

INSPECTION REPORT

TRINITY SCHOOL

Belvedere, Kent

LEA area: Bexley

Unique reference number: 101472

Headteacher: Mr I Collins

Reporting inspector: John Carnaghan
1352

Dates of inspection: 31st March – 4th April 2003

Inspection number: 249635

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Modern (non selective)

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 11 to 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Erith Road
Belvedere
Kent

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Rev Canon D A S Herbert

Date of previous inspection: 24th February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities (sixth form) | Aspect responsibilities (sixth form) |
|--------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1352 | John Carnaghan | Registered inspector | Geography | What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are students taught? |
| 9391 | Norma Ball | Lay inspector | | Students' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its students? |
| 24142 | Sylvia Argyle | Team inspector | English Media studies | How well is the sixth form led and managed? |
| 18178 | Ian Matthews | Team inspector | Mathematics | How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to students? |
| 30433 | Adrian Lyons | Team inspector | Business studies | |
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Trinity School is a Church of England, voluntary aided secondary school for pupils aged 11 to 18. It primarily serves the northern part of the London Borough of Bexley. This area has a number of considerable social disadvantages. Many primary schools send pupils to Trinity School and most pupils have been through a selection process. The school is growing in popularity and is significantly oversubscribed. With 865 pupils on its roll, the school is smaller than average. It has a small but growing sixth form which currently has 48 students. The proportion of pupils (18.2 percent) known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly above the national average. Where comparison is made to similar schools in this report, these are secondary modern schools where more than 13 percent but less than 21 percent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils on the special educational needs (SEN) register (just over 19 percent) is similar to the national average; the proportion identified with statements of need (3.5 percent) is above average. There are 39 pupils at the higher levels of the SEN code of practice, 37 of whom have statements of special educational needs. Their needs, in the main, concern emotional and behavioural difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties and speech and communication difficulties. The proportion of pupils whose mother tongue is not English (7.4 percent) is above the national average but very few of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Just over one in eight of the pupils in the school are of ethnic minority origin. The numbers of pupils who join or leave the school during the course of the school year is low. The attainment of pupils when they enter the school, as shown by the outcome of national testing and standardised testing undertaken by the school, is well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Trinity School is a good and improving school which is well led and managed. The head teacher and staff have worked successfully to provide a haven where pupils feel valued and where their education and personal development is paramount. Since his appointment in January 2002, the head teacher has done much to move the school forward. Clear progress is evident in a number of areas, although the sixth form is still in need of development. Pupils achieve very well in Years 7 to 9 and in GCSE examinations, where results are similar to the national average. Behaviour and relationships are positive and pupils show a real love for their school. Teaching is very good in Years 7 to 9 and good overall. This is a strong motivator to pupils, whose learning is also good. The way the school works with pupils who have SEN is very good; their needs are carefully addressed in a warm and caring environment. However, literacy standards remain a concern and are a limitation on pupils' growing achievement. Despite this and some unsatisfactory aspects of monitoring teaching and learning and of using assessment information, the overall effectiveness of the school is good. Its expenditure per pupil is only slightly above average so that, in the light of the significant social and educational issues it faces, it gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' achievement in their time in school is very good and standards of work are improving.
- Teaching is good; it is very good in Years 7 to 9. In particular, teachers plan lessons very carefully and ensure that learning is effective.
- The head teacher has a clear vision for the school and provides good leadership. With strong support from senior and other staff, most aspects of the school are well managed.
- Pupils are strongly committed to the school and regard it as secure and welcoming. Relationships between pupils and with all staff at the school are very good and pupils behave well.
- The provision for SEN pupils is very good. This area is very well managed in order to provide

highly effective support for their learning and overall development.

What could be improved

- Standards of literacy are too low; the school is working hard to promote improvements, especially in Years 7 to 9. Older pupils, particularly those in the sixth form, need more guidance in writing and speaking fluently.
- The school does not use the results of assessments sufficiently in all subjects to inform its policies or to set clear and useful targets for pupils.
- The way the school currently monitors and evaluates what it does is inconsistent. While some subject leaders have an accurate picture of their current provision, others are unclear about their strengths and weaknesses.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. Overall attainment in results has improved considerably and at a faster rate than the improving national trend. Most of the key issues from the last inspection have been tackled well. Standards across the curriculum have risen. ICT resources have improved considerably so that all pupils feel that they have good access to computers; other subjects contribute well to promoting ICT skills. Teaching is better adapted to meet individual pupils' needs although gifted and talented pupils are sometimes insufficiently challenged. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 now follow a double science course, as recommended, and the administration of SEN is much better. The school's provision for literacy development has improved although pupils' literacy standards are still a concern. Marking of pupils' work remains inconsistent and assessment has been insufficiently developed. Nevertheless, the school has made good improvements overall since the last inspection and has good capacity to improve and develop further.

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 examinations.

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

Key

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| very high | A |
| well above average | * |
| above average | A |
| average | B |
| | C |
| below average | D |
| well below average | E |
| very low | E |
| | * |

Pupils enter the school with standards which are well below average. In particular, pupils have low standards of literacy when they start at Trinity. Results in 2002 in the national testing at the end of Year 9 were below national averages in English and science and well below average in mathematics. In comparison with similar secondary modern schools, English and science results were above average and those in mathematics were average. This represents very good achievement by these pupils. The trend over the last four years is of overall improvement, which is in line with the national upward trend.

In 2002 the overall GCSE performance, based on average points score, was broadly similar to the national average; compared to similar secondary modern schools it was well above average. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A*-C was below the national average, for those gaining at least five grades A*-G it was well above average. Compared to similar secondary modern schools these results were both well above average. These pupils made above average progress when compared to that of pupils nationally with similar end of Year 9 results. They made very good progress and achieved very well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C and their average points scores were generally in line with the national averages in English and mathematics but below average in science. Art and design had exceptional GCSE results in 2002: pupils gained well above average grades. The school comfortably exceeded its targets in 2002 in terms of both the proportion achieving five or more GCSE results at A*-C grades and pupils' average points score. The improvement in GCSE results in the last four years is considerably better than the national upward trend. Throughout the school, girls' results are consistently higher than those of boys to a significantly greater extent than nationally. Results at A-level were very low and in the bottom five percent nationally in 2001. Results in 2002 show a slight improvement but no national comparisons are available. Numbers sitting examinations were very small and this can make such comparisons with national averages unreliable. Given their low standards on entry to the sixth form, achievement of students who sat examinations in 2001 was satisfactory.

Current standards of Year 9 pupils are generally in line with what is expected, including in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This is largely due to the very good teaching that pupils experience. Standards of pupils currently in Year 11 are as expected in English, mathematics and science. Given the standards pupils have on entry to the school and their attainment at the end of Year 9, the overall achievement of pupils from Years 7 to 11 is very good. Pupils in Year 12 are currently achieving standards which are broadly in line with expectations. Given that this particular group of pupils started their A-level courses with below average standards, this represents good achievement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good. Pupils like school very much, they see it as a positive element. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good. Pupils are generally calm and sensible; pupils are well managed by teachers. |
| Personal development and relationships | Good. Pupils develop well in their understanding of social, moral, cultural and spiritual influences. Relationships are very good throughout the school. |
| Attendance | Satisfactory in Years 7 to 11, broadly similar to the national average with below average unauthorised absence. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching at the school is good overall and very good in the first three years. It is slightly less effective in Years 12 and 13 because teachers spend too long instructing students and in most subjects do not do enough to encourage them to learn independently. The slightly lower standard of teaching seen in Years 10 and 11 was largely because Year 11 pupils, near the end of their courses, required specific examination guidance rather than the development of new learning. Teaching to Year 11 was, therefore, less stimulating. Teachers know pupils well, and their strengths and weaknesses, and they plan what is done in lessons to meet those needs. They warmly encourage pupils' efforts. Pupils are well questioned; this ensures that teachers know what is understood and what is not and adapt lessons skilfully when necessary. They know their subjects and, in particular, use their examination knowledge to ensure that teaching for GCSE and other examinations is relevant. Teachers promote the development of literacy strongly, especially in Years 7 to 9, although numeracy does not benefit from such a consistent approach. ICT is generally well taught in a number of subjects. Recent developments in teaching, particularly the three-part lesson, are understood and well used throughout the school. There are variations in the quality and quantity of homework set by different teachers. Marking is also variable and, overall, it is unsatisfactory. It does not often encourage pupils to consider their mistakes and rarely involves setting targets for them to aim at.

