receive in lessons. Professional contacts with outside agencies are constructive and helpful.
85. The school has had a deficit budget for several years as the number of pupils has fallen and adjustments have been needed in expenditure patterns. The proportions of the budget spent on the main school and on the sixth form are appropriate. The school plans to return to a balanced budget in four years, with local education authority approval, as the number of pupils in each of Years 7 to 11 stabilises at around 150. Resources and teaching staff numbers are being maintained at appropriate levels and the key development priorities are included in planning. For example, the additional computer room has been appropriately funded. The long-term approach is realistic, ensuring that current pupils are not disadvantaged by the financial shortfall. An audit of the school's finances was conducted some months ago against the school's and local education authority's financial procedures and no major recommendations were made to the governors or the headteacher. The school has not yet received a written audit report.
86. A substantial proportion of the school's overall budget is provided as specific grants. These are allocated and spent as required in most cases, for example, to support the establishment of a large environmental area from which many pupils will benefit. The funding for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils for whom English is an additional language, is not spent appropriately however, and these two groups are disadvantaged as a result. Allocating a

proportion of the budget for English as an additional language to pay part of a senior manager's salary, who has no direct involvement with these pupils, when there is a shortfall in specialist support, is poor practice. The money for special educational needs is appropriately spent on the salaries of learning support staff and the special educational needs coordinator, and for resources, but a substantial proportion is used to help fund smaller teaching groups throughout the school. In a number of classes, there are not enough support staff for individual pupils, particularly those with behaviour problems. Current arrangements are not satisfactory, notwithstanding the deficit budget arrangements within which the school must work. Overall, expenditure of specific grants is unsatisfactory.

87. Senior managers have access to ICT and are using it to help with the management of the school. E-mails are not yet commonplace as a means of communication within the school, however, and the way in which data is presented and interpreted does not make full use of the school's ICT capability.
88. Procedures to ensure that the school obtains best value for money are satisfactory. The school is aware of 'best value' principles and works to some of them. Previous expenditure patterns are used to help determine how money should be spent, but data from other institutions is not used. National data on attainment and achievement is available in the school and some use is made of this, but it is not used as effectively as it should be. The school in general does challenge itself about the range of courses and activities it provides. The curriculum has been extended to provide vocational courses for those pupils for whom the National Curriculum is not providing an appropriate range of activities. The school council has been in abeyance for some months but has now been reformed, to give the pupils a voice in managing the school. Parents have been consulted over the expenditure of the voluntary contributions that they provide, a figure of about £600 a year, but questionnaires are not sent to parents on a regular basis to find their views and to help inform management decisions. The school ensures that it gains value for money as a result of competitive tendering, which is laid down in the school's financial procedures and vetted by governors. The best value contracts are selected, which are not always the cheapest.
89. Standards in Years 7 to 9 have improved and now represent satisfactory or better achievement in just under half the subjects taught, although pupils underachieve in English, history, modern foreign languages and music. Standards are too low in Year 11 and pupils are underachieving in several subjects, including English and science. Behaviour is unacceptable around the school and in a minority of lessons, and poor in Year 11. Attendance is below average and unsatisfactory. The curriculum lacks breadth and balance and is unsatisfactory overall with statutory requirements not met in citizenship, music, ICT across the curriculum, aspects of design and technology and religious education in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are well cared for but the provision for spiritual, moral and social education is unsatisfactory. Leadership provides a clear direction for the school but this is not realised and aspects of management are unsatisfactory. These outcomes and provisions are in a context of a deficit budget where the expenditure per pupil is high. Overall value for money is poor.
90. Staffing is unsatisfactory. In physical education, ICT, mathematics, geography and history, staff expertise and allocation to classes are good. Support staff contribute significantly to the social development of the pupils with the office staff and caretaking staff, in particular, spending valuable time talking to and counselling pupils. Teaching staff are well matched to their subject classes, although staffing turbulence has resulted in an increasing reliance on temporary and supply teachers, for example in drama, has affected the continuity of some pupils' learning experiences. Owing to recruitment difficulties the school has been unable to appoint a head of design and technology and, at the time of the inspection, does not have a head of English or ICT. In the case of design and technology and English, this has had a detrimental effect on standards. The number of special educational needs staff is limited. Currently, there are only four learning support assistants working alongside the special needs coordinator and this is

inadequate for the number of pupils on the special needs register. Some middle and senior managers carry too many responsibilities and this limits their effectiveness and contribution to whole-school development.

91. Staff development is satisfactory, with training needs clearly identified within subject areas. Very little time has been spent on specific training for improving teaching and learning, however. More monitoring of the effect of this training on teaching, learning and standards across the school is needed. Performance management procedures are in place and no team leader has responsibility for more than three members of staff. However, performance management could usefully be linked with other school monitoring systems to avoid repetition and to ensure that outcomes are clearly focused on raising pupils' attainment. There is currently no system for assessing the performance of support staff. Arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers are good. Procedures are clear and they feel well supported and procedures are also in place for inducting other staff new to the school.
92. Resources for learning in the school are satisfactory overall, and the number and quality of computers has improved since the last inspection. Classrooms are generally adequately equipped. Resources to support learning are good in ICT and in Years 7 to 9 in modern foreign languages. In most subject areas they are satisfactory, although textbooks are often old and in need of replacement. Resources are unsatisfactory in music, design and technology and religious education. In music there are no tuned percussion instruments and of the thirteen electronic keyboards, eight are badly damaged. Resources are old and in poor condition in design and technology and there is a limited number of hand tools. Lack of access to computing resources is preventing the development of computer-aided design and computer aided manufacturing as required by the National Curriculum. In religious education there are no class sets of textbooks and no artefacts. Many subjects do not have adequate access to computer resources. Computers are not easily available to pupils in art, music, physical education, history, geography and modern foreign languages other than through a central booking system. This is inadequate for subject needs. The library has a very limited selection of books. Non-fiction textbooks are out-of-date and old fashioned, whilst the range of modern fiction is limited. The internet-linked computers allow independent research to take place but there is a very restricted range of other resources. The science department's environmental project, where an area of land has been reclaimed and redeveloped, has proved to be an excellent resource for learning and has involved the school in mutually beneficial links with a range of external sponsors.
93. Accommodation is satisfactory, overall, showing some improvement from the last inspection, particularly in ICT where there are now three newly-refurbished areas. Modern foreign languages and mathematics have suites of rooms and there are good facilities for physical education, particularly the gym and the sports hall. Art lacks storage space and in design and technology the rooms are old fashioned and poorly equipped. Accommodation is unsatisfactory in music where the rooms are damp and there are squirrels in the roof. The teaching areas for special educational needs are cramped and in religious education there is no suitable area for the display of artefacts. The school has worked hard on local community projects to improve the interior of the school and several areas are colourfully painted and well lit. Overall though, the fabric of many of the buildings is in poor condition owing to under-investment over a number of years and some areas are sub-standard and unpleasant. Caretaking and maintenance staff are vigilant and do a very good job to make the buildings as pleasant as possible. Good displays in subject areas such as geography enliven the learning environment and the school's public areas are brightly lit and welcoming. However, damp corridors, inadequate blackout facilities and a lack of carpeting across the site, inevitably have a negative impact on standards in some subjects. The library, with its 22 internet-linked computers, is well used by pupils during lunchtimes and breaks but is too small for a school of this size and the limited opening hours restrict its impact on pupils' learning.

Sixth form

94. The sixth form is well led. The senior management team of the sixth form shares a vision and commitment to the centre's development. Pastoral leadership is strong and makes a very good contribution to the ethos of the centre, the inclusion of all students and the support and information provided to them.
95. The governors and headteachers have contributed to closer partnership through coordination committees. A wide-ranging conference about strategy has taken place, and a development plan produced, which addresses the future developments for the sixth form. However, despite improvement, there remain areas that need to be dealt with, so the contribution of the governing body is only sound at present.
96. Most subject leaders from both schools work closely together and relationships are good. They cooperate on resource acquisition and agree on choice of syllabus and on who should teach each aspect of the course. However, there is a lack of contact between some teachers on a day-to-day basis, partly due to communication difficulties, which the schools hope to resolve. Teachers from the two schools do not in general teach the same modules or the same year groups and can therefore sometimes work side by side without detailed discussion of teaching methodology. This can also happen between pairs of teachers from the same school. Some good examples were seen, such as art, where teamwork and good systems have compensated for staff changes, and in some subjects run solely by teachers from the same school, such as business studies, economics, psychology and drama. But in some shared subjects there is no subject overview or coherent philosophy, for example in mathematics, the sciences, history and geography. This was reflected in the inspection week, in that the information provided was not coordinated and overall analyses of student performance were hard to find. Despite improvement, management in this area is only sound.
97. Monitoring by governors and senior staff is not yet sufficiently effective to identify and improve inconsistencies in subject management and quality of teaching in some subject areas. Performance management is inconsistent between the two schools. As a result, while professional development is sound overall, in some cases there is a failure to identify the need for professional development in sixth form teaching. There is no effective sixth form overview of standards of teaching or achievement. Systems are not yet developed that would give clear information about attainment on entry, the value added by sixth form courses in different subjects, or the achievement of students by gender or ethnicity. Although the problem has been identified, the lack of information systems is still a weakness. Monitoring and performance management are unsatisfactory overall.
98. In 1998, the centre was described as a drain on resources with confusion over the contribution of the two schools. Since that time, due to good cooperation between the schools and the very effective work of the two finance managers, an equitable system has been implemented and the centre's major weakness has been thoroughly and effectively dealt with. This has resulted in increased sixth form resources and closer cooperation between subject heads in the two schools. Neither of the feeder schools now subsidises the sixth form and student numbers have risen since the previous reports to a viable and still rising number. The use of the principles of best value is now sound. Financial planning is very good and the strategic use of resources is good.

Resources

99. Overall, resources are good in quality and quantity and are much improved since the last inspection. Central resources are better, in particular the learning resource centre and its ICT facilities. Although this library and resource centre provides good facilities, their usefulness is limited because students do not have access during part of the lunchtime. Subject capitation has been increased and this has had a beneficial effect generally on provision, although deficiencies

remain in physics, ICT and design and technology. Lack of sufficient storage in the sixth form centre means that books and other equipment have to be transported from elsewhere, as happens in English, which can be time-consuming and inconvenient. In addition, some resources are shared between the sixth form and the main schools. Not all subjects have improved subject library provision, for example mathematics and chemistry. In a number of subjects, such as ICT, biology and physics, students buy their books, which is unsatisfactory.

100. Some parts of the sixth form, such as the biology laboratory, have roofing problems, but these did not disturb teaching during the course of the inspection. Art has no large specialist area. Students complain about lack of space in the common room areas, which is a valid complaint during lunchtime, when pupils do not have good access to dining facilities. Students also complain about lack of access between the sixth form and Abbotsfield School due to locked doors, which necessitates an inconvenient detour. Nevertheless, accommodation is satisfactory with good laboratory facilities, specialist rooms for business studies, economics, history, geography and psychology. The learning resource area is of a good size.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards for all pupils the school should:

1. Raise the levels of pupils' achievements where they are unsatisfactory or poor, particularly in literacy skills, Year 11 science, design and technology, music and English by:
 - setting minimum standards of attainment; [*paras 2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 142, 178, 179*]
 - monitoring pupils' progress more rigorously and providing clear data to help teachers with their planning, to enable them to set challenging targets and to make realistic predictions; [*paras 62, 63, 79, 87, 88, 125, 152, 158*]
 - modifying programmes of study where necessary; [*paras 28, 43*]
 - implementing as a matter of urgency the measures recommended in the previous report to improve pupils' literacy skills. [*paras 26, 38, 40, 79, 101, 102, 105, 114, 126, 180*]
2. Raise achievement, in particular of pupils with special educational needs, with English as an additional language and the gifted and talented by:
 - ensuring that all staff know who they are and receive documentation which clearly specifies needs where appropriate; [*paras 31, 32, 63, 64, 79, 101, 111*]
 - providing INSET to enable staff to implement appropriate strategies which meet the particular needs of these pupils; [*paras 30, 31, 32, 64, 84, 152, 157*]
 - use all specific grant funding in these areas for their designated purpose. [*paras 84, 86, 90*]
3. Improve the overall quality of teaching and learning by:
 - making better use of the very good practice that exists to share strategies that are successful; [*paras 23, 24, 30, 137, 165, 187*]
 - requiring rigorous planning for every lesson which includes all groups' needs; [*paras 28, 43, 104, 144*]
 - monitoring the effectiveness of teaching in bringing about clear learning outcomes; [*paras 25, 80, 81, 83, 127, 147, 181*]
 - following up the results of monitoring with support for individual teachers. [*paras 25, 80, 81, 83, 127, 147, 181*]
4. Improve the attitudes, behaviour and punctuality of a significant minority of pupils by:
 - implementing school behaviour policies consistently; [*paras 14, 15, 48, 57, 61, 81*]
 - using more appropriate strategies to reduce the number of exclusions and promote regular attendance and punctual arrival at school and in lessons. [*paras 17, 60, 89, 184*]

5. Improve the quality and range of learning opportunities by:
 - meeting statutory requirements for cross-curricular ICT, music, aspects of design and technology and religious education in Years 10 and 11; *[paras 38, 41, 42, 79, 82, 89, 114, 136, 138, 143, 146, 153, 158, 160, 195]*
 - increasing the amount of teaching time. *[paras 39, 41, 174]*
6. Strengthen management by:
 - ensuring that senior managers monitor and evaluate the priorities contained within this plan and that they are held accountable for their direct responsibilities including health and safety issues; *[paras 58 79, 81, 83, 84, 86, 89, 127, 147, 181, 196]*
 - providing guidance to all governors on their role as ‘critical friend’ so that they can undertake their full responsibilities, in monitoring the work of the school. *[paras 82 138, 147, 167, 181, 196]*

Sixth form

1. Improve overall standards of teaching and learning by:
 - strengthening aspects of teaching which will cater for all abilities and encourage students to achieve their targets and remain on the course; *[paras 33, 34, 37, 65, 213]*
 - providing suitable opportunities in all subjects for developing literacy and key skills and ICT; *[paras 36, 209, 214, 230, 239, 262, 278]*
 - enabling students to take more responsibility for their own learning and increase the amount of investigative work; *[paras 35, 36, 200, 208, 209, 216, 225, 220, 229, 232, 240, 244, 251, 253, 257]*
 - remedying deficiencies in resources, particularly textbooks; *[paras 99, 222]*
 - increasing opportunities for enriching the curriculum through visits; *[paras 55, 232, 256, 288]*
 - opening the sixth form library at lunch times to encourage and facilitate students’ independent study. *[paras 99, 282]*
2. Improve the use of school and national data to set targets for students and to guide teachers’ planning by:
 - marking students’ work consistently, thoroughly and regularly; *[paras 222, 263]*
 - using information from students’ previous results to set challenging targets; *[paras 65, 66, 67 253, 259, 265, 282]*
 - setting high expectations and monitoring students’ progress rigorously. *[paras 223, 224, 228, 231, 256]*
3. Improve the management of subjects that use staff from both schools by:
 - establishing better communications and coordinating the development of teaching more effectively between the staff from the two contributing schools. *[paras 208, 217, 217, 222, 250, 252, 259, 271]*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 -11	120
	Sixth form	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		91

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	4	18	43	40	10	5	0
Percentage	3.3%	15%	36%	33.3%	8.3%	4%	0
Sixth form							
Number	1	15	14	20	2	2	0
Percentage	2%	27%	26%	37%	4%	4%	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	617	57
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	142	0

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	14	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	131	0

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	110

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	35
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	56

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.6%
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.5%
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	127	n/a	127

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	77 (18)	88(39)	80(43)
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	77(18)	88(39)	80(43)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	61(24)	69(51)	64(57)
	National	66(64)	67(66)	66(66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	26(4)	39(22)	24(16)
	National	32(31)	45(43)	33(34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	74(41)	99(43)	94(46)
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	74(41)	99(43)	94(46)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	58(54)	78(57)	74(61)
	National	66(65)	67(68)	66(64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	19(17)	37(22)	28(25)
	National	32(31)	42(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	84	n/a	84

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	22(26)	79(79)	85(84)
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	22(26)	79(79)	85(84)
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	26%(30)	94%(91)	100%(97)
	National	50%(48)	91%(91)	96%(96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	30.9
	National	39.8

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

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations	Year	Male	Female	Total
	2001	33	(43)	(76)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	33	(43)	(76)
	Average point score per candidate	12.4	(14.4)	(13.5)
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.7	17.4

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	450	49	2
White – Irish	2		
White – any other White background	4	3	
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	14		
Mixed – White and Black African	2		
Mixed – White and Asian	4	5	
Mixed – any other mixed background	3		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	76	2	
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	18	2	
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	15		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	7	2	
Black or Black British – Caribbean	12	3	
Black or Black British – African	12	3	
Black or Black British – any other Black background	4	2	
Chinese	1		
Any other ethnic group	54		
No ethnic group recorded	5		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7– Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	34.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.5

Education support staff: Y7– Y13

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	333

Deployment of teachers: Y7– Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.6%
---	-------

Average teaching group size: Y7– Y11

Key Stage 3	23
Key Stage 4	21

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-02
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	2291669
Total expenditure	2293750
Expenditure per pupil	3562
Balance brought forward from previous year	-15417
Balance carried forward to next year	-17498

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	23.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	28

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	6
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

674

Number of questionnaires returned

171

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	45	11	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	36	55	6	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	55	9	3	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	60	13	4	2
The teaching is good.	35	56	3	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	45	11	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	33	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	32	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	37	53	7	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	61	32	1	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	49	1	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	56	8	1	8

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Good use of information gathered on pupils, syllabuses and resources, to guide planning.
- Introducing pupils to literature dealing with relevant issues such as racism.

