

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **HEATH PARK HIGH SCHOOL**

Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104396

Headteacher: Mr D Selkirk

Reporting inspector: Mrs M J Kerry  
9931

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> January 2003

Inspection number: 249673

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

© Crown copyright 2003

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Prestwood Road Wolverhampton
Postcode:	WV11 1RD
Telephone number:	01902 556360
Fax number:	01902 556361
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Jones
Date of previous inspection:	10 <sup>th</sup> March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities (sixth form)	Aspect responsibilities (sixth form)
9931	Mrs M J Kerry	Registered inspector		All aspects in conjunction with Sixth Form Co-ordinator
13462	Mrs R Mothersdale	Lay inspector		
2739	Mr I Benson	Team inspector	Geography	Sixth Form Co-ordinator
30996	Mrs A Higginbotham	Team inspector	Mathematics	
27201	Mr C Ashworth	Team inspector	English	
4922	Mr M Driver	Team inspector	Physics	
12885	Mr J Hunt	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)	
15940	Mr N Godfrey	Team inspector	Business education Art and design	
4922	Mrs M Harding	Team inspector	History	
31821	Mr B McCann	Team inspector	Sociology	

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services  
Strathblane House  
Ashfield Road  
Cheadle  
Stockport  
SK8 1BB

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

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

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PART D: THE SIXTH FORM</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>RESULTS AND STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>STUDENTS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>TEACHING AND LEARNING</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>THE SCHOOL'S CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN THE SIXTH FORM</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM</b>	<b>41</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a mixed comprehensive community school in an urban area of Wolverhampton that is economically deprived. It is oversubscribed, with a present total of 1100 pupils aged 11 to 18. It forms part of the Excellence in Cities initiative. The sixth form of 140 students is part of a consortium of four other schools and an FE College. A significant number of students attend courses elsewhere. The sixth form offers wide access to a range of students. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average (38.7%) as is the percentage of pupils with special educational needs (32.2%). The number of pupils with statements is broadly average (2.6%) and includes pupils attending a designated unit for moderate learning difficulties. A high proportion of pupils have English as an additional language, with the main home languages being Panjabi, Urdu, Shona and Hindi. There is a high proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups, primarily Afro-Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi. Attainment on entry is below average.

### HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a highly innovative and very effective school, with some outstanding features, which puts the achievement of all pupils at the heart of its work. Results at GCSE have been rising very rapidly. Pupils make very good progress and results are now well above average. Results in the sixth form in 2001 were well below average, but they improved very significantly in 2002. Standards in the sixth form are rising, are now in line with the national average and achievement is good. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are outstanding. The curriculum is of very good quality and is particularly successful in meeting a wide range of needs, especially in Years 10 and 11 and post-16. Teaching is consistently good throughout the school. The principles of best value are applied very well and value for money is very good. The sixth form offers a good quality education with a wide range of courses, including vocational, and is cost effective.

#### WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Excellent relationships which foster mutual respect, racial harmony, good progress in learning, very good progress in Years 10 and 11, and excellent personal development.
- Outstanding leadership and management which bring to life a clear vision for pupils' education.
- A highly innovative curriculum, outstanding in quality in Years 10 and 11, which offers breadth of opportunity to enable all pupils to achieve well.
- Good quality teaching and high quality care which support pupils' learning and personal development.
- Pupils who are highly committed learners, mature in their attitudes and very well behaved.

#### WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Fully implement the Key Stage 3 strategy. \*
- Give greater emphasis to the formal monitoring of teaching within departments.
- Make more rigorous use of data in departmental reviews.
- Ensure all subjects are making good quality provision for ICT.
- Provide a progress report for parents before target setting days.