The way in which the school meets the needs of most of its pupils is good. In this small school teachers work hard to provide work with an appropriate degree of challenge. Pupils' learning is good overall and very good in Years 7 to 9. Pupils work hard, showing interest and commitment to their studies. Unsatisfactory aspects of assessment mean that pupils can be ill-informed about their progress and what they should do to improve. Pupils with SEN benefit from very good provision. For pupils who speak English as an additional language the help they receive enables them to make good gains in their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Satisfactory. The curriculum for Years 7 to 11 is appropriately broad and balanced. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Very good. The provision for these pupils in Years 7 to 11 is thoroughly organised to meet their varied needs. Teachers and support assistants work as an harmonious and close-knit team to the benefit of SEN pupils. Individual education plans are useful and thorough documents and are regularly updated. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Good. For the very few pupils at an early stage of learning English, there is good personal support. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good. The school successfully encourages pupils' social and moral development. The school consistently fosters spiritual development and creates good opportunities to enhance pupils' cultural understanding, particularly in its European links. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Well. Pupils are very well cared for and the school has worked very hard to ensure that levels of attendance in Years 7 to 11 have improved steadily. However, assessment information produced by the school is not consistently used to set targets to improve standards. |

The working partnership with parents is satisfactory; the school works hard to foster links. School reports convey information about how pupils are progressing in a way that is understandable to parents and pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff | Good. The leadership of the head teacher is good and, with strong support from senior staff, is a significant factor in the improvements in the school. He has clear views on the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has appointed effective school managers to address the areas that need improvement. The management of subjects is satisfactory and is developing well, although some departments are not as aware as they should be of where improvements are needed. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school but do not do enough to find out for themselves about teaching and school management, particularly in the sixth form. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Unsatisfactory. The school's monitoring of what it does is incomplete. Assessment information is too little used and, as yet, has limited impact on pupils' attainment and expectations. |
| The strategic use of resources | Good. The school uses available resources thoroughly to meet its aim of providing a better education for its pupils. |

Accommodation is satisfactory and plans are well advanced for a significant new building to replace the oldest parts of the school. The provision of teachers is good and the school has recruited new staff to invigorate its drive for improvement. Application of the principles of best value is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has high expectations. • Pupils make good progress. • Teaching is good. • The school is well led and managed. • Children like school. • They feel comfortable approaching the school. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information they receive about pupils' progress. • The amount of homework set. • Working more closely with parents • They would like to see a more interesting range of activities outside lessons. |

Only a small minority of parents returned questionnaires or attended the parents' meeting. Of the positive points raised, the evidence of the inspection agrees that teaching and the school's expectations are good. The progress pupils make is good, overall. Leadership and management are good and children like school very much. Parents are welcomed into the school. Of the negative issues, inspection evidence indicates that information for parents is satisfactory and the school runs a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. The school works with parents satisfactorily. However, the setting of homework is unsatisfactory because it is inconsistent.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

Trinity School has a small sixth form with 48 students. It is in a selective area with other sixth forms and a further education college nearby. From 1997 to 2002, the sixth form declined in size but numbers are now beginning to rise. In 2002, one in five students continued from Year 11 into the sixth form. The entry requirements are five GCSE qualifications at A* to C. Currently nine subjects are taught to AS and A-level. There is one AVCE course, in business studies. Students' attainment on entry to the sixth form is generally below average.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

Although Trinity School has some small teaching groups, the sixth form is cost effective. Teaching is good and students achieve well. Good relationships with teachers contribute to students' good achievement. However, attendance is unsatisfactory and the schools' procedures for monitoring and improving attendance in Years 12 and 13 are inadequate. The size of the sixth form is such that examination courses cannot cater for students of all abilities and the curriculum is not broad enough. The current structures for leading and managing the sixth form lack the required coherence to enable it to develop but the school plans to rectify this in the near future by new appointments and more closely defined responsibilities. The sixth form has made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection. Overall, its effectiveness is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good overall with particular strengths in students' willingness to learn and teachers' knowledge and understanding.
- Students achieve well in the sixth form.
- The school is developing systems to support the sixth form in continuing to grow and prosper. These include a thorough programme of staff professional development to ensure that they are fully equipped for sixth form teaching.
- There are good relationships between students and between staff and students. Students have good attitudes and behave well.
- The priorities of the sixth form are effectively supported by financial planning.

What could be improved

- Current structures for leading and managing the sixth form lack the required coherence to enable it to develop.
- Students are not given enough opportunities to develop skills for independent learning.
- The curriculum does not meet the needs of all the school's pupils or the sixth form's stated aims and aspirations.
- Assessment, monitoring and evaluation of students' performance are not effective enough in helping to raise standards.
- Students' level of attendance is unsatisfactory and systems to monitor and promote attendance are not rigorous enough.

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 but four were sampled.

| Curriculum area | Overall judgement about provision, with comment |
|--------------------|--|
| Mathematics | Satisfactory. Students are keen, willing to learn and achieve well. Standards are average. Teaching is good and teachers' clear explanations enable students to make good progress. Further development is required in the use of assessment and in developing independent learning skills. |
| Business studies | Good. Students achieve well and standards are average. Good teaching with good subject knowledge and clearly structured lessons, promotes learning effectively. |
| Media Studies | Good. Standards attained are average and students achieve well in relation to prior attainment. Teaching is good and assessment is particularly effective. The subject is new, increasing in popularity and is very well led and managed. |
| Geography | Unsatisfactory. Standards are below average but students' achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is unsatisfactory, largely because marking and assessment are inadequate and independent learning is not effectively promoted. |
| English Literature | Satisfactory. Standards attained are below average but student's achievement is satisfactory, particularly those who start the course with average or below average attainment at GCSE. Teaching is lively and challenging and enables students to develop their skills and understanding. |

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| How well students are guided and supported | Satisfactory. Students value the support and guidance provided throughout the sixth form. Relationships with staff are good and students are able to approach tutors and subject teachers to discuss concerns and seek advice. Sound guidance is provided for students when selecting their sixth form courses and later, when deciding on courses beyond school or opportunities for employment. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are not thorough and learning opportunities are lost because a number of students do not attend as regularly as they should. The effectiveness of systems to assess students' work is inconsistent across departments. |

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form | Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Roles and responsibilities in leading and managing the sixth form are unclear and the development plan lacks detail and clarity. The governors have no overview of or specific attachment to the sixth form. Although the sixth form is an integral part of the school, there is little direct reference to the school's Christian ethos in its daily life. Sixth form curriculum provision and performance are not thoroughly analysed to identify and deal with areas of concern, such as equality of opportunity. The school recognizes these concerns and is acting to put new systems in place. Subject leaders are generally effective in teaching and organizing their subjects and teachers are well qualified in the subjects they teach. However, the use of assessment information to challenge, set targets and develop strategies to improve achievement is at an early stage. Accommodation is currently unsatisfactory but building plans will rectify this in the near future. |

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"> • The school is caring and helps them to settle well. • They are well taught and challenged. • They are helped to study independently. • Teachers are accessible to help when there are difficulties with work. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would like more advice about future options. • They would like more activities and enrichment courses. |

The inspection supported many of the students' positive comments and their concerns. In some lessons, however, students were not appropriately challenged and independence not strongly encouraged. Students did not always engage actively in lessons or share ideas confidently and there was an over dependence on taking notes. Appropriate advice was given about future options by key school staff and advisers. With a few exceptions, the opportunities for students to participate in enrichment activities are too few.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils' achievement in their time in school is very good and their standards of work are improving.

1. Pupils come to Trinity from a range of primary schools. Evidence from National Curriculum testing and other assessments shows that their standards when they enter the school at the beginning of Year 7 are well below the national average. Their standards of literacy are particularly low. However, pupils make a brisk start to their learning and, by the end of Year 9, much of the work that they do has improved and is, compared with national levels, broadly average.
2. In 2002, National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments in all subjects indicate that standards at the end of Year 9 were below the national average, overall. In comparison with similar schools in 2002, standards were above average. When compared to these pupils' standards of attainment when they started Year 7, these results were well above average, indicating very good achievement. Standards in mathematics tests are not as good as in the other core subjects of English and science.
3. By the end of Year 11, the strength of pupils' achievement throughout the school is evident in their GCSE results. In terms of average points score per pupil, performance was similar to the national average in 2002. In the years 1999-2001, pupils' GCSE standards improved steadily. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' average points were well above average. Compared with pupils' standards at the end of Year 9, these 2002 standards were above average, indicating very good achievement. Current standards in Year 11 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Throughout the school, girls' results are consistently higher than those of boys to a significantly greater extent than nationally. There is no reason for this evident in the school's provision.
4. Much of the work that pupils undertake in lessons stimulates their imagination; it is varied, interesting and challenging. This is because teaching is very good in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. For example, in a Year 9 science lesson, pupils reached higher than expected standards in working on the respiratory system, demonstrating good knowledge of the organs of the body and their functions. They learnt very thoroughly because the teacher repeated, consolidated and checked learning constantly and in a way which pupils could enjoy and respond to. Other important elements in learning were the way the teacher and learning assistant ensured that the SEN pupils were engaged at all times, the strong emphasis on literacy with key words and clear definitions and the very good use made of homework. This was set early in the lesson and referred to as time went on, so stimulating learning further. Fundamental to pupils' achievement were the teacher's consistently high expectations. Pupils were deeply involved, because of the teacher's fascination with the topic. Not wanting to fall short of expectations, they were reaching to understand the difficult concepts involved.
5. Pupils' achievement is promoted across the whole range of subjects. Analysis of pupils' English work in Year 7 indicates thorough coverage of the National Curriculum and consistently good efforts by pupils. Relationships between teachers and pupils are generally very good and teachers encourage pupils with constructive and encouraging comments and marking, although this can be inconsistent. At best, marking includes helpful statements and grades, which pupils act on, although this is too rare. In modern foreign languages the good teaching and careful attention to the requirements of GCSE examinations mean that pupils achieve very well in Years