Areas for improvement

- Plan clear and appropriate learning activities that support the learning of gifted and talented pupils, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
- Encourage writing that is of sustained length, accurate, better organised and well presented.
- Continue the focus on assessment, being consistently accurate about standards attained and expressing targets in terms that pupils really understand.
- Enhance the cohesion in the department through guidance and monitoring that develops high quality teaching and learning.
- Implement the National Literacy Strategy consistently in English lessons.

101. Data concerning attainment on entry was not precise, but from work seen and data available, it is apparent that the majority starts Year 7 at below average attainment for that age. Therefore results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2000 and 2002, which were in line with national averages, represent satisfactory and, for many pupils, good achievement. Performance dipped in the 2001 tests when results were well below national averages. Work seen in lessons and over time (from examination of the books provided) did not reach the levels indicated by test results. It was below average and represents inadequate progress. The range of types of writing was very restricted and often consisted of answers to numbered questions; exercises were of little cumulative worth. Accuracy in spelling, grammar and punctuation is poor, as is presentation of work. Sometimes the attainment of pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language and the most able learners is not accurately assessed and as a result they do not always make enough progress.
102. In comparison with all schools nationally and with results for boys, 2002 GCSE English and English literature passes are above average for grades A*-G and below average for A*-C, indicating that whilst the school does well to ensure most pupils gain at least grades D-G, it is not sufficiently effective, in Years 10 and 11, in assisting pupils to achieve the higher grades. This is underlined by the performance of the cohort who did well in the Year 9 tests in 2000, attaining average standards compared with the national picture, but who attained below average results in GCSE in 2002. This represents unsatisfactory achievement overall. The school experiences high pupil mobility, but data was not available on how this affected pupils' standards at GCSE. In lessons and work seen, there are stronger signs of improvement in the work of Year 10 than in Year 11. In Year 10 there is some evidence of detailed study of texts leading to more clearly structured essays, in which organisation is supported by word processing the work. Attainment in Year 11 is below or well below expectations. In both key stages, pupils' oral standard, at a little below average, is better than their writing, which is well below average. Reading standard is below average but improves when pupils concentrate on short texts such as poems.
103. Teaching and learning are currently satisfactory although, overall, teaching over time is unsatisfactory. The majority of teaching seen was satisfactory or better, with instances of poor teaching in Years 7 and 8 and unsatisfactory teaching in Year 11. Instances of good teaching

were seen in Years 8, 9 and 10 and very good teaching was seen in Years 7 and 10. In work completed over time, there was evidence of unsatisfactory teaching resulting in unsatisfactory learning, particularly in Years 10 and 11. As a result of this unsatisfactory provision in the past, the way pupils approach their work lacks firm foundations. A factor in this is the high staff turnover that has affected this department more than any other. In the best lessons, pupils learn well as a result of well-organised group work. In a Year 9 class, all pupils worked in groups at about the same National Curriculum level. They knew what was expected and were motivated to raise their performance. In a very good Year 10 lesson, after listening to the teacher's guidance on finding "evidence" for meaning in a poem, small groups worked well. Every pupil was engaged in the search until it was time to share conclusions. In lessons where objectives were set out and written up, pupils moved from one step to the next; variety prevented boredom. Good relationships in a Year 9 class enabled pupils to discuss aspects of racism calmly and maturely which contributed effectively to their social, moral and cultural development.

104. Pupils were less good at paying attention when the teacher tried to hold the attention of the entire class for most of the lesson. Such lessons were frequently interrupted by challenges about behaviour and a significant proportion of pupils remained uninvolved throughout. Over-ambitious planning and lack of clear guidance in some lessons meant some activities were unsuccessful and were curtailed before completion, leading to a sense of fragmentation and frustration in learning. Lack of clear instruction meant that teachers, noticing that some pupils had gone off-track, kept interrupting the flow of everyone's work to emphasise the intended outcome. Superficial or unsuitable activities led, in written work, to disjointed entries in exercise books. Marking and report writing often fails to clarify what needs to be done for pupils to make better progress. Attendance in lessons is not always checked to deter lesson truancy, or to identify who will need support on return. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are unsatisfactory. Too often younger pupils are not calm and focused and older pupils' behaviour is challenging.
105. Curriculum time is in line with national levels. The National Literacy Strategy is not followed consistently in English lessons and pupils' low skills in literacy are not adequately reinforced in other curriculum areas. The school library is a calm and tidy area, but books are not arranged in ways likely to entice reluctant readers. ICT resources are accessed regularly by some classes, but not by others. The department is hoping to offer drama in Years 10 and 11, which would capitalise on pupils' stronger oral skills. Lack of continuity in staffing casts doubts on viability. Support for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Little prominence is given to individual education plans and in-class support is infrequently provided. Special needs assistants are very willing to help, but have not been instructed on strategies appropriate to individual pupils. Schemes of work are very detailed and do not readily lend themselves to consultation by teachers working under pressure. There is no overview of how the subject will contribute to personal development, but in some lessons, worthwhile engagement occurs with serious issues such as racism. Improved use of assessment is a current emphasis and pupils understand the criteria for improving their work, but the language used in marking and report writing, does not yet convey a clear message to pupils. Pupil data is accessible but there is little sign of it influencing teaching and learning.
106. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The department is trying to move in the right direction, but has a long way to go. A new head of department has been appointed from January 2003. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory; a number of issues, including the key issue relating to the development of literacy, have not been addressed. There has been considerable staff movement, but the temporary joint managers are maintaining routines in anticipation of greater stability and capacity to move forward when the new head of department is in post. A limited improvement plan has been distilled from previous plans and progress is being made on assessing pupils' work. The rationale for scaling down is understandable in the circumstances, but inevitably it limits the scope of much-needed change. The handbook, for example, is out of date. Some monitoring takes place and good practice ideas are exchanged at

departmental meetings. Teachers cooperate in managing challenging behaviour but often have to call upon senior managers. The working area is tidy and well organised and contributes well to the sense of belonging to a team.

107. Drama is timetabled as a separate lesson in Years 7 to 9. In a good Year 9 lesson the teacher set clear expectations of behaviour and time limits kept most pupils engaged for most of the lesson. In a lesson in Year 7, pupils lost sight of the learning objective as they became over-excited. Potentially drama has a lot to offer in capitalising on pupils' better oral standard. Facilities and space in a separate studio are good. Once again, staff turnover is having a negative impact. After beginning to establish routines and expectations over time, another teacher left early in the week of inspection, although a replacement teacher was quickly found. Subsequently some drama lessons were cancelled in favour of work in a conventional classroom, reducing pupils' curriculum entitlement.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Teachers' subject knowledge.
- The positive and supportive relationships between teachers and pupils.
- Teachers' management of some pupils' challenging behaviour.

Areas for improvement

- Cater for the full ability range in teaching and challenging the most able.
- Extend schemes of work to provide a fuller framework for teaching and learning.
- Focus on developing pupils' literacy skills and ICT in line with National Curriculum requirements.

108. In the 2002 national tests in mathematics, standards were in line with national averages and above the average in similar schools. Results, over the past three years, have fluctuated with a fall in 2001 but an improvement in 2002. Teacher assessments are broadly accurate. On the basis of pupils' prior performance in the national tests in Year 6, achievement is above expectations although some question marks remain on the accuracy of the information on pupils' attainment on entry. In the 2001 GCSE examinations, standards were below national averages and the average for boys and in line with similar schools. The number of A* to C grades has fluctuated with a fall in 2001 but an improvement in 2002. GCSE results in 2002 were below average. On the basis of pupils' prior performance in the national tests in Year 9, achievement is in line with expectations.
109. On the evidence of the pupils' work and the lessons observed, standards at the end of Year 9 remain in line with national averages and, at the end of Year 11, remain below national averages. The work covers all of the attainment targets although graphical work and mental arithmetic skills are not so well developed as illustrated in a Year 11 lesson, where a pupil insisted that $35 \div 7 = 7$ since $7 \times 7 = 35$. By the end of Year 9, pupils solve simple equations and identify lines of symmetry while higher attaining pupils express a number as a product of prime factors. By the end of Year 11, pupils find the general term of a linear sequence and calculate gradients on straight-line graphs, while higher attaining pupils use the sine and cosine rules to calculate the lengths and sides of any triangle.
110. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good and results in good learning and achievement overall. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory and learning and achievement are also satisfactory although they are better in Year 10 than in Year 11. The majority of lessons start promptly. Teachers use a variety of starter activities, which quickly engage pupils in the work. They

demonstrate confident subject knowledge and enjoy positive and productive relationships with their pupils. They manage pupils very well and have a variety of strategies for dealing with the challenging behaviour of a significant minority. In the best lessons, teachers use praise to good effect in motivating and encouraging pupils. Lesson planning is always full but does not always anticipate the resources required to enhance learning such as the provision of triangular prisms for a lesson on calculating their surface areas. Too little attention is given to the spread of ability and the provision of work to challenge the most able.

111. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in mathematics as a result of satisfactory teaching. Pupils with English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress although their literacy difficulties are not always recognised and addressed. The provision for gifted and talented pupils is unsatisfactory; able pupils are not identified or challenged enough in the classroom.
112. Teachers have a good awareness of the individual strengths and weaknesses of most of their pupils. Marking in exercise books is regular but rarely includes enough detail on how work might be improved. Central records are very thorough but do not take account of recent curriculum changes. There is insufficient monitoring of external examination data to identify standards and raise issues for further investigation.
113. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. In the majority of lessons, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes and good relationships with the teacher and with one another. Pupils are attentive and suitably involved in their work. However, in a significant minority of lessons, pupils demonstrate challenging behaviour and poor attitudes to their work. They are easily distracted and find the length of the lessons too long to sustain their concentration on a single topic area.
114. The provision for literacy within the department is unsatisfactory and literacy skills are not sufficiently supported and encouraged in mathematics lessons. Pupils' writing skills are marred by incorrect spellings and pupils in a Year 10 lesson had difficulty understanding the word "divisible" because it had not been properly explained in the lesson. Pupils and teachers confirm that no use is made of ICT in mathematics lessons and the department has made little progress since the last inspection report in developing pupils' ICT capability beyond the use of calculators. The provision for ICT within the department is unsatisfactory and the curriculum fails to meet statutory requirements in this regard
115. The provision for numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory although whole school training has not yet taken place and there is no whole school numeracy policy to provide a coherent framework to develop pupils' numeracy skills. Number work is developed well in languages for number, time and dates while algebra is used for creating formulae for spreadsheets in ICT. Pupils use dimensions of length and temperature in science and spatial skills are used for scale work in design and technology. Pupils make use of questionnaires and surveys in ICT. They present graphs and charts such as death rates in geography and star diagrams in food technology.
116. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Leadership ensures a clear direction for mathematics and the head of department has a good awareness of the strengths of the department through regular formal monitoring. The department is beginning to respond to recent curricular changes but schemes of work reflecting the Key Stage 3 national strategy and changes at GCSE are slow in being developed. Staffing is adequate, accommodation is satisfactory and resources appropriate, although there are not enough books to support mathematics in the library.
117. Improvement since the 2000 inspection has been satisfactory and standards remain in line with national averages overall. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and

teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and good classroom management. Pupils demonstrate sound recall of basic number facts but their graphical skills need development. The lack of use of ICT in mathematics and unsatisfactory promotion of literacy skills, are, however, significant weaknesses.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Very good leadership, providing a clear and effective direction for the department.
- Good achievement in Years 7 to 9.
- Some very effective teaching, based on teachers' good subject knowledge, resulting in very good learning.
- The development of an excellent environmental area from which pupils can benefit.

Areas for improvement

- Tackle the underachievement and disruptive behaviour in Year 11.
- Resolve the issues in teaching and learning, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Increase the emphasis on investigative science.
- Follow up incidents of unfinished and poorly presented work in pupils' books.

118. Pupils enter the school with attainment in science that is below average overall, and make good progress through Years 7 to 9, generally achieving well. Accurate data from primary schools on pupils' attainment on entry was not available. In 2002, pupils' attainment in national tests at age fourteen was average at level 5 and above, and below average at level 6 and above. When the attainment of all pupils in Year 9 is considered, their average points score is below the national average. Comparing these results with those in schools where a similar proportion of pupils take free school meals, standards were above average. The trend of improvement in national test results in Year 9 over the five years up to 2001 was broadly similar to the national trend.
119. In the dual award science course taken, GCSE results in 2001 were satisfactory when compared with other subjects in the school. In 2002, results were significantly lower. In 2001, thirty-nine per cent of pupils entered attained grades in the range A*-C. The comparable figure for 2002 was twenty-nine per cent, much lower than the national figures for all schools and for boys, which were about fifty per cent. In both years the proportion gaining grades A* – G was similar to the national figure. The school is aware that results in 2002 represented an unsatisfactory outcome for several of the higher attaining pupils, with underachievement and lower than predicted results. Attainment was well below average, but broadly average when compared with schools with a similar number of pupils taking free school meals.
120. Current attainment in Year 9 is broadly average, indicating good achievement over time. Pupils' knowledge of scientific terms and recall of facts is better than their understanding of investigative work. All pupils are provided with quite an 'academic diet', enabling them to become used to using appropriate scientific terms. The work in books of lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs, however, is too often unfinished and the quality of presentation is poor. This is also true for those pupils for whom English is an additional language and who are still developing their language skills. In Year 11, attainment is well below that expected and achievement is unsatisfactory. In some classes, work is of a satisfactory or better standard, and work in Year 10 is of a significantly higher quality than in Year 11. Throughout the school, investigative work has too low an emphasis, work is too often unfinished and the quality of presentation is poor. The major factor behind the difference in standards between Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11 is the quality of teaching.

121. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons were good in Years 7 to 9. They generally listened well although a few tended to become silly and lose concentration as lessons progressed. Pupils enjoy practical work and small groups worked reasonably well together. In Years 10 and 11, attitudes and behaviour were satisfactory or better in most lessons, but the overall quality was unsatisfactory because pupils were poorly behaved at times.
122. The quality of teaching and learning observed in classes was good in Years 7 to 9. The best quality, which was very good, was in Year 9, and the least effective was in the mixed ability Year 7 classes. All lessons observed were satisfactory or better. In Years 10 and 11, the overall quality was unsatisfactory. In Year 10, the quality was good, with all lessons satisfactory or better, but in Year 11 the quality was poor in some classes.
123. Strengths in teaching included well-structured lessons where, for example, at the start the teacher shared the learning objectives with the class, and at the end, questioned the class on their knowledge. Relationships between most of the pupils and staff were good. Teachers' good subject expertise resulted in rigorous questioning, which in turn led to very effective learning in some lessons. An example of very good teaching, on the specialised function of cells, included a video camera used to very good effect to show different plant cells; the magnified images on the television screen captured the interest and attention of the class and enabled detailed informative discussions to take place about microscopic worlds. Such work represented excellent use of ICT. Pupils' behaviour was managed very effectively and constant reminders ensured that each boy remained involved with the task in hand. Learning was good rather than very good because pupils showed less independent learning skills than might be expected from a higher attaining group of fifteen-year-olds.
124. In a few lessons, mainly with older pupils, behaviour was not managed effectively and individuals disrupted the learning of others. In these lessons, teaching and learning were poor because school strategies for dealing with unruly pupils were not followed. Pupils ignored what was being taught, making few, if any, notes. Further weaknesses concerned not matching work to the prior knowledge of pupils and providing poor explanations. In these circumstances, pupils were uninvolved and made poor progress in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language made too little progress because teachers did not take account of their needs. Higher attainers are insufficiently challenged when work is not matched to their prior learning. A scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work in each year showed that, quite often, slower and lower attaining pupils do not finish their work and the quality of presentation deteriorates as the term progresses.
125. Teachers mark work frequently, providing detailed, constructive criticism for individual pupils. Few comments were followed up, however, and some were difficult to read. In addition to these comments, work is graded for effort and attainment. Pupils find this two-grade system difficult to understand. Almost all teachers' mark books are models of good practice but the number of grades suggests that teachers are marking too much work! A more realistic marking load is needed, from which the pupils will benefit. Senior managers provide a substantial amount of assessment data, but it is not in an easily accessible form and so is underused.
126. The contribution to literacy is unsatisfactory. Not enough has been done to focus pupils' attention on their written work or to improve the presentation of their work. The development of numeracy is satisfactory. Pupils develop their numeracy skills in many science lessons.
127. The leadership of the department is very good, with a clear focus on improving teaching and learning and the boys' achievements. Management is very effective in some areas, but not in others and is satisfactory overall. Curriculum planning is good, with helpful schemes of work being rewritten, backed up by detailed lesson plans. References are made to the use of ICT, and structured, demanding homeworks are included as part of the planning. Further guidance is needed in these documents to guide teaching and learning for the extremes of ability in the

school. An audit has been carried out as part of the Key Stage 3 national strategy for improving standards in Years 7 to 9, but managers could not find the document at the time of the inspection. The brief audit summary available indicates that the department is working to improve standards, but that the implementation of the strategy is at a very early stage. Good resources are used well. Laboratories are satisfactory although the holes in floors of some laboratories constitute a safety hazard. An excellent environmental area is being developed with the support of parents and local industry. The department handbook is useful, but more detail is needed for it to be a reference text for staff. Technician support is very good. Staff are well qualified with a good balance of the three science disciplines of physics, chemistry and biology. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are carried out rigorously and frequently. On-going support is provided for staff and pupils, but not enough action is taken by senior managers to resolve issues where pupils are being disadvantaged by what is taking place.

128. Standards today at the end of Year 9 are similar to those reported in the last inspection in 2000, but lower at the end of Year 11. Marking is better and more consistent but teaching is less effective, with very good lessons but also a few of poor quality. The unsatisfactory quality of presentation in pupils' books remains. The curriculum today is similarly broad and balanced to that described in the last report, with better planning, although investigate work is not as strong. Overall, unsatisfactory progress has been made over the past two years, but the potential to make improvements under the present leadership is great, considering the clear direction and very good role models available.

ART AND DESIGN

The focus was on unendorsed Art and Design, which is the only course in art offered.

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

Strengths

- Attainment has recently improved; standards are now average.
- Teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. Teachers provide pupils with a good range of basic skills and with good individualised support and guidance.
- Pupils do particularly well in drawing and mixed media work and have positive attitudes towards the subject.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to pursue the subject in clubs and summer schools.
- Leadership is good with clear long-term planning to establish a core curriculum for the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Develop pupils' skills and knowledge of printmaking, which are weak.
- Increase the planned opportunities for pupils to use ICT.
- Improve pupils' independent research skills in line with their technical skills.

129. In 2002, teacher assessments of Year 9 pupils show that almost half reached level 5 or above, a little lower than the national picture. However, results have improved over time and the standards seen across the Year 7 to 9 year groups reflect the continuance of this trend. Year 7 pupils' observational colour studies using dry pastels show good colour blending techniques. Year 8 pupils use a range of skills in observational drawing and competently depict three-dimensional objects with illusory depth and from oblique angles, successfully applying tonal work. The good quality of some drawing work reflects the department's emphasis on teaching technical skills. Most Year 8 pupils compose their larger scale work satisfactorily. Written work shows pupils make satisfactory use of key terminology and definitions in their picture analysis and related descriptive work. Year 9 pupils use a range of colour and scale to create

visual impact in their graphic work. However, lower achieving Year 9 pupils do not satisfactorily combine images with lettering in their graphics work, leaving them as isolated elements. Some Year 9 pupils fail to gather the necessary resources (visual, art historical or contextual) that would help them sustain an extended piece of work. Achievement is satisfactory.

130. In 2001, GCSE results were slightly above the national average. Results for 2002 were slightly below national averages and in line with the average for boys, although numbers entered were very small. Lower and middle attaining pupils have done well and in recent years all pupils entered have gained A* - G passes in the GCSE examination. The department has successfully developed a skill-based approach to the teaching of the unendorsed art course, which has improved attainment. Year 10 pupils handle three-dimensional materials confidently and successfully to solve constructional problems. In one three-dimensional lesson, Year 10 pupils successfully re-created an artist's painting into a three-dimensional construction, solving the distortions in perspective and scale that entailed. In general, the work of Y10 pupils shows a confidence in experimenting with media and technique that is less in evidence in Year 11. Sketchbook work and loose drawings of higher achieving pupils show a high level of competency in observational drawing. Lower performing pupils in Year 10, however, show much weaker drawing skills and less confident handling of media, particularly painting. In some cases the drawing work is over-extended and only sections of the pupils' work seem thoughtfully composed and executed whilst others seem rushed or arbitrary.
131. Attainment at the end of Year 11 is in line with expectations. Higher attaining pupils include a good range of art historical and contextual research in their work, including written studies and sketches. Their observational drawing and colour-work show they handle media competently and apply methods for constructing or depicting perspective systematically. Figure drawings by higher attaining pupils display an understanding of how chalks and charcoal can be worked together in a range of ways. Higher attaining pupils write competently and personally about their visits to see art in galleries. Although lower attaining pupils also have extensive written work in their sketchbooks and logbooks, they do not articulate their ideas and responses well. The written work tends to be repetitive and restricted in scope. The range of two-dimensional media used by lower attaining pupils is satisfactory but the quality is poor and drawing is sometimes immature. Three-dimensional work by lower attaining pupils, however, is lively and effective. Printwork by pupils at all attainment levels is under-developed and seldom exploits the potential of the medium or process.
132. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with a number of strengths. Teachers manage pupils well and intervene appropriately and effectively to support, guide and encourage them. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. They provide competent demonstrations of techniques and processes including drawing and colour handling. In one lesson the teacher satisfactorily demonstrated the method of drawing cylindrical forms in perspective to Year 8 pupils, emphasising key terminology throughout the demonstration. Pupils' interest and involvement were stimulated by the teacher's own work. However there is little reference to the work of artists, art history, or contextual material during lessons. This deficiency negatively affects pupils who require more visual ideas to reinforce their understanding and to stimulate their own work. Teachers make lesson objectives clear to pupils, and also, in a straightforward manner, identify the criteria for satisfactory performance. This knowledge enables pupils to be more analytical and specific when identifying difficulties they experience as they develop their work. In one Year 10 three-dimensional class, for example, the learning was broken down into clear stages and this enabled the pupils to carry an overall picture of the task with them and to move from one stage to the next with relative ease. Teachers make good use of pupils' work to illustrate points but permit an over-reliance on second-hand photographic source material. This would normally be addressed through ICT facilities that allow pupils to generate much of this material first hand.

133. Teachers are accessible and trusted by pupils and those with special educational needs particularly benefit from the teacher's intervention, confidently express their opinions and receive good support. As a result, the work of pupils with special educational needs is in line with that of the rest of the class and gifted and talented pupils make appropriate progress. Pupils with English as an additional language are also confident in explaining their ideas. Monitoring and assessment is thorough and effective. Pupils' progress is tracked through regular formal critical review sessions and tests. Teachers lead useful review sessions at the end of lessons, where pupils evaluate their own and each other's work, referring directly to the key learning points and assessment criteria. Teachers use assessment and self-assessment effectively to support individual pupils, although not enough use is made of the information gained to inform curriculum planning or to modify the programmes of study to meet the needs of all pupils.
134. The range of curriculum opportunities is satisfactory at both key stages with a good balance between two-dimensional and three-dimensional work. There are opportunities for technically based processes such as clay work, but printmaking is under-developed and pupils' work in this area of the art curriculum is weak. ICT work is not sufficiently established or integrated into pupils' creative work.
135. Pupils have positive attitudes to art and are pleased to contribute ideas and pertinent points in lesson plenary sessions. They apply themselves well to their work, focus well during the lesson and manage their workspaces well. Pupils share palettes and paints in a co-operative manner. Behaviour is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Personal development is generally good; most pupils enjoy the regular opportunities to participate in organised visits to galleries and museums.
136. The department is well led. Teachers have maintained the good lesson planning identified in the 2000 report and share a clear approach to teaching. Clear long-term planning has established a core curriculum for the subject and this has brought about improvement in pupil attainment. This trend continues for the current cohorts of pupils. ICT is not used sufficiently for creative visual work. In consequence, improvement is satisfactory.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths:

- The citizenship coordinator is enthusiastic, dedicated and committed to the improvement of the subject.
- An audit of subject areas has taken place to identify where citizenship can be delivered.
- Teaching and learning in PHSE lessons, where citizenship was a component, was very good.

Areas for development:

- Identify citizenship objectives in departmental schemes of work.
- Strengthen provision for citizenship in Years 10 and 11 to ensure sufficient coverage.
- Introduce an assessment and recording system to monitor pupils' progress across both key stages.
- Plan opportunities for all pupils to participate in citizenship-based activities.

137. The school is at a very early stage in its delivery of citizenship. An audit has taken place to decide where contributions can be made to the delivery of citizenship within the existing curriculum programme and those areas where it is already happening have been identified. These incidental contributions have not been highlighted within departmental schemes of work, nor have specific learning objectives been formulated. As a result of this approach there was not

enough evidence to allow judgements to be made on standards of attainment or on teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 during the week of the inspection. The quality of teaching and learning in the small sample of lessons seen in Years 10 and 11 was very good. Teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge, used a range of teaching methods and had very good relationships with pupils. There were good opportunities for discussion and pupils responded very well. For example, in a Year 10 lesson looking at old age and stereotyping, pupils identified how society's attitudes towards the elderly are formed. They linked an elderly person's wartime experiences with their own. The teacher's brisk pace and sensitive questioning allowed good progress to be made.

138. Management of this area is unsatisfactory. There is much good practice currently in the school but it has yet to be drawn together, mapped across the curriculum and explicitly taught. Valuable opportunities to enrich and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to become informed citizens are under-developed. In Year 8 history, for example, pupils study the commonwealth and native American Indians, whilst in Year 8 English, the plight of a Vietnamese refugee travelling to England is explored. Links with citizenship would allow discussion of the ethnic and cultural diversity of the United Kingdom, and of the connections between political, economic and social stability. However, since the programme relies heavily on these patchy, incidental contributions, citizenship does not meet National Curriculum requirements.
139. The school has a range of community-based activities. These include the Year 10 environmental project run with the science department. Here, a substantial piece of land has been improved and landscaped and pupils have been involved in extensive fundraising activities. In Year 11, pupils can apply to be prefects and the democratically elected school council allows each year group to contribute to the running of the school. Limited provision, however, means that not all of the school's pupils are given the opportunity to take responsibility and participate in community-based activities and this is an area for development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Pupils' good practical skills in Years 7 to 9.
- Some good and very good teaching, particularly in food technology and resistant materials.
- The commitment of some teachers who use their time and available resources to best advantage.

Areas for improvement

- Increase the monitoring and support of teaching and learning.
- Enhance resources to support teaching and learning, particularly for computer-aided work.
- Develop more reliable assessment procedures.
- Produce new schemes of work with a better balance between designing and making, and which include references to developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

140. Results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 have been in line with the national average for the proportion at level 5 and above, and in 2002 rose to be well above the national average. However, because assessment procedures in the past have been based on restricted evidence and un-moderated, it appears that teacher assessments have been over estimated. Current work indicates that attainment by the end of Year 9 is below the national average.

141. The proportion of pupils gaining GCSE A* to C grades has remained consistent but well below the national average for all students and also well below the national average for boys. Very few pupils gain A grades, but pupils do well in terms of the proportion gaining A* to G grades because they consistently gain above the national average for all students. Pupils' achievement in examinations is therefore satisfactory when compared to their prior attainment for all pupils except those at the higher end of the ability scale.
142. Pupils join the school with limited experience of design and technology and have opportunities to work with a variety of materials in projects that are focused on the development of practical skills. They develop some knowledge about materials and their use but knowledge retention is limited for most pupils. Pupils have limited opportunities to engage in design activities but develop some research and recording skills in food technology and some graphic skills when recording possible shapes for minor aspects of their work in resistant materials. Pupils have very little opportunity to use computers in their work as required by the National Curriculum. Folders in some classes are in poor condition, work is not well organised and is often not well presented and incomplete. Because of the focus on practical work, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English, develop good practical skills and the quality of finished products is often good for all levels of prior ability. There is not however, enough support for the gifted and talented. Current work indicates that standards overall are below the national average but that pupils are achieving satisfactorily when compared to their attainment on entry to the school.
143. Current work in Years 10 and 11 is below national expectation overall, but better in food technology, which is well taught, and in certain groups in resistant materials. Pupils develop aspects of knowledge and understanding but design related activity is under-represented in folders. Current work in resistant materials and graphics is weak in terms of both content and presentation. The quantity of work produced is limited and many folders are disorganised. Guidance is provided to help pupils structure their work to comply with examination requirements, but, because teaching in some groups is weak and schemes of work are not sufficiently focused on design related activity, the skills of researching, analysing, development of ideas and evaluating are under-developed. The use of computers is limited and does not meet the National Curriculum requirements for the subject. In the samples of coursework produced by higher attaining pupils in resistant materials and in food technology, finished folders and practical work are of a good standard and indicate that standards improve as pupils organise their work more effectively and get closer to the examination date. However, the standard of current coursework overall varies considerably according to the teaching group and ability. All pupils, including those with special needs, make some progress and those of higher ability often produce good standards of work but progress in many groups is restricted by the quality of the teaching they receive and they underachieve. On the evidence of current work, achievement overall in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory in relation to their attainment at the start of the course.
144. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall across the school because of the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching observed; as a result, learning is also unsatisfactory. However, some good and very good teaching results in good and very good learning. In food technology and the better lessons observed in resistant materials, teachers have very good subject knowledge and suitably high expectations of behaviour and performance. They manage pupils well so they respond positively, concentrate well, work at a good pace and develop their knowledge, understanding and skills. For example, in a Year 9 food technology lesson, pupils followed carefully planned procedures, used good preparation skills and worked well together under a team leader when producing egg curry. In a Year 8 resistant materials lesson, pupils followed instructions well in making the components for their model tractor. They used a number of machining techniques and showed good skills and safety procedures in response to careful preparation and demonstration by their teacher. However, in the significant proportion of unsatisfactory lessons, teachers did not plan their lessons in sufficient detail, did not manage pupils well and did not

use a sufficient range of teaching skills to organise their work or that of their pupils. As a result, pupils did not pay attention when they should, behaviour was often unsatisfactory and little progress was made in the development of skills, knowledge and understanding. In better lessons, teachers give good demonstrations and provide good individual support but in some lessons pupils do not make as much progress as they might because the expected outcomes of learning tasks are not always explained sufficiently and the marking criteria for their work is not made sufficiently clear before they start the exercise. Homework is usually set but could be used more effectively to enhance coursework.

145. Overall, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. Many pupils like design and technology, particularly practical work, and when lessons are well planned and managed, they concentrate well and respond very positively. However, some pupils and groups of pupils can be late to lessons, pay little attention to teachers and are abusive and aggressive to others if teachers do not manage them well or structure their work effectively. In the best lessons, pupils are respected and respectful and appreciate the opportunities given. For example, the team approach to organising working kitchens in food technology enables pupils to work together cooperatively and this adds to their personal development.
146. The curriculum meets most aspects of the National Curriculum at both key stages but there is insufficient coverage of required computer-related work for design and technology. Option choices are restricted because of the lack of suitable specialist teachers. This has caused a reduction in the number of design and technology subjects being offered and some discontentment with substitute courses because they are not well planned or well taught. Little extracurricular activity is taking place but good links with a catering college means that selected pupils have an opportunity to work in a purpose-built catering facility. Although there is some inclusion of multi-cultural influences within food technology and more experienced teachers include some aspects of moral and social development in their work, these areas and citizenship need to be developed more progressively in planned programmes of work. Some procedures are in place for assessing pupils' work but these need further development in order to improve the validity of teachers' assessments, particularly at the end of Year 9.
147. Although the senior manager currently covering the management role works hard, staffing difficulties are having a detrimental effect on the leadership and management of design and technology, which is currently unsatisfactory. Some monitoring takes place of the subject's performance and teaching, but this is not effective in providing support for weaker teachers. Available resources and accommodation are unsatisfactory. Better teachers make satisfactory use of the facilities, but some areas are not well managed and this affects teaching and the standards achieved. Risk assessments are not carried out rigorously enough to improve health and safety standards in workshops. Lack of access to computing resources is preventing the development of computer-aided design and computer aided manufacturing as required by the National Curriculum. Although there was little mention of design and technology in the 2000 report, no unsatisfactory teaching was seen at that time and, as a result, improvement since then is unsatisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- The department has acted effectively on much of the advice given in previous inspection reports in a number of important ways, and displays openness to advice and new ideas. As a result, GCSE results are now well above the national average.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 10 and 11.
- Teachers have high expectations of all pupils in both behaviour and application to study.