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

\* The aim of this strategy is to boost the progress of lower attaining pupils, particularly in literacy and numeracy

### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since its last inspection in March 1997. Standards at age 14 have improved from well below to below average, and standards at age 16 have risen at a rate much faster than that achieved nationally, rising from average to well above average. Results at post-16 have improved. The curriculum has been broadened in range in Years 10 and 11 and post-16. Statutory requirements are now met for ICT and the daily act of collective worship in the main school. Provision has been made for religious education in Year 10. The quality of teaching and learning has improved so

that it is now consistently good, rather than satisfactory. The teaching of science in Years 7 to 9 is no longer unsatisfactory. Very good progress has been made on strategic planning, and on bringing the budgetary situation under control. Attendance has improved significantly.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

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

Attainment on entry into Year 7 is below average. Results at age 14 are below average, but by age 16 pupils are achieving well above average standards. Their progress is especially rapid in Years 10 and 11, where achievement is very good. Some pupils achieve outstandingly well, and the results at age 16 are in the top 5 per cent nationally when compared to similar schools. Results at age 14 are rising at the same rate as national trends, but results at age 16 are rising considerably faster. These results taken over the past three years make the school the tenth most improved nationally. Results post-16 were well below average in 2001, but they have improved very significantly in 2002, and students make good progress from their starting points. Because of the strength of the school's policy and practice on inclusion, all groups of pupils achieve well and make good progress, including those with special educational needs, the gifted and talented and those with English as an additional language. The school's targets for age 14 are very challenging, whilst those at age 16 are regularly exceeded.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Throughout the school pupils and students are keen to learn, enthusiastic contributors and highly committed to their studies. Their appreciation of each other's work and ability to offer and accept constructive suggestions is impressive.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are mature and sensible in their behaviour. Mutual respect and high levels of self-discipline are always apparent.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. The quality of relationships is a key factor in the school's success, allowing pupils to achieve well and make excellent progress in their personal development.
Attendance	In line with the average and much improved since the last inspection.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	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.*

The quality of teaching sampled across the curriculum in the main school is consistently good. In Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11, about a third of the teaching seen was very good, four fifths was good or better and none was unsatisfactory. In the sixth form, about a quarter of the teaching was very good, taken across the nine subjects inspected in detail and those sampled at Heath Park and in the consortium. About four fifths of the teaching was good or better and none was unsatisfactory. No excellent teaching was seen. Literacy and numeracy, and key skills in the sixth form are effectively taught. However, further work remains to be done on implementing the Key Stage 3 strategy and improving the use of ICT in all subjects. A particular strength of the teaching is that all pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The programme for the gifted and talented is well advanced and they make very good progress. Pupils' high levels of motivation mean that they expend considerable effort, their work is purposeful, and they make good progress. Their active involvement is a strength, particularly in the main school. Sixth form students are committed and enthusiastic learners. Some teaching could promote students' independence as learners better.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. An imaginative and wide ranging curriculum, making very good use of partnerships to enhance provision, and supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. There is an outstanding range of opportunities in Years 10 and 11, including a rich provision of vocational courses. The curriculum meets a diverse range of needs very well.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Carefully managed provision ensures help is well planned and targeted. Very good quality individual education plans support pupils' learning well. The requirements of the new Code of Practice have been put in place conscientiously.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are carefully and sensitively managed. They achieve as well as their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, with outstanding provision for social and moral development. There is a strong emphasis on citizenship and community, and very good use of assemblies and tutor time to support personal development as well as to meet statutory requirements. The very positive ethos throughout the school supports achievement and personal growth.
How well the school cares for its pupils	High quality care ensures pupils are supported personally, enabled to grow as people, and to achieve well in their learning. Improvement is helped by the consistent use of targets set within subjects. The integration of care and support for learning is a particularly strong feature.

The curriculum does not meet statutory requirements in respect of the provision for religious education in Year 11 and post-16, or in the provision of a daily act of collective worship for sixth form students. The total teaching time is below the recommended minimum in Years 7 to 9 and years 10 and 11, but despite this pupils make good progress.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Outstanding. There is a clear educational vision focussed on pupils' achievement. School development planning is comprehensive and coherent. Innovative solutions are successfully tried.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body provides a suitable strategic framework in which the school can operate. Governors are highly committed to the school's inclusive philosophy.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Extensive monitoring of performance, including that of different ethnic groups, is undertaken by the school in comparison with national and local performance data. The wealth of information available could be better used within departmental reviews, supplemented by direct observation of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The constant application of the "best value" principle of challenge combined with very good quality strategic planning means that resources are effectively used to raise achievement. Staff are well deployed, and the graduate teacher programme has been very successful. The principles of best value, especially those of comparison and challenge, are very well applied to the work of the school.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children make good progress in their learning.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school is approachable.</li> <li>• Children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• The school supports pupils' personal development well.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about progress and options in Years 10 and 11, and especially information provided for the recent target setting day.</li> <li>• Some parents expressed concerns about behaviour.</li> </ul>