10 and 11. Based on test scores at the end of Year 9, 30 percent of pupils were expected to gain a grade A*-C in French in 2002, the actual figure was 44 percent. In German the figures were even better; the expected figure was 53 percent and the actual result saw 88 percent gain A*-C grades. Analysis of Year 11 science books illustrates how the scheme of work has been organised to develop skills and confidence progressively. As a result, late in the GCSE course, pupils write effectively about how and why investigations are conducted.

6. The way in which teachers provide appropriate work for all pupils, whatever their prior attainment, is good and means that each pupil has every opportunity to reach her or his full potential. Pupils say that they feel well supported in their studies and report that when they approach teachers with difficulties they are listened to sympathetically. Teachers are given clear indications of the learning needs and appropriate strategies to employ for each pupil on the SEN register. They know pupils very well and incorporate this information into their planning and the approach they adopt in lessons. Those pupils who work in the SEN centre benefit from a secure and caring environment with trained and caring staff. This is not always true of gifted and talented pupils. There is currently no clear policy for these pupils. However, individuals are usually given work that challenges them. The school has plans in place to co-ordinate its response in this area.

Teaching is good; it is very good in Years 7 to 9. In particular, teachers plan lessons very carefully. They warmly encourage pupils' efforts and ensure that they learn effectively.

7. Teaching is good overall. Of the lessons seen, 85 percent were good or better and none were unsatisfactory. The most consistent element in teaching is the clarity and effectiveness of lesson planning. This enables teachers to deploy resources and support to where they are most required, leading to stimulating lessons. It ensures that pupils in need of extra help receive it. Thus, teaching is inclusive. Teachers promote equality of opportunity in practical ways. For example, they sit boys and girls together. This has the additional effect of encouraging girls to speak who may otherwise sit quietly while boys may tend to dominate.
8. The use of the recommended three-part lesson has been widely adopted. This ensures good pace in lessons and an appropriate focus both on what is to be learned at the start of the lessons and what has been achieved at the end. This structure also means that pupils know what is expected of them, which helps to encourage their positive response. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and the requirements of the National Curriculum, GCSE and other examinations, and apply this consistently in lessons. In a very good Year 11 English lesson, where pupils reported back on their work in analysing Steinbeck's 'Of Mice and Men', the teacher challenged pupils' assertions to ensure that they explained their points in sufficient detail, using the correct grammatical form. The task was closely related to examination requirements. Pupils were aware of this and demonstrated positive attitudes throughout, to the benefit of their learning, which was very good.
9. Lessons usually proceed at a good pace because teachers plan a series of short, interesting activities which maintain interest. The preparation of lessons is efficient, so that activities can be started with a minimum of fuss. Pupils are well managed so they have few opportunities to waste time. Teachers question at all stages of lessons; this effective continuous assessment enables teachers to adjust the emphasis of lessons as they go along. Close trust with teachers means that pupils are encouraged to participate in all aspects of learning without fear of humiliation or ridicule. A very good Year 10 physical education lesson included an element where a pupil acted as an instructor, teaching the development of basketball skills as part of preparation for a sports leader award. Other pupils responded very well and entirely in character, 'misbehaving' when the 'teacher' was distracted but accepting their 'punishments' in

the same spirit in order to make the teaching and learning process more realistic. Both the pupils and the real teacher interjected occasionally to offer brief advice and this open approach meant that all learnt very well in the lesson.

10. Teachers of English and mathematics have good knowledge of the Key Stage 3 Strategy. They use their growing expertise in the promotion of literacy and numeracy in their own subjects. Reading for pleasure is promoted in English lessons and in tutor periods. Teachers of all subjects are careful to incorporate opportunities to further students' literacy skills whenever possible, particularly in Years 7 to 9. References to literacy are commonplace in subjects as diverse as design and technology, art, geography and music. Overall, this consistent emphasis has a very beneficial effect on students' achievement in this area. In a good Year 10 ICT lesson, pupils' learning was facilitated because the teacher defined the appropriate specialist vocabulary and paid close attention to pupils' spelling and use of English. In a Year 7 mathematics lesson, pupils' answers to questions were made easier by the key words on display. However, the strengths of literacy across the curriculum are not replicated in numeracy. The promotion of this area in subjects beyond mathematics is unplanned and so less effective.
11. Teachers use their personal knowledge to enliven lessons and sustain pupils' interest. In a very good lesson about the Norman Conquest to Year 7 pupils, the teacher had prepared thoroughly. Careful organisation ensured that a variety of interesting resources were available and the teacher used personal experiences of visiting the site of the Battle of Hastings to bring to life the issues under consideration. Pupils were very well managed and the teacher was firm but very encouraging to all pupils, so that they were able to learn very well.
12. While there are some elements of good practice in the way the school uses homework in Years 7 to 11, it is unsatisfactory overall. Parents express some disquiet over the way it is set, some saying there is too much, others complaining at the lack of it. They felt that, when set, homework was not adapted to pupils' requirements and did too little to encourage independent research. The inspection confirms that there are inconsistencies in setting homework between individual teachers. Analysis of pupils' work shows that, even within subjects, there are considerable variations in practice. This is largely because homework is not thoroughly monitored. Year 11 pupils expressed unhappiness because coursework is not organised to avoid too much of it being set at once. They complain that, as the courses near their end, they face demands to do large quantities of homework in a number of subjects at the same time.
13. The way pupils' work is marked is similarly inconsistent. The underlying reason for this again lies in the lack of effective monitoring. Even within subjects there are distinct variations in practice. For example, in mathematics books a mixture of approaches was seen. Very little work was graded; some books had comments but these were generally not helpful in encouraging pupils to improve their work. Other mathematics books had ticks and crosses and some books showed no sign of being marked. In English, the grades used varied and did not serve to clarify standards for pupils. Marking very rarely sets appropriate learning targets for pupils.

The head teacher has a clear vision for the school and provides good leadership. With strong support from senior and other staff, most aspects of the school are well managed.

14. The head teacher is well informed about the school. He knows staff well, is open and a good communicator; he does much to ensure the school's commitment to high standards and continuing pursuit of improvement. He is a presence in the day-to-day life of the school and has developed good relationships with pupils, teachers and parents alike. His appraisal of the strengths and areas for development in the school was largely confirmed by the inspection process. He has been the prime mover in setting the priorities for the school and acts vigorously

to overcome any perceived areas of concern. For example, the school's inconsistencies in the gathering and use of assessment data are understood and the school has appointed an experienced manager for this area so that improvements are already underway. The head teacher has been very perceptive in appointing and promoting staff to improve performance in other areas of the school which were causing concern. When the inspection looked into these areas it was clear that, even where managers had been in post for a brief period, improvements were underway. With each new appointment the capacity for further improvement in the area concerned has been raised.