Areas for improvement

- Deal with the remaining issues from the last report, the lack of fieldwork in Years 7 to 9 and the underuse of ICT in both key stages.
- Ensure that pupils are adequately aware of what skills they are gaining and of the detailed steps they should take independently towards better performance.
- Employ teaching strategies which cater for the wide spread of abilities in classes.

148. Pupils join the school with below average attainment in geography, especially in relation to the literacy skills on which much understanding and communication depends. In the 2001 teacher assessments at the end of Year 9, only one third of pupils reached the expected standard, Level 5 or above. Although in 2002 nearly half of the students did so, results were well below national averages. However, standards observed throughout Years 7 to 9, and in the current Year 9 in particular, are better than this, approaching the national average overall. This is because the work is well sequenced and well explained, and teachers consistently emphasise the need for pupils to apply themselves to their work. A wide range of ability is evident, particularly in Year 7. By Year 9, average and above average pupils give satisfactory written answers to limited questions, but not many attain the highest levels of response when extended answers require unprompted individual thought.
149. Over the past four years GCSE results have been maintained at well above the national average both for all pupils and for boys, averaging seventy-two per cent. Numbers entered are quite small. Passes at A*-G have been at, or close to, a hundred per cent throughout this period. In 2001 this was significantly better than pupils performed in similar schools. It was also better than pupils' performance in most other subjects in the school. The number opting to take the subject has fluctuated between about a quarter and a half of the year group, but groups contain the whole range of ability and teaching has been successful in ensuring that low attainers and students with special educational needs pass. Similarly, average students have done well to get C grades or better. Few students, however, have gained A* grades, indicating a need to challenge the most able pupils more effectively. A further minority do not complete their courses, but this is at around the average for the school. The observed standards attained by pupils in Year 11 were at about the national average, reflecting their lower attainment in Years 7 to 9 than recent Year 11 groups. Standards in the Year 10 lesson observed were average but standards were higher in exercise books, where most pupils presented work carefully and with good attention to detail.
150. Most pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve satisfactorily relative to their starting point, particularly in their grasp of geographical terms and in their oral ability to demonstrate understanding when carefully questioned. Some achieve well. The rate of progress is slower in Year 7, where many of the ideas encountered in this first term are new, but it is more noticeable and consistent in Years 8 and 9. Here the work in books shows that they steadily acquire geographical knowledge and understanding, for example of features such as the causes and effects of volcanoes and of population change. They also acquire skills, for example in understanding and using maps, in the use and interpretation of data and in more general comprehension of evidence from texts. In

Years 10 and 11, the pupils who have chosen to study geography achieve well, and in Year 10 make progress at a faster rate than in Years 7 to 9. Here the standard of work remains at the national average, but students have adapted well to the new demands of the GCSE course and have covered much content for this stage of the term. The most able produce work that is detailed, well-researched and contains high-level thinking. They link ideas gained from previous work, from research and from other experiences, and sometimes use the library to help with their research. Many still find extended written accounts difficult, however, and literacy levels continue to limit progress for some pupils. In Year 11, achievement levels were lower than in Year 10 and work seen shows less consistent application on the part of the students. Generally, pupils with special educational needs and with English as a second language progress as well as others at both key stages but the gifted and talented do not achieve appropriately in GCSE examinations.

151. The teaching and learning of geography is satisfactory overall with some good characteristics. Most pupils work well, some very well, and co-operate well with teachers and each other. This is because teachers have high expectations of their work and behaviour, explain their aims well and build on what pupils already know. They ensure that pupils are on-task and that they understand the work set. In the best lessons, teachers focused attention quickly and provided work that was pitched at the right level and pace for most pupils, offering extension tasks to the more able. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, pupils learned three ways to recognise different heights on a map and had the opportunity to record this in both written and pictorial forms. Some then went on to describe features of places on maps, using this new information. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and a good understanding of GCSE requirements. Most lessons seen were well structured with a good mixture of teacher explanation and pupil activity. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, pupils enjoyed a structured decision-making process on the siting of settlements, which developed their thinking skills well. Key words, geographical processes and phrases were a feature of all lessons.
152. In about a third of lessons, a significant number of pupils had poor attitudes to work and this slowed the pace for others, despite teachers' good efforts. Also in a few lessons, teachers did not plan fully for the needs of all students, so that some were not completely challenged and made slower progress than they might. In particular, teachers do not yet have a wide enough range of strategies to cater for students' different learning and thinking styles and for the limited literacy of some, although progress has been made in these areas. Other weaknesses in teaching lie in the area of assessment. Teachers mark pupils' books regularly, but comments could be more closely targeted at the progression of specific skills and concepts. Some good use is beginning to be made of National Curriculum levels, but systems are not yet uniform and few students can describe in detail how they need to improve.
153. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Geography is managed effectively in that improvements in standards stem from clear, consistent direction, good teamwork and commitment. It is not possible to make a firm judgement on improvement since the last inspection since little mention was made of geography in the 2000 report although there was some unsatisfactory teaching then and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen during this inspection. There has been progress over the past four years in widening the range of activities to include more problem solving but ICT provision remains minimal and there is no fieldwork in Years 7 to 9, which does not meet statutory regulations. Monitoring of teachers' work and marking is also too informal, and focused evaluation of its impact on learning is underused. The department action plan identifies key priorities well, including most of the above issues, but there has not been enough planning for teachers' professional development from outside sources.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Improving GCSE results in recent years to above average levels.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge.
- The history club, which builds on, and further develops pupils' enthusiasm.

Areas for improvement

- Match tasks to the capabilities of all pupils in the class, so that success is achievable.
- Plan opportunities for using ICT and the library, to enrich pupils' learning.
- Achieve greater consistency in marking and assessment.

154. Results for teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 for 2002 were well below national averages for all pupils and for boys. Results of the small group of GCSE students were above national averages for all pupils and for boys in grades A*-C. For grades A*-G, they fell below national averages for both categories. There has been a trend of improving results for these small cohorts over recent years.
155. At the time of the inspection, the evidence of pupils' work and lessons seen, indicate that Year 9 pupils are working well below national expectations. Although they progress satisfactorily in lessons, their achievement over time is unsatisfactory. In a lesson observed with a Year 9 mixed ability class, pupils were able to comment orally on changes brought about through the upheavals of the industrial revolution but in the reading and writing task that followed, many were unable to scan the text to find the answers looked for and their written work fell well below expectations. Orally, pupils in Year 7 showed confident understanding of events in the reign of King John, but most could not reproduce this standard of work or the knowledge and understanding they had shown in their enthusiastic discussions, in their written work.
156. Evidence from the inspection suggests that, despite recent improvement in the GCSE results of the small option groups, standards are well below national expectations for pupils currently in Year 11. For example, in a lesson on social change in Britain, most pupils in this mixed ability class were unable to show the expected knowledge of these events in their written responses and only a few higher attaining pupils were able to write unaided sentences on the changes that they had discussed with the teacher. In Year 10, the teacher's good subject knowledge of the history requirements for GCSE enabled all pupils to make responses in line with expectations although a significant number of pupils are clearly challenged by the demands of extended writing in a fixed time. Achievement over time is unsatisfactory overall because pupils lack the literacy skills required to support their learning.
157. The teaching and learning observed were satisfactory overall, and sometimes good, but some unsatisfactory teaching and learning were seen. Teacher knowledge and experience is often a strength. For example, in a good lesson with Year 10 pupils, the teacher's knowledgeable and enthusiastic delivery resulted in all pupils in this class being able to write at least some description of propaganda in Nazi Germany, and give an idea of where it might be found. Higher attaining students wrote more fluent accounts that also showed good understanding of the power propaganda could exert on its intended audience. In a good Year 7 lesson, the teacher's enjoyable and constructive range of activities gave pace and motivation to pupils' learning. The clear objective, signalled at the start of the lesson, allowed all pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding, so by the end of the lesson they could begin to shape their written responses effectively. Where teaching was unsatisfactory in a class of Year 11 pupils, learning suffered from the challenging behaviour of some pupils, which affected both their learning, and that of others. The teachers' materials were not always appropriate for the range of

pupils in the class although pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, were able to make progress along with the others through the additional help of the teachers and learning support assistants when they were available. There is no specific provision for gifted and talented pupils but they also make progress similar to others.

158. Pupils' exercise books are regularly marked, although there is some inconsistency in the department. Teachers' comments do not always clearly relate to the target levels used to assess pupils' attainment and achievement. Whilst individual pupils used ICT, pupils' work overall, and the department documents, indicated that little use is currently made of these opportunities to enrich the teaching of history and the work of the department. Numeracy skills are adequately covered when the need arises but the development of literacy is unsatisfactory. The library collection is not used very much by pupils, and requires review to make it reflect more their needs and expectations and the history topics they study.
159. Pupils benefit from the opportunity of attending extra sessions for examination revision. The recently formed history club provides an opportunity for pupils, including the more able, to develop their interest in history. While accommodation and resources are generally satisfactory, there is a need to ensure some protection from the sun in the principal teaching rooms.
160. The department is led satisfactorily. There was no specific mention of history in the 2000 report but in the department handbook, a range of issues is identified. These include more effective use of assessment, more use of ICT to enrich the curriculum, working to support the literacy strategy, and monitoring of teaching to ensure effective planning and management of pupils' learning across the department. All of these issues continue to be pressing for the department.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

However, the use of ICT in other subjects is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Improved standards and achievement at all levels of ability across the school.
- Teaching of specialist ICT lessons.
- Accommodation and resources.
- Attitudes and behaviour in most lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Plan the use of ICT by other subjects, to fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum for their respective subject.
- Manage available resources, to ensure all subjects have access to them.
- Plan for the inclusion of literacy, numeracy, spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and citizenship in programmes of work.
- Increase the proportion of pupils entered for the GCSE examination compared with those who take the course.

161. End of Year 9 teacher assessments have fluctuated considerably over the past three years. In 2001 they were well below national averages but were average in 2002. Current work indicates that standards are slightly below national averages but that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils whose first language is not English, make good progress in Years 7 to 9.

162. The proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades in the GCSE short course for ICT in 2001 and 2002, was well below the national average when compared with boys and all pupils entered nationally. The proportion of those entered, who gained A* to G grades, was well above the national average for all pupils. However, a significant number of pupils who took the course were not entered for the GCSE examination. When taking into account pupils' attainment on entry to the school, and on entry to Year 10, achievement was satisfactory overall.
163. By the end of Year 9, pupils use a range of computer programmes and have experiences in all of the areas required by the National Curriculum. They develop a good range of knowledge about computers and the functions they can perform and many are good at remembering procedures to use these functions in set tasks. Pupils follow a series of set tasks and within this programme they have opportunities for some individual application of the skills they have learnt. For example, in the 'Peveril Hall' project, they have opportunities to apply spreadsheets, to use desktop publishing, to draw programmes and word process in exercises such as designing their own letter headings with logos, to import images into word-processed documents and to create menus. Standards attained vary with ability and commitment to the subject. However, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, benefit from the well-structured programmes of work and, because they feel well supported by this style of learning, achieve well and make good progress. Opportunities to read, write and edit text in word-processing activities has a positive effect on the development of literacy skills and aspects of numeracy are developed through the use of spreadsheets and database work.
164. From work seen during the inspection, standards currently are below average in Years 10 and 11. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding well through set exercises, which contribute to their project work. They follow a structured approach and apply learned skills effectively. For example, in a project on used cars, which uses databases, pupils learn about data validation and the procedures for carrying this out on the computer before applying aspects of this work in their current exercises. Higher attaining and more committed pupils are good at remembering procedures to access the functions of computer programmes and others do so through the good individual support given by teachers. As a result their current work indicates good achievement but the coursework of less committed pupils is behind schedule and indicates that some pupils may not meet the deadlines set by teachers and their opportunity to be entered for the examination. As a result achievement is satisfactory overall.
165. Teaching of specialist ICT is good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, plan their lessons well and have suitably high expectations of behaviour and performance. Pupils are managed well, courses are well structured and a range of teaching methods is used effectively. Good use is made of time and a strong feature of most lessons is the individual help given to pupils in class. However, lesson objectives are not always clear at the start of the lesson nor are assessment criteria for learning activities. Pupils' written work is not marked regularly enough and there is not enough homework. Teachers have suitably high expectations of pupils' behaviour and create good learning environments in most lessons. Most pupils like using computers and, because teachers structure lessons and support individual pupils well so that all pupils achieve some success, most have positive attitudes to their work. Relationships with teachers and fellow pupils are generally good. A few individuals disregard teachers' instructions but, because situations are generally well managed, most other pupils take no notice or discourage this negative behaviour. Projects are based on set exercises, so opportunities for more personal and creative work are limited and this restricts personal development. As a result of the good teaching, learning is good. Structured programmes of work and individual lessons enable pupils of all ability levels to develop knowledge and understanding effectively. Pupils show good level of concentration and interest when using computers. Although there is no specific provision for gifted and talented pupils, higher attaining and more committed pupils remember computer procedures and use their time well. Others, including those with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English, are more reliant on the support they receive within individual exercises but all make progress and achieve well.

166. The use of computers in ICT lessons is good in all years and National Curriculum requirements are met for the subject. Most other subjects are not using computers enough, however, to cover the subject requirements as set out in the National Curriculum. Pupils consider the applications and effects of the use of computers in society but these and other elements of citizenship are not a sufficiently planned part of programmes of work. The use of computers outside lesson time is good, with substantial numbers attending lunch time sessions.
167. The leadership and management of ICT lessons are good but there is not enough monitoring of and support for the use of computers in other subjects. This aspect of management is unsatisfactory. There have been very substantial recent improvements in the facilities for the subject; accommodation is good and the number of computers is in line with national averages. The school has made a very significant commitment to improving the provision for ICT within the school but all subjects do not have sufficient access to computing facilities. In spite of recent staffing difficulties that have required a senior manager to take responsibility for the department on top of many other duties, the current team of teachers and technician are working collectively and well to revise and establish good programmes of work.
168. Although there are weaknesses in areas such as the use of computers in other subjects, since the 2000 inspection there have been improvements in the standards attained, the achievement of all pupils and the provision of resources. Therefore improvement overall is good.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Teaching is consistently sound or good and has improved recently.
- The curriculum is well planned.
- Pupils respond positively to opportunities for active, communicative use of French.
- The good leadership and management of the new head of department are bringing about improvement.

Areas for improvement

- Raise standards, especially in Years 9 and 11, by focusing on extended speaking and writing skills.
- Increase the time allocation for French, which is below the recommended level.
- Improve library provision and generally encourage pupils to read more for information and pleasure.

169. Results of teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002, 2001 and 2000 were well below average. In 2002, no pupils attained the national benchmark of level 5. Pupils currently in Year 9 are working towards level 5, but only the most able can tackle the use of past tenses with real success. Most pupils are still working at levels 3 and 4 and their attainment overall is below expectations.
170. GCSE results in 2002 were well below the national average for all schools and for boys in the numbers gaining grades A*-C. No pupil gained a grade higher than B. Results were lower than in 2001. The pass rate at grades A*-G was above the national average in 2001 and close to it in 2002. Pupils do less well in French than in their other subjects. Pupils in the current Year 11 are predicted to attain grades broadly similar to 2002. In lessons and work seen, they are performing well below expectation. Only the most able are producing work of GCSE grade C standard. The main weakness in their development as linguists is that they are not producing enough extended speech and writing on topics of personal interest.