Inspection evidence fully supports the positive views of parents, in particular the very good provision the school makes for supporting personal development, and the high expectations of work and good quality teaching which enable pupils to progress well. Inspection evidence showed that information for the target setting day does need improvement, and the prospectus needs to be updated with respect to how options are chosen in Years 10 and 11. Overall, however, parents are kept well informed about progress. Inspection evidence did not support concerns about behaviour, which is very good, both in and out of class.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form of this 11-18 mixed community school has 140 students on roll. It serves an area of considerable deprivation. Two students have statements of special educational need. As in the main school, students come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and there is a high proportion of students with English as an additional language. All post-16 provision is made in partnership with four other schools and a college of further education that also serves the north east of Wolverhampton. A wide range of subjects and courses is offered, leading to GCE Advanced level, Intermediate GNVQ or AVCE certification. The policy is to make access to these courses as wide as possible. Students can also follow courses in any of the partnership establishments. Learning opportunities are also provided through a good range of enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities. Study, organisation and key skills are taught within all courses. Numbers in the sixth form have recently increased: most students have progressed from Year 11. There are clear criteria for entry to courses students wish to follow.

## HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form is cost effective and provides a good quality of education for its students. Standards are rising. Results were well below average in 2001 but improved considerably in 2002. Standards on inspection were found to support these improved results, and to suggest continuing improvement. Achievement is good. The quality of teaching is good, and students achieve well from a wider range of attainment than would be seen in many sixth forms. The very broad curriculum includes vocational courses, and is well matched to a diverse range of needs. Leadership and management, including the strategic role of governors, are of good quality. Very good improvement has been made since the last inspection.

### Strengths

- Excellent relationships and students who are highly committed to their work and to their school community.
- A very broad curriculum and partnership arrangements which allow this wide ranging provision to be cost effective.
- Effective support and guidance which guides students in their choices, and helps them to improve their work.

### What could be improved

- The quality and range of resources for students' independent learning provided through the Independent Learning Centre.
- The development of students' independent learning skills in some of the teaching.
- The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of provision across the sixth form.

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

## THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	<b>Very good.</b> Standards are above average. Teaching is very good and achievement good. Leadership and management are good.
Physics	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Standards are average. Both teaching and achievement are satisfactory. Leadership and management are also satisfactory.
Business education	<b>Good.</b> Standards are average. The quality of teaching is good and supports good achievement. Leadership and management are also good.
ICT	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Standards are average. Both teaching and achievement are satisfactory. Leadership and management are good.
Art	<b>Good.</b> Standards are average. Good teaching and learning lead to good achievement. Leadership and management are very good.
Geography	<b>Good.</b> Standards are above average and good quality teaching leads to good achievement. Good leadership and management are provided for this subject.
History	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Standards are average, but less good in Year 12. The quality of teaching is often good and results in mostly good achievement. Leadership and management are good.
Sociology	<b>Good.</b> Standards are average. The quality of teaching is good and enables students to achieve well. Leadership and management are good.
English	<b>Good.</b> Standards are average. The quality of teaching is good. Achievement is satisfactory overall, but good for some students. Leadership and management are good.

Other post-16 courses were sampled and included one lesson in each of biology, performing arts, film studies and psychology as well as two lessons each of media studies and chemistry. Three lessons were inspected in a partnership school. Teaching was very good in one chemistry lesson and one performing arts lesson. Teaching in the other subjects was at least satisfactory, but more often it was good.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Very good. Students have access to a wide range of information, advice and guidance. Feedback from teachers within subjects is detailed and helpful, and supplements regular progress reviews.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Good. There is a clear vision and educational framework within which provision can be made and the sixth form effectively managed. The governing body is highly committed to the local partnership arrangements. These enable students to benefit from a wide range of cost effective provision. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision are under review. Some subject leaders monitor teaching and learning but a more systematic process is needed for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of provision across the sixth form.

## STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A wide range of course and subject choices suited to their career aspirations.</li> <li>Good teaching and high level of challenge.</li> <li>Opportunities for independent study.</li> <li>Their work is thoroughly assessed.</li> <li>They are treated as young adults.</li> <li>Generally enjoy sixth form life.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being better informed about their progress.</li> <li>Course outlines are unclear.</li> <li>They are not well advised about careers.</li> <li>Their views are not always listened to.</li> </ul>

Inspection supported the very positive views students had of the sixth form. However, inspection evidence shows that: students are well informed about their progress, especially through detailed marking and assessment; course outlines are clear, but not all include reference to key skills; they are well advised about careers but, for those who frequently travel to partnership schools, making appointments to see an adviser can be very difficult. Students' views are not only listened to, they are heard and have affected, for instance, the provision of courses, most recently in ICT. This school has the success and effectiveness of its students at the heart of its work.

#### **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**

**Excellent relationships which foster mutual respect, racial harmony, good progress in learning, very good progress in Years 10 and 11 and excellent personal development**

1. The quality of relationships throughout the school is outstanding, and is the firm foundation on which the success of pupils is built. There is a high degree of mutual respect, and pupils know that teachers, including the headteacher, are genuinely and keenly interested in their progress and achievements. The knowledge which teachers have about pupils, and the way this is shared between those who are giving support, establishes a climate in which each individual is well known. A high level of trust and confidence exists between teachers, pupils and peers. There is a climate of openness and mutual support, evident in the way pupils spontaneously offer suggestions for improvement to each other.
2. The degree of racial harmony is striking in this ethnically very diverse community. When pupils enter classrooms for lessons they spontaneously sit in groups which are mixed by both gender and race. There is simply no need for teachers to arrange this artificially as is seen in many schools, as pupils readily work together with high levels of collaboration. Pupils and their parents express the view that the school is an accepting and valuing community, appreciative of all backgrounds and cultures.
3. As pupils progress through the school, many of them going on into the sixth form, they become mature and confident members of the school and the wider community. The care offered by the school has enabled them to grow as people, to achieve success in their academic learning and to raise their aspirations for further study. A significant proportion of pupils progress from Year 11 to study post-16. The vast majority of these complete their courses successfully, and again the majority move on to further study, training or employment. Progress in personal development is of a high order.

**Outstanding leadership and management which bring to life a clear vision for pupils' education**

4. The quality of leadership and management are outstanding. There is a clarity of educational direction within the leadership group, and a full understanding of what is needed on the part of management to make that vision a reality. All of the work is driven by the quality of opportunity provided for pupils.
5. The school development plan is a carefully structured and well thought out document, linked to a series of departmental development plans which have been drawn up by senior managers working with heads of department. The major themes of the plan are significant areas of the school's work, including social and educational inclusion and standards and progress. Within these broad areas, strategic developments are well to the fore, as well as more detail on the implementation of those developments which are further advanced. The plan sets out a coherent and comprehensive set of plans for improvement, based on excellent self-evaluation.
6. This is an innovative school, which has enthusiastically embraced the philosophy of the 14-19 curriculum. The principle of challenge within the best value framework is extremely well applied, with frequent questioning and evaluation of the opportunities

provided for pupils and how well these meet their needs. One result of this thinking is a curriculum that is impressive in breadth and range, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The design of the curriculum, and the role of leadership and management in making that curriculum a reality, has a strong impact on the standards achieved. It offers a variety of courses and experiences, including vocational courses and work placements, which motivate pupils and enable them to fulfil their potential in areas where they are best able to succeed. The effect of this approach can clearly be seen in the rapidly rising standards at age 16.