15. The senior management of the school comprises a close-knit team. Newly appointed members have integrated well with the existing senior managers and contributed to the existing team by bringing energy and new ideas. They have clearly defined responsibilities. However, these arrangements are flexible and responsive to changing needs and priorities. For example, the responsibility for the building programme, planned to replace the most antiquated part of the school, has been appropriately delegated. The pastoral work of the school is well managed and this contributes well to the positive ethos of the school. Where there are perceived needs, staff are encouraged to undertake training to equip them with the appropriate skills. The significance of staff development to the school has been recognised with the appointment of a member of the senior management team to further develop this area. New teachers and other members of staff, such as learning support assistants, are well trained and supported when they start at the school. Most subjects are well led; science has benefited from recent changes in its leadership and the provision of ICT in the school has gained as a result of a very thorough audit of resources recently undertaken.
16. However, there are some areas for development. The support for heads of department and other middle managers by the senior management is variable. The arrangements for formal and informal monitoring of their performance are inconsistent. This is the main reason for inconsistencies in some areas of the school. The leadership and management of the sixth form have received insufficient attention hitherto. Again the school recognises this and plans are well advanced to make radical changes.
17. The members of the governing body have a firm commitment to the school. Relationships between the leadership of the school and the governing body are good. Governors work with individual departments and provide some support to middle managers. But governors' monitoring of individual subjects is not thorough enough to identify areas for improvement. Roles and responsibilities of governors are clearly defined. Governors are closely involved in financial monitoring of the school and in planning allocation of finances in the future, in accordance with the development plan. They have a sound grasp of principles of best value. However, governors do not always demonstrate a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. They were unaware of the weaknesses in sixth form leadership and management and have done too little to promote the school's Christian provision or ethos in the sixth form.

Pupils are strongly committed to the school and regard it as secure and welcoming. Relationships between pupils and with all staff at the school are very good and pupils behave well.

18. Teachers treat pupils sensitively and have high expectations of their attitudes and behaviour. The school has a caring ethos, in accord with its strong Church of England links. With the exception of the promotion of links with the church in the sixth form, it lives up to its aims in this respect. This commitment encourages the atmosphere of trust in the school and pupils generally act with maturity. Pupils say that they like their teachers and respect them because, whatever

the subject, they can always get support when they require it. Year 9 pupils say that the school is a small, friendly community. They have confidence in their teachers and know that they could turn to them for advice. They appreciate the fact that pupils created the behaviour rules in the Trinity School code. Pupils are encouraged to work together in all lessons, frequently in mixed gender groups. Boys and girls mix well and relate warmly to one another, as do pupils of different ethnic groups. Thus, it quickly becomes second nature for pupils to help one another in their learning activities. Teachers encourage this. However, sixth form students are little involved in the life of the wider school community and there are too few opportunities for them to take on responsibility or set a good example for younger pupils.

19. Behaviour is generally good. Behaviour while moving between buildings during the inspection was almost all good and the atmosphere peaceable and harmonious. Supervision is good but largely unobtrusive. At the end of the day, pupils leave the site in a quiet and orderly fashion. Pupils respect their environment and the school is commendably free of litter or graffiti. Behaviour in the over-crowded dining room is good. Pupils report very little bullying, none of it serious. They are pleased that the school deals effectively with bullying or any other incidents when they arise. Year 7 pupils say they feel secure and are happy and confident at school. They felt that they had settled in very well in their first weeks in the school. In many ways the school provides a haven of order and calm in an area of considerable social deprivation.
20. No unsatisfactory behaviour was seen in lessons and in many cases it was good or better. The degree of willing co-operation with teachers displayed by pupils of all abilities is very beneficial to learning. Even when teaching lacks stimulation, pupils maintain concentration and effort throughout the lesson. In a very good music lesson on understanding chords, the strength of relationships and attitudes to learning were manifested when almost all pupils volunteered to perform. They contributed with maturity and sympathy when evaluating one another's performance. In this practical session, levels of noise were understandably high when pupils were composing; however, when the teacher called for attention the classroom fell silent almost immediately. Throughout the lesson, pupils worked closely in pairs showing strong focus on the task in hand. The very good attitudes and behaviour displayed were a positive incentive to learning, which was very good.

The provision for SEN pupils is very good. This area is very well managed in order to provide highly effective support for their learning and overall development.

21. The SEN co-ordinator leads a team of over twenty adults who support pupils with SEN. They meet every morning so that they can be most effectively deployed and so that they are all aware of their responsibilities for the day. There is a formal weekly meeting of all SEN staff. The management and leadership of SEN is very good, resulting in a consistency of care in all elements of the department's work. The development plan for SEN is very clear and progress against targets is thoroughly evaluated. Staff receive a programme of training organised by the department; these frequently lead to the gaining of nationally recognised qualifications. Outside speakers contribute to continuing staff development.
22. Assessment of pupils with SEN is regular and thorough and the results of assessments are carefully recorded. They form a significant element in the ongoing review of each pupil. SEN staff visit primary schools whose pupils are coming to Trinity so that they are prepared to provide for each pupil when she or he starts in Year 7. Tutors and other teachers are thoroughly briefed on each SEN pupil's learning and other needs.
23. Individual educational plans for pupils are thorough and regularly updated. They are reviewed termly. All SEN staff, even those not employed on the day, attend the statutory annual reviews

so they may contribute and be kept fully informed. The department works closely with parents who report that they get quick and helpful responses from any enquiries that they make. The department has a very good reputation in the area and attracts pupils from well beyond the school's usual catchment area.

24. With its small rooms and cosy atmosphere, 'the cottage' provides a safe haven for all pupils. Lunchtime 'clubs' are open to specific targeted pupils, are staffed by learning assistants and seen as an important provision in caring for particular pupils. The learning support unit provides a withdrawal facility for a small number of pupils with emotional and attendance difficulties.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards of literacy are too low; the school is working hard to promote improvements, especially in Years 7 to 9. Older pupils, particularly those in the sixth form, need more guidance in writing and speaking fluently.

25. The school is aware that literacy standards provide a significant barrier to pupils' learning. This is evident in lessons. Frequently sixth form students lack confidence and skills in expressing their views. When students are questioned, as in a Year 12 geography lesson, they tend to offer brief answers and did not use this as an opportunity to develop their views or to ask for elucidation. In this case, the teacher told students to read certain pages silently and then make notes; this activity did too little to address their weaknesses in understanding and summarising complex texts.
26. One outcome of the lack of student confidence when dealing with the printed word is that teachers tend to lecture students too much and too few opportunities are given for students to undertake their own research. In this way the problems arising from low standards of literacy are avoided rather than confronted. In a Year 12 media studies lesson, the students' learning was limited by low standards of literacy. They answered teachers' questions monosyllabically and seemed happier in writing copious, almost verbatim notes as the teacher talked about the growth of mobile phones. Again pupils had to read from a text. The difficulties that they experienced in reading with understanding were evident when they fed back their findings to the class. Presentations were brief and lacking in confidence. Much of what they said was mumbled and the class relied on the teacher to summarise with greater clarity in the closing minutes of the lesson.
27. Across the school, students and pupils lack confidence in this area. For example, in a very good Year 9 English lesson, no pupils could be persuaded to read aloud, despite the good relationships evident in the classroom. However, teachers' efforts to promote literacy are generally far more effective in Years 7 to 11 than in the sixth form. Their work in Years 7 to 9, helped by the adoption of the Key Stage 3 Strategy, is particularly strong. In mathematics lessons, key words are displayed in classrooms and pupils are reminded and encouraged to use them. In a very good Year 10 physical education lesson, the teaching very effectively emphasised the need for clear spoken communication by sitting pairs of pupils back-to-back to recite aloud alternate lines of a nursery rhyme. This was effective preparation for when a pupil led a section of the lesson and had to communicate clearly with his peers. However, there are also inconsistencies in the promotion of literacy in Years 7 to 11. Marking in almost all subjects does too little to address basic grammatical errors. There is no standardisation between teachers in what should be corrected and how it should be done.
28. The library offers good facilities for most pupils in the school. It has an appropriate range of books but, because lessons are held there, it is not always accessible to pupils. It is well staffed

and pupils enjoy using it. However, the sixth form is disadvantaged by not having a separate library area and this further limits their opportunities to read more widely and undertake independent research.

The school does not use the results of assessments sufficiently in all subjects to inform its policies or to set clear and useful targets for pupils.

29. At the time of the previous inspection, the procedures for assessment were criticised because they were variably implemented by departments. The use of assessment in planning was also seen as inconsistent. The school agrees that, while progress has been made and some systems are in place, assessment has not moved on sufficiently. Plans have been made for a rigorous overhaul of the way in which assessment information is collected and used.
30. In some subjects, like mathematics and ICT, there are good systems in place to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding but other areas do not undertake sufficient regular assessment. As a result, when pupils are asked about the standard of their work and what they need to do to improve, answers vary from subject to subject. Overall they are insufficiently aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Where they have and know their targets for improvement, these generally lack guidance about what specific actions need to be taken. However, the school is tackling this area through the process of academic tutoring. Form tutors meet with each pupil individually with parents present. The tutors report back on progress in subjects and agree goals with the pupil and parents. Most pupils saw this as a useful dialogue but some parents reported that some tutors lacked all the required subject-specific information so that the guidance given lacked precision.
31. The school has appointed a manager to improve the gathering of assessment data and its use. He is enthusiastic and energetic and, gradually, the quantity of assessment information produced across the school is increasing. The recently approved assessment, recording and reporting policy aims to produce consistency. The school has used national assessment data in evaluating if pupils are making fast enough progress and is starting to use this information to develop teaching and learning strategies and target teachers' professional development most effectively.
32. Assessment information is fed through to heads of department but it is in a form that is hard to understand and the school accepts that the data is not used very consistently. What is planned, and has yet to be achieved, is a method to enable heads of department to track pupils' standards and progress as they move through the school. Currently curriculum and teaching developments are not closely related to pupils' standards and their rate of progress.