171. Pupils enter the school with below-average linguistic ability. The current team of teachers has not been in place long enough to bring about fundamental improvement in standards. In relation to their prior attainment although pupils' achievement over time is unsatisfactory, current progress is satisfactory in the lessons seen at both key stages. Pupils now make a good start in Year 7. In one class, they used their listening, speaking and writing skills effectively in combination to describe people. In all lessons seen, they made clear gains in knowledge and understanding of French. They develop their knowledge on key grammatical structures such as past tenses – a good example was seen in Year 10. Their listening and speaking skills are sound – though they lack confidence in giving other than short, spoken answers. Their writing is satisfactory but with too much copying of material rather than writing for their own purposes. Reading for information and pleasure is underdeveloped. Pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English make satisfactory progress. They are fully included in lessons and teachers are generally aware of their needs and provide appropriate support. The department has no specific strategy for pupils who are gifted and talented in languages.
172. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It was good in just under half the lessons seen and none was unsatisfactory. The best features of teaching are the good planning of lessons, using a common format; teachers' extensive use of French in class and the expectation that pupils do likewise; good management and control, making for an orderly and purposeful atmosphere in lessons; awareness of pupils' difficulties with French and the provision of support and encouragement; variety in lessons, with a healthy emphasis on active approaches to learning through communication and use of ICT to enrich the curriculum. Teaching is less successful when pupils are given tasks for which they have not been adequately prepared and when there is too much emphasis on breadth of vocabulary rather than progressive learning of structure to enable meaningful construction of language. Work is marked regularly, but does not consistently offer pupils clear guidance as to how to improve.
173. The quality of pupils' learning is closely related to the quality of teaching and has improved over time. It is also satisfactory. Pupils are motivated by the active, oral-based approach used in most lessons. They listen attentively, show concentration in written tasks, work well together in pairs and respond well in spoken practices and drilling. Their individual spoken responses still show a general lack of confidence, however. Pupils have developed positive attitudes to French: this was notably the case in lessons seen in Years 7 and 10. Their attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory overall – in only one instance in Year 9 was learning disrupted by the immature behaviour of a minority of pupils.
174. The curriculum is well planned and well resourced with up-to-date books in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11, it is well planned but the department has insufficient funding to equip pupils with suitable course books. The overall time allocation for French is below the recommended level, which is clearly having an impact on standards. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress have improved, particularly with the introduction of individual targets linked to National Curriculum levels.
175. The recently appointed head of department has brought about significant improvement through good leadership and management. Planning is consistent and there is a good team spirit in the department. Teaching is effectively monitored. During the week of the inspection, one teacher was absent and all staff covering lessons were provided with clear lessons plans and the necessary materials to enable them to teach the lessons effectively. Development planning has identified appropriate targets to continue the process of improvement. Library provision is unsatisfactory with too few books to encourage pupils to read more for information and pleasure.

176. Marking was identified as an area for improvement in the 2000 inspection report. Recent initiatives have begun to tackle this although there is still much to do to raise standards in French. Significant improvement has now been made in the key areas of teaching and learning. The overall picture is of an improving department, with the capacity to maintain this improvement, given the current team of teachers.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Teaching is enthusiastic with effective use of musical demonstrations.
- GCSE pupils enjoy the practical activities and work well in small groups.

Areas for Improvement

- Guide and support the work of the department more effectively to improve the quality of leadership and management, which is currently poor.
- Raise expectations of teaching and learning, particularly in covering the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- Set up systems for assessment so pupils know what they need to do to improve.
- Provide opportunities for written work to enhance the practical sessions and allow pupils to make better progress.
- Use computers and music software within lessons.
- Deal with the health and safety issues arising from the poor accommodation.

177. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were below average when compared with national figures and those for boys. Music has not been taught as a GCSE subject for several years. In 2002 one pupil was entered for the full examination but comparison with national statistics is not possible.
178. By the end of Year 9 standards are mostly below or well below average. This represents an unsatisfactory level of achievement because pupils are not making enough progress from their musical attainment on entry to the school which is below average. Pupils who study English as an additional language and those with special educational needs also make unsatisfactory progress. There is no particular provision for the gifted and talented but by the age of 14, higher attainers produce simple short melodies using electronic keyboards. They cannot, however, notate their pieces so they have to try and remember them from week to week. Performance standards are below average, with many pupils unable to maintain their own part within a group piece. Few pupils can identify or discuss features of music from different times or places. They have little knowledge of musical devices and consequently do not know how to incorporate them into their own compositions. Pupils do not use or understand musical technical vocabulary because they have no means of noting any terms they may hear or use and because there is no formal policy within the department on improving literacy skills.
179. Standards in Year 11 are below average and represent unsatisfactory achievement. Pupils studying GCSE music enjoy the practical activities in lessons. They work collaboratively when composing in small groups. However, they cannot demonstrate a suitable understanding of musical history and harmonic analysis and lack the basic musical knowledge normally found at this stage of the course. Higher attaining pupils compose extended pieces on the electronic keyboard but they have a low level knowledge of some basic musical terminology such as ternary and rondo form and simple musical elements such as timbre and dynamics. A small number are competent musicians as was demonstrated by a Year 11 flute player in a performance recorded on CD. Lower attainers achieve very little in lessons because they do not understand most aspects of the subject. The majority of pupils do not use musical terminology

when describing their own music and the music they hear. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have no written work. They have not covered large amounts of the GCSE syllabus and Year 11 pupils have virtually no work to show for their two years of study.

180. Pupils do not learn appropriately because the teaching they receive is unsatisfactory. Teaching is enthusiastic and good use of musical demonstration is incorporated into most lessons but pupils are not learning enough about music. The mid and long term plans fail to address the full requirements of the National Curriculum and so large chunks of musical knowledge are left out. Individual lesson plans fail to cater for all pupils' needs. Pupils show little respect for the musical instruments they use. For example, out of the thirteen electronic keyboards available, eight have been vandalised with keys broken off and graffiti scratched into the casing. There is an over emphasis on practical music making. Pupils do not write anything in music lessons because they do not have exercise, manuscript or note books. This prevents them from improving their writing skills. They cannot make notes about new information and are unable to remember important facts or musical vocabulary. As a result, they are not well prepared for the demands of the GCSE course or further study of music. Pupils do not get enough opportunities to perform in ensembles. Listening skills are not taught well and as a result pupils do not know how to focus their listening during musical extracts and when listening to each other perform. Consequently, pupils do not listen to or respect the views of others. Contributions to literacy and numeracy skills are very poor with no reference made to them during lessons or in planning. Lessons rarely have clear learning objectives, which results in pupils being unsure of what is expected of them. Lower attaining pupils have very low concentration levels, which frequently lead to unsatisfactory behaviour during lessons. This is disruptive to the rest of the class and hinders learning. Attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory and the management of pupils is generally unsatisfactory with too much emphasis on maintaining acceptable behaviour rather than focusing on learning. Several lessons overran due to unsatisfactory time management. Pupils are frequently asked to practise work undertaken in lessons at home but many do not have access to keyboards. With no written account of their work they have to rely on trying to remember what they have covered from week to week.
181. Leadership and management of music are poor and are not monitored sufficiently by the senior management. Teaching is not as good now as it was in 2000, when some teaching was judged to be very good, and progress since then has been unsatisfactory. Documentation for the subject is very poor. The schemes of work lack detail and are unsatisfactory as an aid to planning successful lessons. Pupils do not make enough musical progress during lessons and over time because there is no systematic planning for the subject. The quality and effectiveness of assessment are very poor because there are no systems in place to inform pupils of how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve. The statutory requirement for ICT within the subject is not being met because pupils do not use computers in lessons. There has been recent development with this but pupils have never used the two computers in the storeroom and the new software is still in its wrapper. Because of the lack of enough specialist teachers, the time allocation in Year 7 is unsatisfactory with pupils missing out on a whole term of music lessons. Resources are poor, with many broken keyboards. Pupils do not get the opportunity to use other kinds of sound sources such as tuned percussion instruments or instruments from cultures other than western. This restricts pupils' understanding and experience of many aspects of music. Accommodation for the subject is unsatisfactory. The ceiling of the music room is infested with a large number of squirrels, which run around loudly and produce dust and other residue that falls into the room. The library is seldom used to carry out research into musical history. The head of department has very little time to manage the subject because the department is understaffed. As a result of these significant weaknesses, the music curriculum does not meet the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, pupils do not make enough progress and improvement is unsatisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teachers have high expectations and good class management, with well-structured lessons, clear objectives and thorough evaluation, so learning is good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, and help them to achieve well.
- Very good extracurricular provision enhances learning opportunities.
- The department is well led and managed.
- The school has been awarded a Sportsmark.

Areas for improvement

- Establish consistent links between practical and theory to enhance learning even further and improve the preparation for the examination course.
- Ensure that all teachers set progressive targets for pupils to improve basic skills.

182. Pupils enter the school with skills and understanding that are below average in physical education. The 2002 teacher assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 were above average compared with schools nationally, indicating that pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. Work seen during the inspection however, was not as high as this and was in line with national averages.
183. In 2001, GCSE results were well below average for grades A*-C and above average for grades A*-G when compared with national results. The results in 2002 were not as high, mainly because many more pupils took the examination. Only nineteen per cent of those entered gained A*-C passes which was less than half the average for all schools and boys. However, almost every boy achieved a grade A*-G pass.
184. The work seen during the inspection shows that the standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 9 are average when compared with national expectations. This judgement is lower than the assessment results and indicates that teachers were too generous in their assessment. Nevertheless, pupils achieve well in comparison with their standard on entry into the school. At the beginning of Year 7 pupils have weak knowledge of gymnastics and dance. Teachers work hard to build up pupils' movement vocabulary and their awareness of space and levels, but pupils' work is below expected levels in linking movements and sequences. They have had little opportunity for these activities in their primary schools. In a Year 7 gymnastics lesson, high attaining pupils had a good understanding of technical terms, including naming muscles. Low attaining pupils achieved well in the practical elements of the lesson because the teacher focused pupils well on what was required through example, demonstration, good organisation and high expectations. All pupils attained the initial stages of balance. They gradually acquire the skills and understanding to improve their performance so that, by the end of Year 9, pupils work close to national standards. For example, in a Year 9 gymnastics lesson, high attaining pupils built on previous learning to improve technique and get extension in vaulting; low attaining pupils managed a basic performance which included the essential elements but lacked quality, finish and technique. Pupils were able to suggest suitable exercises for the warm up of different groups of muscles. Standards are affected by absence. In a Year 8 dance lesson, where pupils were well motivated to achieve, pupils, who do not attend regularly, hampered some group dances so that routines were disrupted. Pupils worked hard to compromise and adapt but the quality of work was affected.
185. Standards attained by pupils in lessons at the end of Year 11 in the GCSE course are average. Most students achieve satisfactorily compared with their results at the end of Year 9. For example, in a Year 11 GCSE football lesson, pupils effected strong, well-directed passes. High

attaining pupils moved the ball well and exercised good control using a variety of dribbling techniques. They demonstrated good awareness of the flexibility offered by different areas of the foot. One gifted and talented boy met the differential targets set for him by the teacher and moved the ball with alternate feet. In core-curriculum physical education, pupils' achievement is good with pupils working to above expected standards. For example, in a Year 11 fitness lesson, high attaining pupils met and exceeded targets. Low attaining pupils were well motivated by an understanding of the benefits of fitness in muscular strength and endurance.

186. Pupils with special educational needs and the gifted and talented achieve well and pupils with English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily because of the good, secure structure of lessons and the individual attention they receive. Teachers are always clear in their explanations, give good examples, use visual aids and conduct demonstrations for good understanding. This is useful for all pupils but particularly benefits low attaining pupils, pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs.
187. Overall, teaching and learning are good. They are particularly effective in Years 7 and 8 where teachers have a clear focus on raising standards and extending pupils' experiences. For example, in a Year 7 dance lesson, pupils demonstrated their learning of strong movements and good timing by performing the New Zealand rugby team's HAKA dance and chant. In several groups, tasks were provided for pupils which met their particular needs, so that every pupil was able to progress and move on to the next target. Pupils are aware of their assessment scores but not of how improvements can be made. They are, however, frequently given demonstrations of good practice during evaluation at the end of lessons. Teachers use ICT well when teaching theoretical work. For example, in Year 10, pupils were presented with animated depiction, which gave them better understanding of inhalation, exhalation and the transfer of oxygenated blood. This enhanced their literacy development and the usage and spelling of technical terms. Teaching and learning are not as good when pupils are not given all the criteria for success, when areas for improvement are not properly identified, or when work is not marked against national standards. They are not as effective as they should be when theory and practical work are not linked. Literacy and numeracy, although a part of some lessons, are incidental within lessons rather than planned for. In GCSE theory work, for example, graphs on fitness were rendered unsatisfactory for revision purposes because they were not labelled. There is little opportunity for pupils to access computer facilities.
188. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Teachers insist on good behaviour and support the structured way in which the department succeeds in its expectations. Opportunities for learning are enhanced by the very good provision of extracurricular activities. Pupils are offered a wide range of activities including team matches. Teachers check the balance of teams in team games and include all pupils in questioning. Pupils have equal chances within games so, for example, in team games, positions are changed for better understanding, appreciation and learning. Pupils are considerate of one another. In rugby, for example, in complicated passing exercises where pupils have to avoid one another or where they recycle the ball, they are aware of safety. Pupils are aware of the vulnerability of bare feet when returning and stacking equipment in a small storage area. Non-participants change and are included in the lesson as far as possible. They contribute well and are engaged in helping others to succeed by giving feedback and critically analysing performance.
189. Leadership and management of the department are good. Teachers work together well. There is strong teamwork and teachers have the expectation, capacity and will to succeed. They provide good role models, share expertise and work to their strengths. Good organisation, planning and procedures are in place although some schemes of work need updating. Provision of resources is satisfactory. Books for independent learning are available for examination courses in the department and the library supplements learning with additional satisfactory material. Accommodation is satisfactory and includes shared use of a sports hall, use of a gymnasium, extensive playing fields and outdoor courts. There are three changing areas, one of which is too

small and without showering facilities. A theory base has been established for teaching theory lessons. This is satisfactory and is close enough to practical areas to promote good chances of appropriate links between the practical and theoretical elements of courses. Teachers make the best use of the facilities available.

190. Improvement since the 2000 inspection has been satisfactory. Many of the positive features such as the very good teaching in the previous report are mirrored in this report. The school now has a Sportsmark, extracurricular activities are now very good, use of data to target improvement is in place with potential D grade and below pupils targeted for extra support. A development plan links with the school development plan and the department teachers have unifying strategies to link expectation, lesson planning and behaviour management. There is still a need for consistency in the development of basic skills and further work is needed to improve examination performance, including links between practical and theoretical elements for full understanding of the subject. The physical education department is well placed for further success. The department has a high profile because of its popularity, its extracurricular provision and its participation in team matches and competition.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall the provision for religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- The good achievement made by pupils in Years 7 to 9, especially in learning from religion, giving their own views and applying issues.
- The emphasis on understanding and respect for different beliefs and views.
- Aspects of teaching that contribute to the good achievement of the pupils.
- The recently written schemes of work giving a clear structure to the work.

Areas for improvement.

- Meet statutory requirements to provide religious education for all pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- Increase resources including artefacts, to supplement the teaching and aid the learning of the pupils.
- Extend the range of work to support pupils with weaker literacy skills and extend higher ability pupils.
- Produce an assessment scheme that meets the Agreed Syllabus requirements.

191. Pupils join the school with knowledge, skills and understanding that are well below the expectations of the Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus for religious education used by the school. Pupils come from a variety of primary schools and have differing experiences of religious education. They have studied world religions at different depths and also have weak literacy skills. The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 9 is below the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus and that improvement represents good achievement. Work in lessons is of the expected level with an emphasis on learning from religions and applying the knowledge learnt to relevant situations. However, longer-term recall of world religions is weaker and many pupils confuse them. Evidence from the inspection shows that the current Year 8 are in line to meet the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus by the end of Year 9, although they are much stronger when discussing issues and giving their ideas orally than when writing down the work.
192. Religious education is offered as an option subject. There are no pupils studying religious education as an option or as a core subject in the current Years 10 and 11. A group did take the GCSE examination in 2002. When comparing the percentage of pupils obtaining grades A* to C, results were below the national average for all pupils but in line with the national average for boys.