7. The vision that lies behind any change is clearly and uncompromisingly focussed on pupils and their achievement, and is shared by the leadership group and widely amongst the staff. The pace of change is rapid and requires flexibility and the ability to embrace new ideas. Many teachers give of their time and expertise to support pupils through lunchtime sessions for fast tracking, revision or catch up sessions in twilight time, or the provision of a full programme of extra-curricular activities. There is a strong commitment in the school to providing good quality learning for pupils.
8. An area that the school has rightly identified for further work is improving the quality of teaching and learning through a programme of direct observation in the classroom. There are already observations linked to performance management in place, and the school development plan identifies a series of additional observations to improve the quality of practice still further. These will supplement the extensive analysis of outcomes already in place, and assist further improvement of the quality of teaching by giving more detailed information than can be obtained through discussion. Teachers have already given much valuable support to colleagues through mentoring those on the graduate trainee programme.
9. The school makes extremely good use of comparative performance data of all types, both from within the local authority and nationally. There is extensive analysis of outcomes by ethnic group, gender and prior attainment. This work is beginning to be used at departmental level, and some departments make good use of data analysis in their reviews. This good practice needs to spread to all departments so that data is used rigorously to evaluate performance and identify areas for further improvement. This is already a priority within the school.
10. Management provides some creative solutions to common challenges. An example is the additional staffing provided in departments. This is used to eliminate the need for short term supply cover and to provide better continuity and subject specialist teaching for pupils, as well as relieving staff of the necessity to cover outside their specialist area. It will also provide heads of department with more opportunity to monitor and support the quality of teaching. Another example is the very successful use of the graduate trainee programme which has brought in teachers who are doing good quality work. This has meant that the school can be permanently staffed rather than relying on temporary posts. Again, this provides substantial benefits to pupils' learning.
11. The leadership group is a small but cohesive team with complementary skills and expertise. There is a wider co-ordinating group whose membership encompasses key areas of the school's work. On both these teams, the interlocking relationship between pastoral support and teaching and learning is particularly strong.
12. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the areas of school development planning, the formal monitoring of standards in subjects and the formulation of departmental development plans which were all key weaknesses in the last report. The current school development plan clearly identifies

responsibilities and monitoring processes, together with success criteria. There are now good links between whole school and departmental plans. There has been very good progress on this key issue from the last inspection relating to leadership and management. In addition budgetary problems have been brought under control, and the allocation to departments rationalised. Performance management has been successfully introduced whilst at the last inspection appraisal was behind schedule. The curriculum has been extended and enhanced, and the provision for pupils with special educational needs improved.

**A highly innovative curriculum, outstanding in quality in Years 10 and 11, which offers breadth of opportunity to enable all pupils to achieve well**

13. The curriculum that the school offers is rich, imaginative, flexible in meeting pupils' needs and gives very good support to their personal development. Combined with good quality teaching and high quality personal guidance, it is a key factor in enabling pupils to achieve as well as they do. This is an inclusive school with an inclusive curriculum.
14. The range of learning opportunities provided in Years 10 and 11 is impressive. There is an excellent range of vocational courses, as well as courses leading to GCSE. Different learning needs are catered for and pupils are carefully identified and guided towards courses on which they have a real chance of success. Good use has been made of disapplication procedures to tailor provision to pupils' needs. Because pupils see that they can succeed, their motivation is high. The current prospectus makes clear to parents the wide range of courses on offer, but it needs to be updated to explain better how the guided choices system works.
15. Extremely good use is made of partnerships to enrich and enhance the choices on offer. The recent partnership with a local College has been very well planned, with close co-operation between the two partners. Very good arrangements have been made to monitor and support pupils on a good range of NVQ courses, so that they are successful. The post-16 consortium is particularly successful in enabling students to access a range of courses which they could not take within their own schools. The experience of going out into partner schools is also very valuable for students' personal development, giving them an insight into what it means to learn within another organisation.
16. There is a willingness within the school to offer as many routes as possible to pupils. High achievers can fast track subjects to GCSE, or take twilight courses for additional qualifications. By these means some pupils achieve as many as 17 GCSE passes during their school career. In 2002 there were 69 pupils who achieved eight or more GCSE passes, with many achieving between 10 and 17 passes. In terms of average points score, last year's results were well above average, and in the top 5 per cent nationally compared to similar schools. When the average points score is capped at each pupil's best eight passes, it is still above the national average. Results are improving at a rate above that achieved nationally, and in 2002 the school was ranked tenth in the country for improvement in GCSE results over the last three years.
17. Pupils make very good progress from below average attainment on entry, and perform well across all measures at age 16. This means that pupils of all levels of attainment are doing well. In some subjects less pupils than average achieve the very highest grades, but results from vocational courses are outstanding, with a far greater proportion than average achieving A\* and A grades. There is very high take-up of vocational courses with over half the cohort entering in 2002. Pupils' achievement in all

subjects is supported by twilight sessions, booster and revision sessions and a homework club.