The way the school currently monitors and evaluates what it does is inconsistent. While some subject leaders have an accurate picture of their current provision, others are unclear about their strengths and weaknesses.

33. The underlying cause of the school's inconsistencies in areas already noted, like marking, homework and assessment, is the variability in the way in which subjects are monitored. This is linked to the way in which heads of department are line managed. While some heads of department report regular meetings and support from senior managers, in a number of other areas there is less monitoring.
34. This variety of approach is reflected in departmental practices. For example, science effectively monitors what teachers do. All departmental staff have been observed teaching science in recent months. As a result, a training day was held to address perceived areas for development in the Key Stage 3 Strategy and new materials to support teaching and learning have been

purchased. In contrast, while teaching has been monitored in mathematics, this has not fed into improvements in practice. For example, marking and the setting of homework are still very much up to individual teachers. Targets for the department are set, particularly as a result of the head of departments' feelings about the previous years' Year 9 and Year 11 examination results.

35. The way in which departments are led is generally satisfactory. Under the influence of newly appointed managers, improvements are underway. Again, there are inconsistencies. The developing availability of accessible assessment information should enable departmental development planning to address the improvement of standards more effectively.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

36. The school has made considerable improvements in recent years. However some areas remain underdeveloped. In order to continue to build on the marked rise in standards in recent years the school should:

- (1) Continue efforts to promote improvements in literacy, building on the good work in Years 7 to 9 and extending it to older pupils, particularly those in the sixth form. *(Paragraphs 25-28)*
- (2) Use the information from assessment to inform heads of department about the development of their subjects and how teachers work in classrooms. This information should also be used to develop specific and useful targets for all pupils in all of their subjects. *(Paragraphs 29-32)*
- (3) Through effective line management, ensure that all subject leaders monitor the work of their departments thoroughly. In this way, eliminate inconsistencies across the school in areas such as the setting of homework and the marking of pupils' work. *(Paragraphs 33-35)*

Sixth form

- (1) Plan effectively for a growing sixth form. Develop structures for leading and managing the sixth form and put in place rigorous and consistent systems to ensure that issues such as attendance and assessment are fully dealt with. *(Paragraphs 56-59)*
- (2) The library provision for the sixth form should be developed so that it provides good opportunities for independent learning. *(Paragraph 58)*
- (3) Use the opportunity provided by the growth of the sixth form to ensure that the curriculum provides opportunities for a wider range of students. *(Paragraphs 47-50)*
- (4) Develop consistent assessment procedures in all subjects. Use the information from this to identify areas for improvement and thus maximize opportunities to raise standards. *(Paragraphs 51-52)*
- (5) Monitor sixth form attendance thoroughly. Follow up individual cases of absence and so improve attendance. *(Paragraph 54)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | | |
|--|--------------|----|
| Number of lessons observed | Years 7 – 11 | 34 |
| | Sixth form | 17 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | | 28 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Years 7 – 11 | | | | | | | |
| Number | 1 | 15 | 13 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 3 | 44 | 38 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sixth form | | | | | | | |
| Number | 0 | 1 | 10 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 0 | 6 | 59 | 35 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for Years 7 – 11 and the sixth form here as each lesson in Years 7 - 11 represents more than three percentage points and each lesson in the sixth form represents more than five percentage points..

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Y7 – Y11 | Sixth form |
|---|----------|------------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll | 817 | 48 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 110 | 5 |

| Special educational needs | Y7 – Y11 | Sixth form |
|---|----------|------------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 37 | 0 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 195 | 0 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 48 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 24 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 20 |

Attendance – figures relate to Years 7 to 11.

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|------|
| School data | 90.8 |
| National comparative data | 91 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.5 |
| National comparative data | 1.2 |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2002 | 66 | 93 | 159 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above | Boys | 35 | 44 | 48 |
| | Girls | 58 | 49 | 50 |
| | Total | 93 | 93 | 98 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above | School | 58 (68) | 58 (61) | 62 (58) |
| | National | 66 (64) | 67 (66) | 66 (66) |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above | School | 28 (25) | 35 (29) | 23 (23) |
| | National | 32 (31) | 45 (43) | 33 (34) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above | Boys | 36 | 45 | 49 |
| | Girls | 57 | 54 | 52 |
| | Total | 93 | 99 | 101 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above | School | 59 (66) | 62 (63) | 64 (59) |
| | National | 67 (65) | 70 (68) | 67 (64) |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above | School | 17 (13) | 36 (32) | 27 (23) |
| | National | 32 (31) | 44 (42) | 34 (33) |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2002 | 69 | 91 | 160 |

| 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 | 19 | 63 | 67 |
| | Girls | 49 | 89 | 91 |
| | Total | 68 | 152 | 158 |
| Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified | School | 43 (33) | 95 (93) | 99 (96) |
| | 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 | 38.4 (36.2) |
| | National | 39.8 (39.0) |

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

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

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

| | | For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations in 2001 | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------|--|------------|------------|
| | | Boys | Girls | All |
| School | Number of candidates | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| | Average point score per candidate | 7.7 (4) | 4.4 (0.7) | 5.6 (1.5) |
| National | Average point score per candidate | 16.9 (2.6) | 17.7 (2.9) | 17.4 (2.7) |

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

| International Baccalaureate | | Number | % success rate |
|---|----------|--------|----------------|
| Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied | School | 0 | N/a |
| | National | | 81 |

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

| No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 730 | 134 | 4 |
| | | |
| 7 | | |
| 3 | 1 | |
| 2 | | |
| 2 | | |
| 9 | | |
| 51 | 5 | 1 |
| 1 | | |
| 1 | | |
| | | |
| 12 | 1 | |
| 38 | 8 | |
| 3 | | |
| 3 | | |
| | | |
| 3 | | |

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) | 45 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 17.6 |

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 24 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 527 |

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

| | |
|---|------|
| Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes | 68.6 |
|---|------|

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

| | |
|-------------|------|
| Key Stage 3 | 25,2 |
| Key Stage 4 | 21.8 |

Financial information

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year | 2001-02 |
| | |
| | £ |
| Total income | 2,624,392 |
| Total expenditure | 2,600,836 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 3006 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 18,347 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 41,903 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 14 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 17 |
| | |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 2.0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 860 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 94 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 34 | 59 | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 38 | 60 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 22 | 69 | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 24 | 54 | 18 | 4 | 0 |
| The teaching is good. | 27 | 69 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 20 | 55 | 18 | 4 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 43 | 52 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 53 | 47 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 21 | 57 | 19 | 2 | 1 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 39 | 52 | 5 | 0 | 4 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 25 | 69 | 5 | 0 | 1 |

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

| | | | | |
|----|----|----|---|----|
| 20 | 56 | 11 | 2 | 10 |
|----|----|----|---|----|

PART D: THE SIXTH FORM

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

37. The school's A-level results in 2001, based on average points score, were very low and in the bottom five percent when compared with the national average for maintained schools and when compared with all providers of sixth form education. However, very few students sat examinations in 2001 and this can make such comparisons unreliable. The attainment of these few students on starting the course was below average so their achievement was satisfactory. There was little variation between subjects but results based on average points scores were highest in art and design and lowest in English literature and sports studies. Results in 2002 show a slight improvement in students' average points score but there are no national averages for comparison. Results in subjects were broadly similar to those in 2001 with the exception of art and design, which saw marked improvements. Again, very few students sat examinations and any national comparisons can be unreliable indicators of standards.
38. In the subjects inspected, the standards demonstrated by students currently in Year 12, are below average in English literature and geography and broadly average in mathematics, business studies and media studies. Results from unit tests undertaken in business studies indicate an improvement in standards this year. Given that students enter the sixth form with standards which are below what is normally seen, these levels of attainment indicate good overall achievement for these students. Very few sixth form students speak English as an additional language and none has SEN. In the case of the former, learning of these few pupils in lessons is good.
39. Lessons were sampled in the four other courses running in the sixth form. The standards being demonstrated were at least in line with those expected for the age of the students. Standards were above the expected level in art and design with particular strengths in the good quality of coursework. In accounts, standards of work seen were broadly average for this stage of an A/S level course; pupils were calculating accounting rates accurately. In vocational business education, standards were generally average; students were using ICT well to research competition between similar types of shops.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

40. The attitudes of students to school and to their work is satisfactory overall. Most students are keen to come to school and enjoy their time in the sixth form. During the inspection almost two-thirds of lessons seen were characterised by good or better behaviour and in nearly a quarter they were very good. Although behaviour was good, attitudes to learning were often less positive. In some of the lessons seen students showed a passive attitude to their work, were shy to engage in discussion and too reliant on taking notes from their teachers rather than sharing ideas together. For example, in a media studies lesson on the war in Iraq, students were reluctant to explore in depth the emotive quality of newspaper reports and concentrated instead on quietly recording the comments of the teacher in detail. The poor attendance of some students in the sixth form also indicates their less than positive attitude to work.