193. There is an attitude of inclusion for all from Years 7 to 9 and most pupils make good progress and achieve well. Exceptions to this are those with special educational needs, the gifted and talented and those for whom English is an additional language. They make only satisfactory progress because not enough is done to address their particular learning needs. Attitudes to religious education are satisfactory. Pupils work efficiently, are happy to contribute to lessons, show respect for each other's views and generally take a pride in the presentation of their work although, at times, it is not properly labelled which makes revision difficult.
194. The teaching of religious education is satisfactory with a number of good aspects. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and there is no significant difference in the teaching in Years 7 to 9. No religious education teaching was seen in Years 10 and 11. Strengths within teaching that enable effective learning to take place are the challenge given to pupils in coming to terms with difficult concepts and the good teacher-pupil relationships that ensure that pupils feel confident in expressing personal views. The very good knowledge and understanding of the staff is used to stimulate and maintain interest in the lessons by devising a variety of ways of approaching the topics. Weaker aspects in teaching that inhibit learning by some pupils are lessons where pupils are passive rather than actively involved and lessons that do not challenge the most able whilst at the same time supporting those with particular learning needs. The marking of the pupils' books gives positive encouragement and attention is paid to correct spellings. Work is marked using the school structure of an effort and attainment grade but the use of constructive comments so that pupils know what to do to raise their attainment level is inconsistent. The use of ICT is still limited. The formal assessment of the pupils' work is not currently being carried out as required by the Agreed Syllabus and, although all lessons have an emphasis on learning from the religion, tests have a major emphasis on the facts of the religion.
195. The curriculum provided for religious education in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory; it covers the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus but visits to places of worship have not yet taken place. The lack of visits, as well as a lack of artefacts in the school, means that a valuable dimension of learning and understanding is missing from the course. The videos in use are the personal property of the teacher and not the school and there are not enough copies of most textbooks. This shortage of resources is affecting the learning and understanding of pupils and is unsatisfactory. The department makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. When studying a range of world religions, consideration is given to both the religious and cultural aspects and respect is endemic in all aspects of the course. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is poor. Pupils study moral, environmental and family relationship topics within PHSE; they do not, however, reflect on how people with different religious beliefs react to these issues. As a result, the course cannot be considered as religious education. Furthermore, the Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus requires that an accredited course be studied, although taking an examination is not obligatory. All pupils are required by law to study religious education and as a result the school does not meet statutory requirements in this respect.
196. The teaching of religious education is managed efficiently on a day-to-day basis. The schemes of work for most aspects of the course have recently been rewritten and there are plans for delivering the work in a more developmental way, so that pupils' understanding of how one religion impacts on another are clearer. However the leadership and management of religious education overall is unsatisfactory in that many management areas have not been undertaken. There are no departmental policies covering aspects such as literacy, numeracy and citizenship, the required assessment is not being undertaken, there is no use of data to monitor pupil and departmental improvement and the school is not fulfilling the legal requirements. Although teaching has improved since the last report, at that time it was stated that the statutory requirements were being met. In this respect, the situation is worse and so improvement is unsatisfactory.

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

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

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

GCE A level and AVCE courses (2001)

	Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E	% gaining grades A-B	Average point score			
	School							
	England							
	School							
	England							
	School							
	England							
Mathematics		12	92	87	25	43	5.5	5.8
Chemistry		7	57	90	14	43	2.6	5.9
Biology		6						

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

All the subjects in this area were focused on for detailed inspection.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Relationships between teachers and students are positive and supportive.
- Teachers are aware of students' strengths and weaknesses.

Areas for improvement

- Cater for the full ability range and suitably challenge the highest-attaining students.
- Expand schemes of work to provide a fuller framework for teaching and learning.
- Match courses to the needs of pupils to reduce drop out rates.
- Plan for more use of ICT and other opportunities for students' independent learning.

197. Standards in the mathematics A2-level examination in 2001 were in line with national averages, and similar in 2002. Eighty-nine per cent of students achieved a pass grade and twenty-two per cent achieved A or B grades. The A2-level results have remained in line with national averages over the past three years although the number of students entered has fallen. On the basis of the students' GCSE results in Year 11, achievement in A2-level mathematics is in line with expectations. At the end of Year 12, students enter for the AS-level mathematics examination. Forty-six per cent of the students achieved a pass grade but no students achieved the A or B grades. Drop out rates are high and, in 2002, no students continued with mathematics into Year 13. The department also offers a GCSE resit class but numbers are small.
198. On the evidence of the students' work and the lessons observed, standards in Year 12 remain in line with national averages. The work is developmental and builds well on previous learning, so that by the end of Year 12, students can confidently solve quadratic equations, identify arithmetic and geometric series, differentiate from first principles and use integration to find the area under a curve. In mechanics they have a good understanding of vectors, and in statistics they have a basic knowledge of measures of location and dispersion.
199. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are satisfactory. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and make good use of their knowledge of examination requirements. They enjoy positive relationships with their classes and offer their time freely to assist students outside lessons. However, too little attention is given to the spread of ability and the highest-attaining students are not sufficiently challenged with enriching and more intellectually demanding work. Too often, teachers' talk dominates the lesson so that there are insufficient opportunities for students to develop their independent learning skills.
200. Teachers have a good awareness of their students' individual strengths and weaknesses. Marking is regular with useful, supportive comments provided and exemplar solutions offered to students. Target setting lacks rigour and target grades are sometimes inconsistent with those set in the partner school. To date, there is insufficient monitoring of external examination data to raise issues for further investigation. Students' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory; they demonstrate positive attitudes and good relationships with the teacher and with one another. They appreciate the importance of mathematics but are reluctant to involve themselves in lessons and do not take enough responsibility for their learning.

201. The curriculum in the sixth form includes AS and A2-level mathematics, covering modules in pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics. The department operates an open-access policy to study mathematics in the sixth form, although high numbers of unqualified results and increasing drop out rates confirm that these courses are not appropriate for all students.
202. The provision for literacy in mathematics in the sixth form is satisfactory, although a significant number of sixth form folders are marred by poor presentation skills and work which provides little support for later revision. Reading around the subject is not sufficiently encouraged and the stock of books in the library is inadequate. The provision for ICT is unsatisfactory and students confirm little use of this to support their work, other than the use of calculators.
203. The provision for numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory. Number work is developed well for sales analysis, profit and loss accounts and to calculate elasticity of demand in business studies. Students make use of standard form in calculating the rate of arrival of photons in energy calculations, and use algebra for substitution in laws of motion for physics. Students design questionnaires and analyse these for research in media studies. They read and interpret graphs in biology and make good use of charts, tables and graphs in sociology.
204. The leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory. The heads of department have a good awareness of the strengths of the department but there are no formal lines of responsibility and no shared strategic development of mathematics in the sixth form. The response to recent curricular changes has been good but schemes of work are not provided so that links between the various strands of mathematics and opportunities to use resources such as computers are not highlighted. Staffing is adequate, accommodation is satisfactory and resources appropriate. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Chemistry

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

Strengths

- Teaching is effective in Year 12, and in some lessons in Year 13, with a good emphasis on practical work.
- Schemes of work are well planned as a result of good cooperation amongst staff.
- Relationships between students and most staff are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Tackle the issues of poor teaching of some classes which results in little learning and contributes to the high drop-out rates at the end of Year 12.
- Increase teaching time in Year 13.
- Monitor both teaching and learning and the organisation and quality of students' notes.

205. A2-level results in 2001 were poor with three failures from seven candidates. In 2002 results were similarly weak with three failures from eight candidates. The grade range in both years varied between 'A' and 'U'. The drop-out rate, after completion of the AS course is high. Just four candidates chose to continue with A2 studies in Year 13 this year, after fourteen took the AS course. Many more girls than boys are currently in the Years 12 and 13 groups. Data was not available to indicate the extent of students' success, considering their GCSE results.
206. Standards of work of the current Year 12 students are above average, reflecting their attainment in GCSE examinations in 2002. Students are making good progress in their studies, achieving well. Year 13 standards, however, are below average and results in their AS examinations in 2002 indicate substantial underachievement at the end of their first year in the sixth form. The two principal causes of this inconsistent and unsatisfactory picture are weaknesses in some teaching and insufficient teaching time, with just four hours a week available in Year 13.

207. Year 12 students showed good practical skills as they reacted the halogens with various reagents and applied their knowledge of oxidation and reduction. Health and safety considerations were given a high priority. The students' notes at this early stage in the course show good coverage of the AS modules. The small Year 13 group have some good notes as well, showing appropriate coverage of most areas taught. Little monitoring of students' notes is carried out, however. The small sample of notes seen indicates that some need to be arranged in a more structured way, to enable students to revise efficiently and effectively the large body of scientific knowledge required
208. The quality of teaching observed and evidence from the students' files show that teaching in Year 12 is good. Work is planned well to meet students' needs, with practical work emphasised throughout the course. Explanations are clear, provided by staff who have a good knowledge of chemistry, although at times more in-depth questioning of understanding would be helpful during both theory and practical sessions. The different styles of the teaching team are appreciated by students and relationships are very good. This good teaching results in good learning and achievement.
209. In Year 13, four hours of teaching time is timetabled rather than the five available in Year 12. Effective teaching takes place for most of this time, which is appreciated by students. Work is interesting and relevant and reflects syllabus requirements. Some poor teaching was observed, however, where students learnt very little in the hour period. Students are pleased with their progress in Year 12 and with much that takes place in Year 13. They are very unhappy with the poor quality teaching, however, and the impact of this on their likely A-level results. They said that they were unable to recommend chemistry in the sixth form until the issue of poor teaching is resolved. In lessons, students are attentive, work well together and use textbooks purposefully. They make less use of computers than is desirable, but this is an area of current focus and the development of key skills is satisfactory. In a poor lesson observed, the students had researched four areas of chemistry and had been asked to present their findings using ICT. The four topics were of very different complexity. Very low-level computer skills were used, and when the presentations were completed, earlier than expected, nothing was taught for the second half of the lesson. Students' learning in this session was poor and the hour was largely wasted.
210. Facilities for teaching A-level chemistry are good. All lessons take place in a modern well-equipped laboratory and resources are good. Up-to-date textbooks have been bought and students have access to the Internet through modern ICT facilities in the sixth form library. Sufficient homework is set by most staff, but not all, and similarly, most staff mark students' work thoroughly. Mark books indicate that most staff keep appropriate records of students' progress. Students find it unhelpful, however, when teachers predict different grades for the same module. Teachers' liaison over assessment is, therefore, unsatisfactory. Leadership and management of the two departments that together provide the teaching, resources and direction for chemistry, are good in some ways, but unsatisfactory overall. Staff meet together only about twice a term to discuss teaching and learning of the subject. The syllabus has been carefully subdivided amongst the teaching teams. New schemes of work are being written to help ensure good coverage of requirements. The known teaching problem has not been resolved, however, and responsibility for monitoring, evaluation and action is unclear, resulting in the unsatisfactory situation in Year 13. There are too few references in the last inspection report to teaching and learning chemistry to enable a judgement to be made about progress since then.

Biology

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good overall and some very good for active learning.
- Students' good attitudes help them to learn well.
- A good contribution is made to the teaching of key skills.

Areas for improvement

- Raise the standard of some aspects of teaching, such as clarity of explanations by some teachers.
- Increase the time available for investigative work and organise laboratory work more efficiently.
- Improve coordination to achieve consistent standards of teaching, learning and monitoring of standards.

211. Results at AS level in 2001 were below average, which reflected the cohort's attainment on entry to the course. Results at A2-level in 2001 and 2002 were broadly average. Past results have fluctuated. Girls have generally tended to score lower than in other subjects. Boys' results have improved to above average, but numbers have been very small. Students in the current Years 12 and 13 started their courses with average GCSE results. Standards seen in lessons and samples of work meet expectations for the course. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds do at least as well as their peers.
212. Teaching was good overall. In Year 12, there was consistency in teaching method. Teaching on mitosis was very good and students responded with very good attitudes. Students' pace of learning was good and students are used to the challenge of independent work. They extract meaning from a wide range of texts and use the Internet to acquire information. Students' presentation of information on cell division, using their own models, was very good. The teacher asked challenging questions, which enabled the students to learn well. Students participated actively in lessons; almost all students gave good responses. Year 12 students were also active in learning about diffusion, osmosis and the fluid mosaic theory of the cell membrane. Their presentational skills were less good in this session but they made good use of the Internet and of digital microscopes, and their learning was good. In both Year 12 classes, teachers' subject knowledge was very good.
213. In Year 13, there were examples of very good attitudes and good learning when the students were working on nerve impulses. They were able to carry through investigations on reaction time and reach a good level in their analysis of results. The teacher was able to compensate for the students' under-developed skills in the use of ICT, and reach a successful conclusion. This lesson showed a very good promotion of independent learning and gave evidence of attainment in biological knowledge and understanding that met A-level expectations. However, there were some defects in the teaching of the Year 13 food module. Parts of the lesson were well conducted, but sometimes, the teacher's explanations were unclear and board work on metabolic pathways was confusing. At the same time, the organisation of laboratory work was badly handled and students could not have completed the planned work in the time available. At present, planned investigations do not fit conveniently into a single period, and double periods are not available for these activities.
214. Literacy skills are promoted well, for example in students' presentation of argument and the skills of presenting the results of their own research in Year 12. The interactive textbooks contribute well to students' learning. The use of ICT makes a good contribution to this work and numeracy skills are developed well within the coursework.

215. Student attitudes are positive. They acknowledge that the teaching methods and activities effectively develop their understanding. They are grateful for the opportunities for independent work and group work and appreciate that their learning experiences in Year 12 contribute significantly to their good achievement in Year 13.
216. The curriculum is satisfactory, as are procedures for assessment, which assist students to achieve well. Guidance informs students of their levels of attainment and what they need to do to improve further. Resources are good and have been improved recently, but equipment is not available for some aspects of ICT such as data-logging. There is sound library provision and good provision of textbooks, although students are asked to contribute to the costs of these. Staffing is good. Students of all levels of attainment are supported with detailed marking and guidance on how to improve. The opportunities for independent learning provide a good challenge for higher-attaining students, and particularly for those who are gifted and talented.
217. Management of the subject is sound. Relationships between teachers and technicians are good and appropriate liaison takes place over schemes of work and resource development. However, essentially the two schools work separately on the year groups they teach and, in Year 13, separately on the modules they teach. Thus there is no consistency of style of teaching and learning, and no systematic monitoring of standards of achievement or teaching. There was no mention of biology in previous reports but standards in the sixth form teaching were good and they remain good in biology. Improvement since the last inspections has been sound.

Physics

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

Strengths

- Some teaching is good.
- Provision of books in the library is good.
- Students show conscientious attitudes to their learning.

Areas for improvement

- Plan the course more consistently and effectively in order to raise students' performance and their enjoyment of the subject.
- Share good practice to improve the overall quality of teaching.
- Plan for more consistent use of ICT and the development of key skills.
- Use value-added data when planning the curriculum.
- Ensure that resources, including textbooks, are appropriate for the course.

218. The A2-level examination results in 2001 were well below the national average. Eight students took the examination. In 2002, only 4 students entered and results were again well below the national average. In both years, girls achieved the very small number of A grades. It is not possible to compare the performance of the 2001 students with those in previous years.
219. Standards of work of current students are below average. In Year 13, students achieve below the level their GCSE results would suggest. They achieved less than expected in an unsatisfactory lesson on the Doppler effect, for example, because the lesson structure was not focused on their learning needs. Their written work was well presented, but was largely notes and calculations with little explanation. Year 12 students are finding the change to A-level very challenging because of inconsistencies in the teaching. In a well-structured lesson on work and energy, for example, they recalled the law of conservation of energy, stating it clearly. They discussed and applied energy formulae to problem solving. However, in an unsatisfactory lesson on gravitational potential energy, they were unable to see the purpose of their work.

220. Students' learning is unsatisfactory overall because teaching is unsatisfactory. Some very good teaching was seen, but a significant proportion was unsatisfactory. The very good teaching was characterised by good relationships and careful planning to help the students connect physical evidence to mathematical explanations. In such lessons, students were involved in their learning through discussion and opportunities to explain their work to the rest of the class. Their confidence grew as the lesson proceeded and they enjoyed the work. Unsatisfactory lessons were characterised by the teacher reading through photocopied sheets. There was little opportunity for student involvement and they were unable to ask questions because they did not understand the work. However, they were attentive and assisted the teacher when wrong equations were provided to solve a problem.
221. In their own time, students go over the work using textbooks in an attempt to follow those parts that they have not understood in lessons. Although they appreciate the good teaching, they do not find the overuse of photocopied sheets helpful and are aware that they have significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Students had chosen physics because they enjoyed it at GCSE level and found it interesting. They are now very disillusioned and all those spoken to would not recommend the sixth form course. Several Year 12 students will drop physics as soon as they are able.
222. The unsatisfactory teaching and learning stem from the inconsistent way in which the course is managed and taught. One half of the course has a satisfactory scheme of work whilst the other half is a list of textbook pages. Here, opportunities for cross-curricular elements such as key skills and the use of ICT are not identified. This split approach means that the course lacks coherence and the unsatisfactory teaching has a detrimental effect on the good teaching. Teachers do, however, monitor performance through regular testing so that students feel that they know how well they are doing. There is no analysis of the mismatch between predicted and actual performance in order to improve curriculum planning. The department makes a good input into the library to provide an interesting range of books and periodicals. However, resources at departmental level are insufficient to equip a modern physics department appropriately. Students have to buy their own textbooks although the department arranges this for them so that they benefit from group discounts. References in the last inspection reports to teaching and learning physics are insufficient to enable a judgement to be made about progress since then.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

Design and technology

The focus was on A-level design and technology.