18. The school adds very good value in Years 10 and 11. Progress in these years is particularly rapid, after a slower start in Years 7 to 9. In 2002 average points score at age 14 was below average, partly due to a dip in results for English. Work seen on inspection indicated higher standards being achieved in English than suggested by last year's results. Achievement at age 14 is good when compared to similar schools. Overall results at age 14 are improving, at a rate in line with national trends. The Key Stage 3 strategy should raise standards further when it is fully in place.
19. Standards in the sixth form are rising and value added data for 2002 showed that the majority of students achieved as well as or better than might have been expected. The school encourages wide entry to the sixth form. Results in 2001 were well below the national average, with better results for girls than for boys. However, results improved significantly in 2002 with an increase in average points score from 10.1 to 16.7, and an increase in the percentage of those obtaining A and B grades. There was particular improvement in GCE A level results, including substantial improvement in boys' results. Achievement in the sixth form is good. There is evidence of standards improving in several of the subjects inspected in depth.
20. Extensive monitoring of achievement by gender and ethnic group shows that in the main school and sixth form all groups of pupils achieve well, and sometimes pupils from ethnic groups achieve better than their peers, particularly girls. Where there is significant variation, in the spread of backgrounds choosing a particular option for example, or in achievement within a subject area, this is addressed through departmental planning.
21. As well as guiding pupils onto appropriate examination courses, the school also ensures that wider opportunities are available. Liaison with other organisations, such as the Connexions service, means that pupils have a number of sources of advice and support to help them in their choices. Very good use is made of work experience placements, as part of vocational courses, as an experience offered to all pupils, and for those who are at risk of losing interest in school. For this last group extended work placements are often highly successful in improving motivation, self-esteem and attendance. There is also flexible support available within the school by way of modified timetables and individual guidance provided by the learning support centre.
22. The support given to pupils' personal development displays a richness of provision. It is outstanding in promoting social and moral development. Teachers are excellent role models, having high expectations and developing high quality relationships within which pupils flourish as learners and people. The school is a just and fair place to be, and is recognised by pupils as such.
23. Assemblies make a powerful contribution. During inspection week the theme was communication, which can be either damaging or encouraging. Both assemblies seen had a potent moral and spiritual message about the worth of others, how we can build them up or damage them, our own moral responsibility and the importance of forgiveness when we damage others or are damaged ourselves. At the end of each assembly, a pupil sang movingly to rapturous applause from peers. The assembly theme is linked to what goes on in tutor groups, using reading and reflections from a variety of religious and non-religious sources. The quality of these extracts means that, not only is the requirement for the act of collective worship met in the main school, but an experience of real substance is offered to pupils who respond thoughtfully and with



maturity.

24. The celebration of everyone's achievement is a natural feature of each day. Pupils spontaneously praise each other and offer constructive comments. The Year 11 awards ceremony recognises a wide range of achievement and promotes the ideal of service to the community. Care and concern for others is evident through charity work and participation in community projects. Much of what goes on engenders a strong sense of community, helping pupils to see themselves as part of the school and of the wider world. There is a strong emphasis on citizenship in the curriculum. During the inspection, lessons in citizenship covered issues, such as diversity in society or the electoral system, in a committed and enthusiastic way. Pupils saw these topics as highly relevant and paid close attention.
25. Awareness of self and aesthetic expression are encouraged in drama, music and performing arts and by a wide range of extra curricular activities. These include a range of sports, a wide variety of musical ensembles, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, outdoor pursuits, community projects and charity work, theatre visits and other occasional outings and events. Pupils work together in performing groups and ensembles as harmoniously as they do in other activities. Their social development is excellent, and their response to the assertive discipline policy is to embrace its principles and act responsibly and respectfully. High levels of self-discipline and respect for fair play are clearly apparent in lessons such as physical education. A variety of cultural traditions are celebrated in display.
26. There has been significant improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection. The school has embraced the philosophy of the 14-19 curriculum, and is putting it into practice to the benefit of pupils. The strengths in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development have been maintained and built upon.