41. Personal development and the relationships which students form with each other and with teaching staff are good overall and this contributes to the positive atmosphere in many lessons. Students listen well to each other and to teachers and show courtesy and respect. They show an understanding for the feelings for others. Within school, students contribute to the discussions of the school council and a few make a significant contribution to the sports activities of younger pupils each term. From time to time opportunities are created for older students to help and support younger pupils but this is irregular. Overall, there are too few opportunities within school or in the local community for students to show initiative and take responsibility. This weakness inhibits an important element of their personal development. Independent learning skills are not sufficiently well developed and students have not developed mature skills in research. Students do concentrate well on their tasks but often do not show any spark or individual flair in wanting to delve further into subjects and find out more for themselves.
42. Attendance is unsatisfactory. The methods for recording students present in the school and following up on absences are insufficiently rigorous to promote better attendance. In the three tutor groups in Years 12 and 13, attendance is below 90 percent and unauthorised absence is also above the national average. The school is aware that this is an area where improvement is needed and will shortly be moving to a more sophisticated form of computer registration and tracking for sixth form students.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

43. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are good. All lessons seen were satisfactory or better and 65 percent were good or better. The main strengths are in teachers' subject knowledge and the way teachers use their understanding of the requirements of A level examination boards to promote learning effectively. To this end, lessons are usually well planned. Year 13 art and design lessons were notable for the expertise of their teachers. In one such session the seven Year 13 students, who were in the final stages of completing projects and preparing for their A level examination, received advice and guidance from all three art staff. All three demonstrated a very good grasp of what was required to gain high grades in the examination. The confidence and obvious understanding of what was required to succeed in the examination inspired confidence amongst the students and they learnt very well. The good relations with students evident in this lesson are typical across the sixth form. There is a caring atmosphere where students are carefully nurtured by teachers; sometimes this leads to passivity on the part of students.
44. Questioning can be good and is used informally to assess what students know and where there are gaps in understanding. As Year 12 students worked through the text of 'A Streetcar Named Desire' the teacher interjected from time to time to ensure that they were following and understanding the text and that they had grasped some of the nuances of meaning. The questioning was probing and the subsequent written prompts allowed them to develop their ideas further, when they consolidated their work in writing. Teachers generally reinforce and consolidate students' learning well. Questioning assists with this process as does the use of new resources, such as an extract from a video, to repeat and recapitulate what has been covered once. Sixth form students generally have good access to computers. Their use is well promoted in some subjects, like media studies, but largely ignored in others, such as mathematics and geography.
45. There are some areas for development in teaching. The most significant concern is that teaching is too directive. Too frequently, students sit at their desks taking notes from the teacher. Students' files in most subjects have great quantities of notes taken in this way. In a Year 13 media studies lesson the teacher dominated the lesson, asking for definitions of important words,

like emotive, then providing the answer almost immediately. With such an approach the students were less and less inclined to contribute to a dialogue and concentrated on writing as many notes as possible; this was detrimental to their learning. Some teachers have too low expectations of students. This is one of the causes of the limited student involvement in their learning. In a Year 12 mathematics lesson, the teacher demonstrated very good subject knowledge throughout. Explanations were very clear but opportunities for students to undertake their own investigations were ignored in favour of further exposition.

46. In contrast to the situation in the main school, teachers sometimes pay too little attention to the development of key skills in their teaching. Given the quality of provision in literacy in Years 7 to 11 this is surprising. The way some teaching encourages passivity amongst students also discourages the development of an appropriate variety of opportunities to speak, read and write in subjects like geography and media studies. In this way, where much subject information is gleaned and developed by understanding and growing skills in the use of the written word, students are held back in their very real efforts to achieve.

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

47. The sixth form has expanded over the past year and now provides a generally adequate range of A level subjects for those students who meet the school entry requirements. Currently, there is no provision for those students in Year 11 who have not achieved five or more higher grades at GCSE and none for those with SEN. These students either attend local further education colleges or move into employment. The curriculum does not yet meet the published aims of the sixth form; in particular it does very little to promote the school's Christian ideals. It does not meet statutory requirements in providing appropriate religious education. As numbers in the sixth form continue to rise, the school expects to continue to expand and increase the number of A level subjects on offer.
48. Entry requirements permit a small number of students to start A level courses without having attained higher grades in one or more of their subjects, particularly English, mathematics and ICT. As a result, some students struggle with the basic skills required to successfully complete their courses. The absence of courses in literacy and numeracy in the sixth form leads to these students experiencing some difficulty in parts of the A level curriculum.
49. Given the relatively small numbers in the sixth form, the school has managed the size of the teaching groups well. As a result the sixth form is cost effective, and provides a coherent programme of work in the subjects selected by the students. There is a weakness, however in the provision of enriching activities. Whilst there have been some special events, for example a successful visit to Disneyland as part of the media studies A level, there are no routine activities including, for example, an appropriate programme of physical education. Similarly, sixth form students have little involvement in the rest of the school. Five students are taking the sports leaders award and have involved themselves in community activities, but this is an exception. The recent introduction of the personal and social education programme has improved the provision although this approach is still in its early stages. This is a positive addition to the current rather narrow curriculum.
50. Current facilities and the organisation of private study are unsatisfactory. The sixth form has one combined social and work area, with some ICT provision. Students also have access to other classrooms when they are not in use for teaching. A new building programme, due for completion this year, should improve the situation and prove a valuable additional facility for the students.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

Assessment

51. Procedures for assessing attainment and progress in the sixth form are currently unsatisfactory. The school has identified as a priority the collection and use of assessment information and recently much has been done with very good support from the local education authority. The school now has detailed data with which to track progress of students and subjects and to identify where and when improvements are needed. The school is reaching the stage where they can distribute this to teachers and students in an easy-to-read format. Decisions have yet to be made on how best to manage this information and translate it into practical advice for students.
52. Currently, students have a minimum target grade to aim for in each subject which is based on their overall GCSE results. These targets are modified in the light of students' progress. Media studies is an example of a subject that makes good use of assessment profiles in tutorials which are held with each student. However, teachers' use of assessment and their marking of work are inconsistent. Some teachers are reluctant to relate their grades in marking too closely to the examination criteria in case the students achieving lower grades become dispirited. Students appreciate teachers' comments that are encouraging and provide them with short-term targets, but they say they would prefer a clear indication of their standard with grades that match. The school has not yet reached the position of being able to assess the value added to students in the sixth form through analysis of their A/S and A level results in relation to their attainment at GCSE or earlier.

Advice, support and guidance

53. Students are very well known to staff and the school assigns great importance to their care and welfare. Satisfactory arrangements are in place to monitor the personal development of students and staff share information and concerns very quickly so that individual students can be helped and supported where needed. Students show respect for their teachers and many seek support from pastoral and subject staff when they want to get extra advice about their work. There are few formal periods when form tutors can meet and discuss issues with students beyond the brief registration periods and the fortnightly tutor periods. This places an extra burden on pastoral staff in trying to provide a high level of support for their students. Reliance is placed upon students and teachers making informal contact as and when needs arise. Such an informal system has many benefits where students know staff well but may be difficult where students do not have such a good rapport with their teachers. Most students feel that their teachers are very accessible but have mixed views about how well they are supported when they have personal problems.
54. Monitoring of attendance is unsatisfactory and lacks rigour. Not all staff take registers thoroughly and the signing in procedures for students are also inconsistently applied. As a result, levels of attendance are lower than they should be. Although students report that they enjoy their sixth form experiences, a significant minority of students do not come to school regularly and this has a damaging effect on their school work.
55. Staff give generously of their time to students in Years 12 and 13 both in providing general guidance on studies and class work and also on more specific careers guidance. Students benefit from good advice on choosing their sixth form courses. An appropriate range of careers information is available in the school library. Good use is made of the advice from 'Connexions' who provide a drop-in advice service on a weekly basis as well as special events, such as an

annual university fair. Many students did not feel that they were well advised about future options but the inspection found that overall provision is satisfactory.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