Overall the provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teachers work well together; their knowledge and understanding extend students' learning.
- Good use is made of monitoring and assessment to raise students' understanding.
- Students have very positive attitudes.

Areas for improvement

- Extend students' experiences into computer-aided design and making.
- Develop students' skills in applying technical knowledge and understanding when designing.

223. The school offers courses at AS and A2-level. About 15 students study the subject at AS level in Year 12 and this falls to about half in the Year 13 A-level course. Results in the 2001 examinations were above average. Results were lower in 2002 and were similar to those of 2000.

224. Standards of students currently in Years 12 and 13 meet the expectations for the course and they achieve well, over time, given their standards on starting the course. Students have a well-developed knowledge and understanding of materials and processes and use product analysis and effective research techniques to support their designing and making. However, students are not rigorous enough in their application of technical knowledge and understanding when designing, and this often leads to superficial annotation and underdeveloped ideas. Students have a clear appreciation of the implications of social, moral and cultural considerations on product design and a sound understanding of the wider implications of design decisions. Their work is characterised by a thorough and detailed approach to all aspects of study; they work hard and take great care in their presentation. This is apparent in the Year 12 product study, where thorough analysis of an existing product leads to improved design for a target market. Students use a good variety of presentation styles in their work, and ideas are clearly annotated against specified criteria. The use of ICT is satisfactory and leads to good standards of presentation. However, computer-aided design and manufacturing are not being developed which is a weakness in the provision.
225. The quality of teaching in the three lessons seen was satisfactory, as was students' learning. Lessons were well planned, with a brisk pace and focused teaching. The teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and respond well to students' queries, drawing on a wide range of examples to support learning. The quality of teacher-led discussions is good; they are focused and relevant. However, some lessons are too dominated by the teacher, which limits students' opportunities to achieve independently. Teachers use assessment and monitoring procedures well. Work is assiduously marked against examination board criteria and targets are set for individuals. However, teachers' expectations do not focus sufficiently on students applying their technical knowledge in enough depth while designing.
226. Students' attitudes to the subject are very positive. They are interested in their lessons; concentrate well and work hard. Behaviour throughout the department is excellent. Students are polite and demonstrate a due regard for health and safety.
227. The leadership and management of design and technology are satisfactory. A strength is the way the teachers work together and this has meant, for example, that there is clear continuity and progression from the Year 12 course into Year 13. The new A-level in product design has been successfully introduced, and, overall, the department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

BUSINESS

Business studies and economics were focus subjects, but business AVCE and GNVQ intermediate business courses were sampled. There were no results in business AVCE in 2002. In the one lesson observed, students worked well independently and showed positive attitudes. The teacher had good subject knowledge and provided very good support for lower-attaining students. Students understood the principles of book-keeping and used spreadsheets to display and analyse financial data. In GNVQ intermediate business, results have been good over recent years. In the very good lesson seen, students applied motivation theories to the workplace. They achieved very well, and their attainment was above the course expectation at this stage.

Business studies

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

Strengths

- The students do well in examinations and their achievement is good.
- The subject is well led and effectively managed.
- The good teaching supports students' learning well and enables them to build up their knowledge and understanding effectively.
- Teachers know the students well and relationships are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Increase opportunities for students to take greater responsibility for their learning, particularly higher-attaining students.

228. A2-level results in 2001 were in line with the national average. Results for 2002 show improved average point scores, with a higher proportion of students gaining grades A and B. There has been a marked improvement in results since the last report. Students do better in business studies than most other subjects. Overall, girls and boys do equally well.
229. The standards of work of current students are in line with course expectations. When their prior learning is considered, Year 13 students achieve well. In the lessons seen, their learning was good as a result of the high expectations of the teaching and the challenging activities they undertook. For example, students accurately applied their knowledge and understanding of time series analysis in a variety of business contexts to make predictions of sales. Students were given much support, and this encouraged the lower-attaining students and was particularly helpful for those who had missed work. However, the majority of students take too little responsibility for their learning.
230. Year 12 students achieve well. They recall and apply knowledge effectively. In a lesson on laws and their impact on business, they showed a good understanding of technical language in describing how legislation affected, for example, recruitment, wages and conditions. The well-organised teaching, with clear learning objectives, facilitates the transition from GCSE to advanced study. Students' numerical and literacy skills are equal to the demands of the course. Work in lessons and regular homework provide many opportunities for developing key skills although students' files include very few examples of work done using ICT. The proportion of students completing the AS course and continuing at A2-level is high.
231. Students learn well as a result of the good teaching. Comprehensive schemes of work support the thorough planning of lessons. Time is carefully organised and lessons proceed at a brisk pace. The teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of the subject result in interesting expositions and clear explanations. Therefore, students achieve a sound understanding of important ideas and are able to respond confidently when questioning is used to consolidate their learning. Students appreciate the debates they take part in, for example on 'The Third Runway'.
232. Students build well upon existing knowledge to achieve a broader and deeper understanding as a result of teachers' careful planning. Students' previously completed work shows that an interesting range of teaching methods and activities is used. They have good opportunities to work with others. For example, Year 13 students worked very well in pairs to analyse and interpret data. Higher-attaining students show a willingness to work independently, though they are not always given sufficient opportunity to do so. Students' assignments are marked thoroughly, the annotations providing useful information and advice as to how standards might be improved.

233. Students' attitudes to learning are very positive. They find the course rewarding and, in discussion, indicated that they enjoyed their learning experiences. Relationships between teachers and students and within groups are strong. Accommodation and resources are good. The students' learning is enriched through a programme of well-chosen visits and other activities. For example, students are enthusiastic about their involvement in the 'Proshare' competition, which gives them a further opportunity to practise their ICT skills.
234. The leadership and management of the department are good. Strengths identified in the previous report have been maintained and standards have risen. However, the need to develop independent learning remains. The improvement since the last report has been satisfactory.

Economics

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

Strengths

- Students achieve well, with good results in 2002.
- Teachers maintain good relationships with students who respond with interest and enthusiasm.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and experience.

Areas for improvement

- Make greater use of ICT to enrich learning.
- Develop opportunities for students' independent learning.

235. A-level results in 2001 were below average. Results in 2002 were above the national average for the previous year. Students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
236. Students in Year 12 were seen working in line with course expectations at the time of the inspection. They were successfully building on their knowledge of supply and demand factors in a market economy. Presented with the new concept and definition of 'elasticity of demand', they developed their understanding well to work out new prices in response to changed demands.
237. Standards of work of current students in Year 13 are also in line with course expectations. Students build well on their achievements of last year's AS study. In one lesson, students showed a good understanding of price discrimination and consolidated this understanding well by applying it to case studies.
238. Teaching is good. Teachers have confident subject knowledge. They plan in detail, structuring learning activities well to achieve worthwhile learning outcomes. In a good Year 13 lesson observed, well-paced teaching built progressively on past learning, new knowledge and the application of that to new situations. Through working on the case studies, the students showed their increased understanding of how companies operate price discrimination through the planned segmenting of the market. Teaching that was less successful used an over-didactic approach that failed to engage the students appropriately. The context and objectives of the subsequent tasks set were not clearly established, and so the students achieved less than they might have. The marking and assessment of students' work are good, and result in students receiving constructive advice on how they may raise the standard of their work further. Overall, all students, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, achieve well.

239. Students use websites well for research and information, but in general they do not use computers enough to enrich and extend their learning. Good use is made of journal and broadsheet articles, and standard examination board revision texts, but, during the inspection, pupils made little use of the library to develop their independent learning. The department is well managed. The good quality of teaching and learning is a result of the teachers' good subject knowledge and experience, and students' interest and enthusiasm. There are too few references in the last inspection report to economics to enable a judgement to be made about the progress since that time.

Information and communication technology

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

Strengths

- A-2 level results are improving to a good standard.
- Teachers are committed and offer good guidance to support students' coursework.
- Students show good attitudes to their work.

Areas for improvement

- Make much greater use of assessment data to evaluate effectiveness and inform curriculum planning.
- Increase numbers continuing with the course to A-2 level.
- Analyse assessment data better to evaluate progress and identify areas for improvement.

240. A-2 level results in 2001 were in line with the national average, as they had been in the previous year. All pupils in the past three years have gained a pass but no student gained an A or B grade. Results in 2002, for which there are no comparators yet, showed a significant improvement from a much larger group of students. In 2002, nearly a quarter of students gained these higher grades. Most students remain on the course for the duration of the year but not all continue with the subject to A-2 level. In 2001, nearly seven out of every ten students continued from the first into the second year of the course. In 2002, more than half the students did not continue onto the second year of the course, having failed to reach the school's recommendation of at least a grade D in AS-level.
241. The standard of work of students currently in Years 12 and 13 is average for this stage of the course. Students in Year 12 are learning how to develop their project work and how to use spreadsheets. Those in Year 13 are consolidating their understanding of databases and using this in their extended project. Their recorded work shows a developing understanding of the impact of this technology in the workplace and the potential benefits of its use. Students' achievement at this stage in their course is satisfactory.
242. Teaching and subsequent learning are satisfactory. Teachers' knowledge helps them to give students clear explanations of issues and examination requirements. Good guidance during lessons helps students to understand what is required for the completion of a good project and therefore how they will improve their standards. During the course of their practical work they receive any necessary support to enable them to achieve well. Students are expected to develop their understanding of software packages by working, at their own rate, through a workbook. While this is effective practice for many students, a few in each year are struggling and would benefit from some specific teaching of techniques. Students feel that they are now well supported, following changes in staffing. Those in Year 13 particularly enjoy being involved in discussion on topics about which they have had the opportunity to do some earlier research. They therefore learn more effectively.

243. Students' attitudes to learning are good. They complete the necessary background work in finding, interviewing and liaising with the end user of their practical project. They work well in lessons, getting on with their own individual work. Students come from a range of ethnic backgrounds and from both feeder schools. They get on well together.
244. Leadership and management of the course are satisfactory. The two teachers work closely and well together and are beginning to make a range of resources, to complement the text and library resources, available to students via the school's Intranet. Their differing experiences complement each other, to the benefit of students. However, there is insufficient analysis of data to identify strengths and weaknesses and to guide curriculum planning. There has been very little analysis of available assessment data either to evaluate how good the 2002 A2-level results were in relation to students' attainment at the beginning of the course, or to find out why such a high proportion of Year 12 students in 2002 only gained an E grade or were un-graded. The accommodation for teaching the course is good, with high quality software available on the computers in the main room. This is not the case in other rooms, which have to be used on occasions. However, the main teaching room has no board or facility to provide a large view of a computer screen, which restricts teaching because teachers cannot support their theory work, or demonstrate computer examples to class groups. There were too few references in the last inspection report to ICT to enable a judgement to be made about progress since then.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Drama was the focus subject, but media studies, art and physical education were sampled. Most students who take media studies achieve a pass grade and achieve well in relation to their starting points. One Year 12 lesson was observed. Students discussed with confidence the different treatment of celebrities in tabloid and broadsheet newspapers. Students were attentive and responsive, and the teacher's very good subject knowledge and brisk questioning allowed good progress to be made. In art, all students passed in 2002, with a pattern of results similar to the spread of grades reported nationally in the previous year. In the one lesson observed, good monitoring and feedback supported students' own strong motivation and capacity for working independently, so that individual work on their contextual studies developed well. In AS-level physical education, teachers use a variety of good teaching methods including PowerPoint presentations. Students are regularly involved in research, for example into the origins of various sports and sporting activities. They understand how class, gender, opportunity for leisure and facilities and resources available, affect the development of sport. Students achieve well in lessons because of the teacher's high expectations.

Drama

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

Strengths

- Very good teaching is based on strategies that motivate students to perform well.
- Challenging opportunities are provided for gifted and talented students to succeed.
- Collaboration between students is very good.

Areas for improvement

- Increase opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning and to work independently.

245. Numbers attracted to study drama each year vary. Despite a hundred per cent pass rate for girls in GCSE drama in 2000, there were no subsequent entries at A2-level in 2002. From a lower pass rate at GCSE in 1999, 5 students went through to A2-level in 2001 and nearly all passes were at higher grades, representing very good achievement. In lessons, standards are good overall. Significant strengths are in mime and movement, but there is room for improvement in

vocal range and expression. The recreation of a busy street scene by Year 13 and other episodes in the same performance, involving robotic movement and rhythmic speaking, were of a high standard. This original piece, “The Perfect Woman,” had an excellent script written by a student. Others in the group added to its layers of meaning with suggestions, movement, choice of music and variety of visual and vocal expression. The whole performance was very coherently structured to convey clear messages, underscored with irony. Some activities in Year 12 were much less challenging and did not lead to such high standards. Standards in Year 12 are in line with expectation for this stage of the course.

246. Students’ attitudes are satisfactory and their learning is usually very good in lessons. In Year 12, however, there is a significant amount of absence, which affects students’ learning. The teacher has to monitor students more closely than is usual for this age group so that they keep up with written work; in this respect, Year 13 are also remiss. Year 12 students are unduly dependent on teacher guidance when working and their achievement is limited by their lack of independence and confidence. What they do well is to concentrate on each other’s performances and make genuinely appreciative comments. The teacher is establishing, through ‘forum theatre’, the way in which reciprocal learning for actor and audience arises from frank criticism. Teaching is very good. The teacher’s expertise and range of strategies impress students and strongly motivate them. Appreciation of what students offer enhances their enjoyment and commitment. Clear guidelines are set by which students can achieve well. There are effective teacher-led discussions. Although students are challenged to keep up with coursework, sometimes pace and progress within the lesson is slower than it could be. Assessment takes place continuously and is used effectively to enhance students’ progress.
247. The syllabus has been very well planned by the new teacher responsible for drama. The scheme of work provides challenging opportunities for all students, and particularly for those who are gifted and talented. Leadership and management are satisfactory, but changes of staff prevent firm long-term planning from taking place. The drama studio is an excellent facility and resources, such as lighting, are used well. Students make inadequate use of the very good stock of up-to-date texts in the library. The librarian is keen to meet the needs of students and to promote the use of reference materials. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

HUMANITIES

The focus was on geography, history, sociology and psychology.

Geography

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

Strengths

- Relationships between students and teachers are good.
- Students have positive attitudes to work.

Areas for improvement

- Increase opportunities for active and independent learning by students.
- Develop greater co-operation and collaboration between teachers in managing the subject.
- Plan for greater use of ICT as an aid to learning.

248. In 2001 and 2002, students’ results were well below the national average. Over recent years, students have done less well in geography than in other subjects. The numbers of students joining the course and the results achieved have fluctuated since the time of the last report and there is no discernible trend.

249. The standard of work of current Year 13 students is broadly in line with course expectations. When prior learning is taken into account, achievement is just satisfactory. In lessons seen, students made good progress where teacher expectations were high and the work was pitched at the appropriate level. This was the case, for example, when they studied the impact of tourism on the economies of less developed countries. In talking to students and looking through their files it is evident that the level of lesson content and assignments is not always sufficiently demanding. Last summer, the proportion of students who decided not to continue to study geography in Year 13 was high.
250. Year 12 students, who have recently completed work on rivers, have a limited grasp of the different processes of erosion and are unpractised in using advanced technical language. Students have too few opportunities to develop such subject skills as mapping and data analysis, or to apply and practise their ICT skills through their learning. For example, in a lesson where the objective was to identify variations within the 'Temperate West Coast Maritime' climate, opportunities for practical work were missed. The use of examination questions as homework assignments is increasing their ability to write succinct and structured paragraphs but they have less opportunity for more extended writing. Overall their achievement is unsatisfactory.
251. Teaching is satisfactory overall but the quality is variable. Teachers show good subject knowledge in their explanations. In the better lessons, students were aware of the objectives and involved in their learning. For example, in a Year 12 lesson, this resulted in students achieving a secure understanding of the causes and impact of population change as they studied a model of demographic transition. On another occasion, when the teacher dominated the lesson, the students made notes and completed low order tasks that did little to advance their knowledge and understanding of the factors influencing climate. Students' previously completed work shows that a satisfactory range of methods and activities is used in the teaching and learning, but that practical work is limited. Students do not have enough opportunity to develop and practise the skills necessary for independent learning. Subject teachers have no agreed marking policy, and, therefore, there are inconsistencies in practice. While students' work on rivers has been marked thoroughly, with good advice as to improvement, this is not always the case.
252. Students have the numerical and literacy skills necessary to cope with the demands of the course. They are conscientious and diligent. Always attentive and courteous, they learn best when activities demand their involvement; otherwise they can lapse into passivity and mere compliance. A good learning centre has been provided though the range and number of books are limited. Students do not make enough use of this facility, which also provides access to the Internet, partly because it is not always open at breaks and lunchtime.
253. The shared responsibility for the management of the subject is ineffective. Subject teachers do not work closely enough together to bring about the necessary improvement in provision. There is too little evaluation of teaching. Geography is taught in both schools, as well as the sixth form block. This is divisive and impedes communication. For example, the syllabus has been divided between physical and human aspects, each being taught by teachers from the different schools and schemes of work are being prepared on different models. The increasingly available data, which allows targets to be set and progress monitored, is inconsistently used. There is a shared commitment to improvement, but no clear plan as to how this is to be achieved and improvement since the last report has been unsatisfactory. Important issues, including the more formal evaluation of teaching and the need for more opportunities for students to be able to show initiative, have not been resolved.