**Good quality teaching and high quality care which support pupils' learning and personal development**

27. Everything that happens within the school is aimed towards supporting pupils' learning. The high quality care which pupils receive, the support for them in overcoming potential barriers to learning, the identification of their diverse learning needs and the provision of suitably varied and challenging opportunities to meet those needs, all work together to raise achievement. There is a common understanding amongst members of the leadership team of the vital importance of all these elements and an effective interaction between them.

28. As this was a short inspection, teaching in the main school was sampled across the curriculum, rather than being observed in depth. In this sample of 51 lessons, the teaching was judged to be very good in just under one third, and good or better in four fifths. No excellent teaching was seen, nor any that was unsatisfactory. As the sample covered all the National Curriculum subjects plus other vocational and non-vocational courses, this clearly indicates good teaching across the curriculum. In the sixth form, nine subjects were inspected in depth, six were sampled and a further three were sampled in a consortium partner school. Once again, the teaching profile showed good quality teaching and learning taking place. However, there is less teaching of very good quality in the sixth form, where one lesson in four is of very good quality, than there is in the main school, where the proportion of very good teaching is one lesson in three.
29. A major strength of the teaching and learning is the sense of shared purpose and commitment to learning, which means that classrooms are places where much productive work can go on. Pace is generally sustained well through the 70-minute lessons, with teachers planning a variety of activities which keep pupils interested. In the lengthy post-16 sessions, most teachers ensure that activities are varied by planning a different focus for each part of the lesson. The teaching time in the main school is below the recommended minimum, but the effectiveness of planning, and the reduction in movement time around a very widespread building achieved by having a four-lesson day, mean that pupils still make good progress.
30. In the main school, pupils are very actively involved in their learning. Sometimes in the sixth form teaching, this involvement is not so well developed, and this is analysed in more detail in the sixth form part of the report. A very good example of active involvement was seen in modern foreign languages. In a Year 8 French lesson, pupils who are fast tracking to GCSE were continuously involved in speaking and listening by brisk, energetically led and well-designed activities of constructing sentences to make a hotel booking. The teacher's lively approach, and ability to create a positive learning ethos meant that pupils made rapid progress in challenging work where even hesitant pupils were prepared to speak and make mistakes. Those who were struggling were well supported by targeted questions which encouraged them to speak.
31. Many teachers make very good use of the information supplied by the learning support team and by the gifted and talented co-ordinator. The identification of these pupils' needs is part of a carefully managed process which enables teachers to have good information about pupils who have English as an additional language, who have special needs or who are gifted and talented. Support for diverse learning needs might be a modified curriculum, undertaking Compact for example, or a modified timetable with the learning support centre with a view to re-integration, or extended work placements or planning to meet needs in class where this is the best way forward. There is considerable flexibility and diversity within the system which can accommodate individual needs well. The quality of individual education plans is very good, and statemented pupils make good progress.
32. A wide range of diverse needs is successfully met. In a Year 10 Compact group doing work on literacy skills, pupils made very good progress because of the teacher's skills in behaviour management, the brisk pace and the skilled and sensitive use of feedback to raise achievement. Their self-esteem was high and they enjoyed their success, spontaneously exclaiming, "Oh yes – now I've got it!". The programme for gifted and talented pupils is further forward than in most schools, and the effect of it can be seen in teachers' planning. A particularly good example was seen in design technology in Year 9 where planning for gifted and talented pupils enabled them to produce work of

exceptional quality. Recently arrived pupils who are not fluent in English are monitored and supported so that they can access the curriculum.