56. Leadership and management of the sixth form are unsatisfactory. Some senior managers and governors do not have a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses. This is reflected in the sixth form development plan, which lacks detail and clarity and uncertainty in roles and responsibilities. There is no coherent rationale of the educational aims and objectives of the sixth form or of its relationship with the Christian ethos of the school. The sixth form does not meet the needs of all school pupils in the academic courses it provides and so does not meet the school's aims to be inclusive. There are currently no common strategies for using assessment, broadening the curriculum or improving teaching and learning. Performance information is not yet used to challenge what is achieved, to set targets or to develop strategies to maintain good achievement or improve.
57. Currently however, there is a strong commitment by senior managers and other staff to develop the sixth form. They recognise the effort required and are putting improvements in place. Leadership of the sixth form is under review and roles and responsibilities are being much more clearly defined. Active promotion of the sixth form is already increasing student numbers. Plans are in hand for improving sixth form accommodation to offer separate social and work space. In most subjects offered in the sixth form, leadership at department level is at least satisfactory and in some cases very good. Teachers' professional development contributes to a good knowledge and understanding of examination requirements. Staff within departments observe each other teaching which helps to spread good practice. New teachers and those in their first year of teaching receive good induction training. Strategic planning of the school's finances is good. The school applies principles of best value and employs careful financial management.

Resources

58. Resources for the sixth form are managed well, ensuring that it operates within the budget it receives and is self-financing. Students all have basic text books for their courses. Access to computers is good and there is access to the internet. However, the library provision for the sixth form is insufficient and this limits opportunities for independent learning. Resources and staff are well deployed without detriment to any other part of the school.
59. Accommodation for the sixth form is unsatisfactory. There is no separate work area and, during private study lessons, students have to go to other rooms around the school. Access to the library is somewhat limited due to its use as a teaching room. Sixth formers enjoy the use of a common room, which does have computers and internet facilities, but the social nature of the room coupled with the lack of a dedicated working area militates against independent learning. Staffing for the sixth form is good. Teachers' experience and qualifications are well matched to the needs of courses and students. The professional development of staff is regarded as a priority, particularly in supporting the development of new courses within the sixth form.

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

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

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

GCE AS level courses

None.

GCE A level and AVCE courses

| Subject | Number entered | % gaining grades A-E | | % gaining grades A-B | | Average point score | |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| | | School | England | School | England | School | England |
| Sports/PE studies | 1 | 100 | 92 | 0 | 25 | 4.00 | 5.09 |
| Art and design | 6 | 100 | 96 | 0 | 46 | 5.00 | 6.57 |
| English literature | 2 | 100 | 95 | 0 | 37 | 4.00 | 5.91 |

Intermediate vocational qualifications

| Qualification | No in final year | % gaining qualification | | % gaining merit | | Average point distinction | |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------------|---------|-----------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|
| | | School | England | School | England | School | England |
| Business | 5 | 40 | 85 | 40 | 40 | 6.00 | 10.45 |

Comparisons made in these tables with national averages are rendered invalid because of the very small numbers involved.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

60. Mathematics is the only course taught in this area. With the recent expansion of the sixth form, a viable mathematics group now operates in Year 12 for the first time for four years. It is clear from talking to students and looking at their work that teachers have the expertise and experience to deliver a successful course.

Mathematics

61. Overall the provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good and teachers have good subject expertise.
- A positive relationship between students and staff results in good learning and achievement.
- The attitudes of the students toward the subject and their willingness to learn are good.

Areas for improvement

- Marking and assessment is unsatisfactory. It was also unsatisfactory in the previous inspection.
- Students' independent learning skills are underdeveloped.

62. The school has not entered any students for A/S or A level examinations in mathematics for the past four years. Currently in Year 12, ten students have started the course. They will sit the first module tests in July 2003.
63. Overall, standards seen are broadly average. Since September, students have concentrated mainly on work in pure mathematics. Although they had some difficulty with basic algebraic manipulation, teachers identified this as a problem and have taken steps to improve the skills of the students. They can, for example, successfully manipulate algebraic fractions and have no difficulty in the manipulation required to sketch graphs. Students also work on networks as part of the module in decision maths. They understand and can successfully use terms such as valence and can identify when networks are traversable.
64. On entry to the sixth form, the attainment of students is slightly lower than average. However, effective teaching has enabled good understanding of the work covered and has resulted in good achievement. Students are, for example, confident in differentiating and integrating simple polynomial expressions and are working at a level which, if translated into examination performance, should produce grades similar to the national average in the modular tests.
65. Teaching is good overall. Teachers explain difficult concepts very well, and the students are able to grasp new ideas quickly. Sometimes the work is too teacher directed. Opportunities for the students to use their prior knowledge to develop understanding of new topics are limited. As a result, students sometimes lack confidence and often take too much time to complete work and this could affect examination performance. Generally more needs to be done to encourage the development of independent learning skills. Marking and assessment is unsatisfactory and this reflects a situation which was criticised in the last inspection. Although books are marked, no grades are given and students are not aware of their day-to-day progress. Students show a

high level of concentration and effort during lessons and there is a good relationship between staff and students which helps promote learning.

66. Leadership of the department is satisfactory although aspects of management require further development. Monitoring and evaluation is not routine or consistent and development planning is poor. The success of the department in re-introducing an advanced level course has been based on the development of provision in Year 11 which promoted the subject and encouraged high attaining pupils to succeed. If this success is to continue, more work needs to be done in Years 10 and 11 to establish the organisational systems which will continue to allow the subject to expand. ICT is generally underdeveloped and the provision of library material is very poor.
67. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, but has been limited due to the absence of an advanced level course. There are also issues, such as assessment and marking which have not been adequately dealt with.

Numeracy:

68. The development of numeracy in the sixth form is very limited. There is no evidence of the wider consideration of the need to develop numeracy.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

69. The school offers no courses in this area.

BUSINESS

70. The inspection focused on A/S level business studies. Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education (AVCE) business and A/S level accounts were also sampled. AVCE groups have been too small to make any reliable comparisons with national figures. Last year, one student took this examination. The lesson observed used ICT and was a good example of theory linked with real business data. The A/S accounts course is in its first year. In the lesson sampled, the teacher showed a very clear understanding of the subject. Challenging questioning of individual students ensured full participation and led to good learning.

Business Studies

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

Strengths

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and the quality of teaching is good.
- Students achieve well.
- The course builds sequentially on students' knowledge and skills, making use of situations from the real world of business.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Areas for improvement

- Teaching and learning should be monitored to develop a more coherent approach between staff.
- Links with the business community should be developed.
- A business base area and improved library resources would facilitate independent learning.

72. As this is a newly introduced subject to the school, there have not yet been any completed A/S programmes but unit external assessments so far recorded for the current Year 12 and analysis of student's work confirm that students achieve well. Standards are average in A/S business studies, which represents good achievement for students who tend to have below average GCSE point scores on entry to the course. Students are positive about the subject, knowing that they make good progress. They appreciate that personal help is available and this aids their understanding, helping them to work hard and achieve higher grades. However, students are reluctant to take any initiative for their learning and in lessons, teachers find it difficult to get them to contribute.
73. Teaching is good. In all lessons observed, there was a clear structure and positive working atmosphere throughout. Teachers demonstrated good levels of subject knowledge, which was made relevant to students through the use of real-world, relevant examples, often building on students' past experience. Teachers use differing approaches in lessons. The use of ICT for research sometimes helped to lead to good learning. This could be fruitfully extended by the use of dedicated business education sites for more independent learning, and the use of presentational tools such as data projectors for student presentations, which would increase student responsibility for their learning. Work is marked regularly and students receive constructive feedback that attempts to link student responses to the examination criteria. Teachers are well qualified and both have good subject knowledge, which is usually communicated clearly and effectively. The good teaching leads to good learning, which leads to the good achievement.
74. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. A development plan shows that the head of department has a vision for the subject's evolution and a coherent explanation was given for recent changes in courses. The department is well resourced and will soon move to more appropriate accommodation. The development plan addresses the need for improved library provision. Staff development has taken place, which has focused on enabling the head of department to introduce new courses successfully. While the development plan is in need of clearer success criteria and time scales, the major problem for the department is one of communication. Departmental meetings do not take place and this leads to two individualised approaches to teaching the subject and a lack of opportunity for the sharing of successful approaches and agreed good practice. Standards of teaching and learning are not monitored. Students benefit greatly from relevant business visits but there is a lack of formal business contacts and activities where students could learn and apply business skills in a more realistic context.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

75. The school offers courses in A/S ICT and in key skills. No lessons were sampled.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

76. The school offers no courses in this area.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

77. The school offers no courses in this area.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

78. The focus was on media studies. Art and design and art and graphics were sampled. In art and design, the lesson seen was good and students' standards were above average. The very good

teaching seen in art and graphics effectively promoted well above average standards and very good learning. Students shared a confident grasp of various graphics techniques.