History

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

Strengths

- Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject.
- Students show good attitudes in lessons and express positive views about the course.
- Marking is regular and helpful.

Areas for improvement

- Consider strategies to ensure that A-level results reflect the standards achieved during the course.
- Develop good liaison to ensure better strategic leadership.
- Plan a more balanced course to include enrichment opportunities, such as museum visits.

254. In 2001, A-level results were well below average. The 2002 results show an improvement, mainly because all students gained at least grade E. However, national averages are not yet available for comparison. The evidence from the inspection is that the standards of current students are average in both years. In Year 12, students interpret sources to identify their relevance to the events that they learn about, such as the 1923 Munich Putsch. Most can evaluate the sources, for example making reference to their authorship when considering their reliability. In written work, most Year 13 students show expected levels of understanding of such questions as the extent to which Britain secured her objectives in the 1919 Peace Settlement, and present a coherent and valid argument about the outcomes of the American Civil War. In lessons, they show an appropriate historical objectivity in considering such questions as why Chamberlain followed a policy of appeasement towards Hitler. However, the ability of a significant minority to sustain extended spoken discussion is hampered by weaknesses in specialist vocabulary.
255. The GCSE results of students in both years indicate that they enter the sixth form course with average standards and achieve satisfactorily during the course by maintaining them. However, in previous years, they have not succeeded in translating the standards reached during the course into examination results that reflect this.
256. Students respond well during history lessons. They have a good commitment to learning, with all showing effort and concentration in their individual work. Most willingly volunteer to answer questions during lessons. In many lessons however, extended discussion is more limited. During a discussion with students, most expressed positive views, all saying that they enjoyed the course and were happy with the teaching. They find the marking of their work regular and helpful in informing them of how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. They would however, like more opportunities for enrichment of the course by, for example, visiting museums and historical sites.
257. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The strong subject knowledge and understanding of teachers ensures that the subject is studied at sufficient depth and that good questioning allows students to practise making use of what they know. Teachers generally ensure that all students are involved during question and answer sessions. Written tasks usually consolidate preceding oral work well. Work often focuses on the interpretation and evaluation of historical sources, which is helpful to students in improving both their evidence skills and their understanding of the events and ideas to which the sources refer. This worked well, for example, in a Year 13 lesson in which students considered speeches by Abraham Lincoln that provided evidence about issues in the American Civil War. In some lessons, there is overestimation of what students can achieve on the basis of their prior learning and vocabulary. In these lessons, planned whole-class or small-group discussions tend to become dominated by the teacher.

258. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The only references specifically made to the sixth form in the last inspection report indicated that A-level results and standards during the course were below average. Although standards are now higher in course work, these are not yet reflected in examination results.
259. The leadership and management of the subject are shared between the teachers from each school, who each have responsibility for the sections of the course that they teach. Liaison is informal. This works adequately in respect of the day-to-day running of the courses. It is not, however, satisfactorily promoting longer-term strategic leadership. In particular, a more formalised approach is required to enable teachers from both schools to work together to identify why students perform better during the course than in examinations.

Sociology

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good, and students are able to relate their learning to topical issues.
- Students taking sociology for the first time on the A-2 level course achieve well.
- Students' attitudes are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Consolidate learning for all, and especially for lower-attaining, students.

260. A-level results were well above average in 2001. A high proportion of students gained A or B grades and both the numbers of students gaining A to B grades and those gaining A to G grades exceeded the national average. Many more girls than boys choose the subject at AS and A2-level. In 2002, results were not as high and the retention rate from Year 12 into Year 13 was low. Examination results have remained close to the national average apart from 2001. Students achieve satisfactorily overall in relation to their prior attainment.
261. The attainment in the work observed in Year 12 was average and above average in Year 13. Year 12 students identify key concepts by reference to theories on class and family in contemporary society whilst discussing important moral and equality issues concerning employment. They understand the possibilities of manipulation and exploitation because of conditioning in society. Students have developed good critical skills, and they have sufficient knowledge and understanding to enable them to explore the reasons for class and influence in society. They apply this thinking to link previous learning to present day issues. Students' current achievement is satisfactory because of the challenging teaching and the stimulating materials used.
262. Year 13 students have a good understanding of theorists and different perspectives and apply these to a variety of topics, including recent events such as the aftermath of the World Trade Centre disaster. Students make well-informed hypotheses for discussion. They are competent at organising essays and understand the value of planning and research. High-attaining students answer questions well and use appropriate material linked with the requirements of the question. These students understand how to interpret statistics, analyse graphs, collect data and confirm hypotheses. Low-attaining students do not always feel secure in their knowledge and need further practice and consolidation to embed learning. Key skills are insufficiently developed, but students make good use of the Internet for research. Achievement is satisfactory for those students who have previously completed a GCSE in the subject; for those students doing sociology for the first time on the A2-level course, achievement is good.

263. The teaching of sociology is good and students learn well in lessons. Teachers skilfully question students to extend knowledge. They have a very good understanding of the subject and this enables them to tackle even sensitive topics and yet rigorously challenge students. For example, in a Year 13 lesson the teacher dealt with the social, moral and cultural implications of the role of women in religion. Students extended their understanding through undertaking their own research. Teachers give appropriate feedback on completed assignments but students do not always correct, improve or extend work by making notes to assist with revision. Marking is satisfactory, but not always closely aligned to AS and A2-level grading and teacher comments do not always indicate areas for improvement, which is especially important for low-attaining students. However, students are generally aware of both their level of achievement and their targets. Teachers take care to involve all members of the group and involve students of all levels of attainment in questioning. The meanings and definitions of technical vocabulary are emphasised. This assists all students but particularly the low-attaining students. This good teaching promotes good learning and students are keen to extend their knowledge independently. Resources are good. Students use supplementary information from books and periodicals; they research topics from their files, books and the Internet. Useful research books are available in the main as well as the departmental library.
264. Students' attitudes to the subject are very good, leading to good exchanges of ideas and confident discussion. Students trust teachers and show initiative when exploring new issues. For example, in a Year 13 lesson, a Muslim student explained religious attitudes and dress conventions in Islam.
265. The subject is well led. Teachers are up-to-date with current developments in the subject, and are fully acquainted with examination requirements. Good systems for monitoring students' progress enable teachers to match the work to students' individual needs. There is insufficient evidence to gauge improvement since the last inspection.

Psychology

Overall, the quality of provision in psychology is **very good**

Strengths

- Attainment is above average and students achieve very well.
- The very good teaching uses a wide range of methods.
- Courses make a very good contribution to literacy skills and to students' spiritual and cultural education.
- A popular subject that is well regarded and enjoyed by students.

Areas for improvement

- Consider ways to alleviate the workload that large classes impose on teachers.

266. A-level results in 2001 were well above average. Results at AS level in 2002 were above average, with over half of the students gaining A or B grades compared with thirty per cent nationally but A2-level results in 2002 were lower overall. There is no information about past trends and no evidence of differential performance between boys and girls, other than that there are more girls on the course.
267. Standards seen in lessons and samples of work reflect the results and students' very good achievement overall. The current Year 12 started the course with below average GCSE results, but students' work is now in line with course expectations. The current Year 13 were above average at the start of the A2 course and had made positive gains compared with their GCSE predictions. Currently standards are well above average. Students write extended critical essays

of very good quality, comparing the views of different psychological schools, for example on criminal behaviour. Presentational skills are very good, as was seen in a Year 13 lesson on giftedness.

268. Teaching was very good in all lessons seen, charismatic and entertaining. The teacher plans the subject very well and knows how students learn. This was seen in two Year 12 lessons on memory, in which there was very good use of analogy, incisive pointers to key information, fast pace and high expectations. In response, student learning was very good. Sometimes a lack of technical vocabulary at the start of the course, combined with the large class size – twenty-three students – reduces participation in discussion, but it is still good, and the clarity of presentation on memory and encoding produced very good gains in knowledge and understanding. The style of teaching promotes active learning, from which all benefit, and the students are conscious of this. Year 13 students learned very well in the lesson on giftedness. Good group discussions developed on educational policy, in which some groups showed very good insight into the disadvantages of educational labelling. The session in which students presented their research on Stevie Wonder, Albert Einstein and Beethoven to the rest of the class showed very good skills, with extensive and well-structured information, including humorous anecdotes and links with previously-learned concepts, such as social estrangement.
269. The course makes a very good contribution to wider education. Literacy skills are strongly promoted in the extended writing, active information research, extracting meaning from and summarising text, presentation of argument and the skills of presenting the results of their own research. ICT contributes effectively to this work and numeracy skills are developed well within the research methods module.
270. The course raises ethical and aesthetic issues such as the meta-problem of using psychology students as subjects, the ethics of experimentation and the cultural and social dimensions of giftedness. Thus it also makes a very good contribution to citizenship.
271. In response to the high quality of teaching, student attitudes are very positive. Even at the start of the course, they are very keen. They express pleasure at the active teaching activities, such as short-term memory chunking, which, they say, really help understanding. In the wider sense, they are grateful for the opportunities for independent work and group work, and they link their experiences in Year 12 to their current success in Year 13.
272. Assessment procedures are very good. Students of wide-ranging levels of attainment are well supported with detailed marking and clear guidance on how to improve. The independent learning constitutes very good provision for the gifted and talented and higher-attaining students in general.
273. The curriculum and assessment are very good. The schemes of work are newly-created and very good. The entire research module is available as a PowerPoint presentation. Very good case studies make specific reference to all the authorities that students need to evaluate, compare and cite. The curriculum is enriched by trips to the army, to study obedience and conformity, by revision conferences and lunchtime sessions. Clear guidance is given such that students are aware of their progress and what they need to do. In one set of work samples, such guidance led one student to progress from U grade to A grade essays over the course. The curriculum is under constant evaluation, and assessment is used to choose courses that match student needs from the many available within psychology. Resources are now good, having been much developed over the past year. Their greatest strength is teacher-produced materials, but they also include textbooks, satisfactory library provision, well-used videos and posters. Staffing has fluctuated in past years but is now very good. Accommodation is sound and well used.
274. Psychology was not mentioned in the previous reports, but improvement since 2001 has been very good.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus of the inspection was on the A-level English language and literature course and on German English literature was sampled. In 2001, in English literature, results were well above the national average and improved further in 2002, although national comparators are not yet available. In the English literature lesson observed, students listened attentively to the skilful and well-constructed arguments presented to them and took careful notes. However, there were too few opportunities for sustained discussion and they became compliant so that their learning was passive rather than active.

English language and literature

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

Strengths

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and an understanding of students' learning needs.
- Students' attitudes to study are very positive and they are interested in their work.
- Helpful and precise marking helps students identify learning targets.

Areas for improvement

- Manage courses more effectively for the longer term.
- Increase time for teachers' planning, preparation and collaborative meetings.
- Create a bank of shared resources.

275. The provision in English caters for approximately forty-seven students. Currently GCE AS and A2 courses are offered in English language and literature and English literature. GCSE is offered as a re-sit course
276. Standards achieved in AS and A-level examinations are high. In 2001, in English literature, results were well above the national average and improved further in 2002, although national comparators are not yet available. In 2002 in the language and literature examinations, all students passed, and more than half gained A or B grades. No national comparisons are available yet because this is a new course examined for the first time in 2002. Students generally finish the courses they undertake.
277. The standards of work of students currently in Years 12 and 13 are above course expectations. Students achieve very well considering their qualifications on entry. Students listen attentively with a high level of concentration and make significant contributions orally in response to teachers' challenging and probing questions. High- and average-attaining students are skilful at reading and interpreting literary texts and in identifying implicit meanings. They expertly transfer these meanings from one style to another, such as from poetry into prose.
278. One group presented their transformed texts to the rest of the class explaining ways they had used specific techniques, such as figurative language, to maintain the dramatic impact of the original text. The class closely questioned them, using a high level of technical language that demonstrated their development as critical readers. Lower-attaining students have some difficulties interpreting deeper meanings in texts but are assisted by questioning from teachers that promotes their individual learning well, and by collaborative group work. One student was transferring a Victorian short story into a dramatic radio play, and members of the group were making constructive suggestions for improvement, for example to create tension and suspense. Students use the Internet for research but do not make sufficient use of computers for preparing essays and drafting work.

279. Teaching is good overall with some very good and excellent features. Teachers are experienced and have good in-depth subject knowledge. They recognise the different levels of students' attainment in their groups by good planning and thorough preparation and provide a variety of challenging tasks. However the level of their responsibilities in other curriculum areas restricts their preparation time.
280. Students' views of the subject are very positive. The relaxed atmosphere and good relationships with teachers create opportunities for collaborative learning and for them to express freely their opinions. They are enthusiastic, show pleasure in their progress and are proud of their increasing levels of skill. They enjoy the activities the teachers provide and appreciate the availability of teachers' support.
281. The management of each course is good, and teachers plan their own schemes of work carefully. However, there is no overall leadership to give an overview of the courses. The lack of time for strategic planning means that teachers have few timetabled opportunities for collaboration.
282. Staffing is satisfactory. Although cover from a supply teacher is used for one lesson every fortnight, the work is thoroughly planned and prepared by the course teacher. Teachers prepare their own resources and carry them from the main schools. There is no central bank of resources for teachers to share and the library contains inadequate resources for the new AS and A-level courses. The restricted opening hours of the sixth form library mean that students' opportunities for furthering their independent research are limited. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

German

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

Strengths

- Results in the 2001 AS and the 2002 A2-level examinations represent good achievement.
- Some teaching is good.

Areas for improvement

- Develop students' language skills, especially speaking.
- Improve assessment and its use in setting targets for individual pupils.

283. Over the past four years, low numbers have been entered for AS and A-level German. There were no students at all in 1999 and 2000. Numbers were too low in 2001 and 2002 for direct comparison with national averages. Nonetheless achievement was good with the higher grades well represented amongst the results in both years.
284. At present there are no Year 13 students. The evidence from work seen shows that standards in the present Year 12 small group are below average. This largely reflects the lower prior attainment level of the students. The students' achievement is satisfactory in structured exercises, but they find it difficult to write at length or with accuracy in less controlled situations, and their performance varies across the topics. They also have difficulty in retaining the more sophisticated vocabulary and structures expected at this level for use in communicating opinions in oral work. There are some weaknesses in pronunciation and intonation. When effectively supported, they understand the gist of spoken German after a few repetitions, and can select key details. Students use the Internet for research, which enables them to widen their knowledge on the topics they are studying. Their achievement is satisfactory overall.

285. Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory overall, and sometimes it is good. In the better-taught lessons, careful planning included effective support for the students, while they focused on tasks that developed more than one skill simultaneously. In one lesson, the teacher combined the correction of homework with the teaching and practice of phrases expressing agreement and disagreement. This enabled the students to amend and develop further the sentences they had written for homework. Such techniques help the students to acquire and practise the language skills better. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Teachers, on occasions, provide detailed marking with a helpful indication of how students can improve their work, but the grades given are over-optimistic in relation to the quality of the work. There is no sign that students are aware of the AS grade criteria, which would help them formulate targets for improvement.
286. Students are very co-operative and attentive in lessons. Although they lack self-confidence, they persevere and for the most part complete homework assignments very conscientiously
287. The present teaching room is located far from the faculty base. Teachers have neither access to nor storage for a good cassette-recorder near this room. This impacts adversely on students' learning, as the quality of the small portable cassette recorder is inadequate for developing higher order listening skills.
288. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Teachers are suitably qualified and have divided up the work sensibly to cover the syllabus fully. Numbers learning German in the sixth form fluctuate from year to year. This prevents firm plans from being devised to develop the subject further, and limits the number of enrichment activities, which can be organised. Improvement since the last inspection cannot be judged, as there is insufficient evidence.