Media Studies

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

Strengths

- Students achieve well, supported by close monitoring of their progress.
- Teaching is good. It is characterised by enthusiasm and good subject knowledge.
- This new course is very well led and managed and attracts an increasing number of students.

Areas for improvement

- Students are over-reliant on printed handouts and lack enough independence in their approach to work.
- Students' literacy weaknesses affect the standards of wider reading and essay writing.

80. In 2002, all students gained a pass at A/S level with grades ranging from A to E. These first results indicate good achievement, particularly as the students had little previous experience in media studies and many started the course with below average attainment. Eight out of thirteen students are continuing to A2 in Year 13.
81. The standard of work of current students is average. Most students are working at full stretch and are achieving well. For many, the practical element of the course is its main attraction. Students show imagination and good ICT skills in creating and manipulating digital images using the sophisticated software available to them. With good teacher guidance, students learn to use appropriate investigational techniques in carrying out their personal studies. The most articulate students speak enthusiastically about their projects and have a good grasp of the rationale of the course. They can discuss and analyse a range of texts and show knowledge of more than one medium. Higher attaining students gain a sound understanding of media theory and can apply this knowledge to their own work. Lower attaining students find the media concepts harder to understand and their written work tends to be descriptive rather than analytical. All students find the amount of wider reading required difficult to manage.
82. Students' attitudes are good. They speak highly of the subject and the teaching. A combination of the students' willingness and the teacher's enthusiasm is a major factor in the students' good achievement. Relationships are very good though students are too reluctant to speak up in class or question ideas. An over-reliance on note taking and assembling printed handouts distributed by the teacher has the effect of restricting both active participation by students and the development of their independent learning skills.
83. The teaching is good with many strong features, including good subject knowledge. The teacher has worked hard to build a bank of up to date resources for this new subject. Lessons include visits to the library to encourage more research. The purchase of high-quality computer software helps students create work with a professional finish. Good marking and feedback of written work is an incentive to students to be more accurate and develop their ideas in more depth. Students' progress is closely monitored using test scores and other assessments. Regular individual tutorials with students provide opportunities for them to discuss their progress with the teacher. This is a good support for students to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
84. The subject is very well managed and is attracting an increasing interest from students keen to study media at advanced level. Media studies has been introduced with enthusiasm and energy.

It makes a good contribution to the still image presentations for school open days. Good links with a higher education institution are encouraging students to seek further study of the subject. Visits, including to Disneyland, Paris, and the planned visit to New York, enrich the curriculum and attract students to the course.

HUMANITIES

85. The focus was on geography. The school offers no other courses in this area.

Geography

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

Strengths

- Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of examination requirements.
- Teaching benefits from satisfactory levels of subject knowledge.

Areas for improvement.

- Teaching lacks variety and challenge. It provides too few opportunities for students to work independently.
- Students' work is not adequately marked or assessed. As a result, teachers and students are insufficiently aware of their standards and how to improve.

87. The school has not entered any students for A/S or A level examinations in geography for many years. Currently, in Year 12, six students have started the course. At the time of the inspection they were undertaking their first modular elements of the examination.

88. Current standards in Year 12 are below national expectations. Towards the end of the second term of the course, students understand and can speak about brownfield and greenfield sites as possible places to build houses. They showed limited understanding of functions of settlements, like the village of Farningham, which they had recently visited. In discussion, they demonstrate knowledge of some elements of life in less economically developed countries, but there is a lack a breadth in their knowledge and this makes it difficult for them to compare the quality of life of different countries. Students' understanding of urban land-use patterns is not sufficiently developed. There is too little analysis in students' written work. Their literacy skills are below what is expected and this is a handicap to their learning. Students do not speak or write with great fluency. They do not use ICT in their work. Students start the course with below average GCSE grades and work hard; their achievement is satisfactory.

89. Overall, teaching is unsatisfactory; however, because of their strong efforts and positive attitudes, students' learning is satisfactory. Observed teaching was satisfactory. Teaching demonstrates satisfactory subject knowledge and the planning of lessons is careful to address the requirements of the examination. No schemes of work have been written, so lessons follow the examination syllabus rigidly; this means they have too little variety. Students generally sit taking notes and answering questions. They have a serious approach to their studies and, using the good text books available, learn satisfactorily. Because of the lack of variation in diet, the pace of learning in lessons is too slow and there is too little challenge for most students. They rarely undertake research or investigative work and are 'fed' most of the information required by the course. They do very little fieldwork. Despite studying rivers and coasts, the school has not provided opportunities to investigate these features in the field. Teaching of the subject does little to promote literacy, despite students' lack of confidence in these areas. There are few

opportunities to use ICT but some data handling work has benefited the development of numeracy skills. Students generally enjoy geography and have positive attitudes. In lessons, they concentrate very well and work hard. However, because there are too few opportunities for independent learning they have got into the habit of being too passive in their approach.

90. The leadership and management of geography are unsatisfactory. While the good organisational structures for previous Year 11 pupils led to the re-introduction of A/S level geography, there is still no proper scheme of work after two terms of the course. The students had undertaken no assessments in the two terms preceding the inspection, so the department's judgements of their levels of attainment and achievement are largely subjective. Student's work is not thoroughly marked so they are unaware of their standard in relation to national levels and do not know how to improve. The use of ICT is unplanned and occasional and is not an integral part of the curriculum. Resources are generally adequate, but the geography resources in the library are not suitable to promote independent learning and wider reading.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

91. The focus was on English literature at AS and A-level. No languages are currently taught and the school no longer teaches key skills in communication.

English Literature

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

Strengths

- Students achieve well.
- Students have positive attitudes and relationships are very good.
- Teaching is good. It is lively and challenging and results in good learning.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of students' work are affected by weaknesses in reading and writing skills.
- Students rely too heavily on help from their teacher in the wider aspects of their learning.

93. A-level results in 2001 were well below average. Both of the students gained a pass but their average points score was well below average. Three students took A/S level in 2001 and all gained passes but they did not stay at the school to extend their advanced studies into a second year. Fifteen students took the A/S level course in 2002. English literature courses have operated each year since the last inspection but numbers make comparisons with national figures unreliable. Most students start English literature in Year 12 with below average ability. Currently, there are small groups for A/S and A-level.
94. The current standard of work of students is below average. Given the low starting point for most students with below average attainment at GCSE, they achieve well. A strength is the confidence displayed by students in speaking and this is encouraged by teaching which ensures full participation. Higher attaining students demonstrate a good grasp of the vocabulary needed to analyse texts. They convey subtle and abstract ideas effectively in their essays. Written work benefits from regular practice and good drafting habits, which are established earlier in the school. However, it is mainly in their written work that students find the leap from GCSE to advanced studies so demanding. For the majority, it is the requirement for wider reading and the

written aspects of the course that present a considerable challenge, both in the depth and the standards of literacy required.

95. Students' attitudes are good. Working in pairs and small groups, students support each other. They negotiate and share ideas well and this promotes team-building skills and very good relationships. They seek and respect guidance from their teachers, and appreciate the extra time teachers make to give them additional support. There is a tendency to rely too heavily on help from the teacher, especially in the requirement to have a broader view of a text and learn about historical context. Some students' attendance is unsatisfactory and this seriously affects their progress.
96. Teaching and learning are good with many strengths. Teachers' good subject knowledge allows questioning which challenges students to think more deeply. As a result, students achieve well in discussing and understanding complex ideas. Teachers use very good templates and worksheets to help students structure their note taking and writing. As teachers know the students well, tasks are given to suit individual ability. Teachers take time and care when marking work to give encouragement to students and recognise their efforts. However, while students appreciate this, they say they would also like to know the standard of their work based on A/S and A-level grading. Although students cope soundly with coursework, more attention is being paid to helping students with closed examination conditions. Theatre visits and workshops serve to enrich the curriculum. For example, a recent visit to the theatre to see 'Hamlet' and day lectures on 'Hamlet' and 'Othello' have stimulated interest in these plays and supported students' learning for the criticism and comparison papers.
97. The department is led and managed well. Staff are committed, caring and constantly seeking ways to improve. Closer diagnosis of test and examination data would pinpoint with more clarity where individual effort could be made. This would be particularly helpful to students after they receive their A/S grades for each unit. Although the school has chosen not to offer key skills courses, weaknesses in literacy have an impact on the standards students achieve. The subject has made good improvements since the previous inspection and teaching and learning have improved.