33. Teachers have very high expectations of behaviour, both in classrooms and around the school. The pupils are very much active participants, and their very good behaviour is not achieved by any degree of passivity on their part! A typical example of setting these high standards was in a Year 11 drama lesson, where the teacher insisted right from the start that protocols suitable to a theatrical venue and a high standard of performance should be observed. This was extremely courteously put across to pupils, but it was absolutely unequivocal, and pupils responded with respect and self-discipline. Teaching which called forth similarly high standards of behaviour and participation was seen in physical education in Year 10. Boys playing basketball were highly focused on developing their tactical skills, and their self-discipline was impressive. When a pupil momentarily became over excited right at the end of the lesson discipline was instantly re-established – a tribute to both the teacher and the group as whole.
34. The knowledge of and interest in their pupils which teachers, including the headteacher, display support good teaching and learning. This is an essential component of the very successful support for personal development. There are also effective monitoring systems, for improving attendance for example, which work well. Data of all sorts, including that on attendance and behaviour, is analysed by ethnicity and this information is used to refine and target support where it may be needed. If there are concerns about particular groups, the school ensures that something is put in place for that group. Examples of this include a learning mentor to work especially with Asian girls, and the appointment of reception staff who can speak community languages. Systems for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good.
35. Targets are used well with pupils within subject areas. Pupils clearly understand the targets they have for each subject, referring to the yellow slips on which these are recorded. Some of these targets are very specific and supportive of further improvement. Some are too general. The consistency of use, however, is impressive. The recent initiative of a target setting day involving pupils and parents is a good step forward, offering parents the chance to be closely involved in their child's education. The quality of information prepared for parents to inform them of the purpose of the day was good. However, the interim progress report needs to be issued to coincide with the day, so that parents can make the best use of the discussion. Parents responded well to the opportunity, with 90 per cent attending their individual interview.
36. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be consistently sound. Teaching in science in Years 7 to 9 is no longer unsatisfactory. There is now a significantly higher proportion of very good teaching and none that is unsatisfactory. There is a very solid basis of good teaching on which the school can build to improve standards still further.

**Pupils who are highly committed learners, mature in their attitudes and very well behaved**

37. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are a major strength of the school, and a very significant contributory factor to their achievement. In nearly all the lessons observed, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good, and frequently they were very good. In a few instances, they were excellent. Almost without exception, pupils show a very strong commitment to their learning.
38. In most lessons, pupils enter the room briskly and purposefully, settle quickly into their places and are ready to start work. They are quiet and attentive from the outset, and the atmosphere is business-like. During the lesson pupils work hard, they are keen contributors to discussion and are willing to speak and to ask pertinent questions. Different groups of pupils work together well. Often there are high levels of self-discipline where the work requires movement or group work, as in physical education or performing arts for example. Pupils are proud of their work, as was clearly seen in a group of Year 10 pupils talking enthusiastically about the opportunities provided for them through NVQ courses at a local College.
39. Pupils show appreciation of the performance of their peers. Their self-evaluation and support for others is good, as in a Year 11 drama lesson where pupils spontaneously and constructively offered each other suggestions for improving performance without the teacher needing to ask. Again, in an assembly, there was immediate and celebratory recognition of the well-presented musical performance given by a Year 8 pupil. During this assembly, and in a similar one for Year 9, pupils' concentration was intense.
40. Because pupils' behaviour both in classrooms and around the school is of a high standard, the level of exclusions is low. Movement around the school buildings, which are not easy to navigate, is orderly and good-humoured. When pupils are challenging, staff work hard to help them manage their behaviour better and this is usually successful. Exclusion is very much a last resort. Much of the very good behaviour in lessons is a response to interesting, challenging teaching planned to meet pupils' needs.
41. Sixth form students are also highly committed to their work and have very positive attitudes to their school. Although they are involved in a wide range of courses in other schools, with 68 courses being taken elsewhere in the consortium, they do feel that Heath Park is still their school. They appreciate the support they get from the school and they contribute to it by, for example, offering support to younger pupils through mentoring or work in class.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

Within the context of what is already very effective provision, the following areas could be further improved. In a number of instances these are already included within the school development plan.

### **Fully implement the Key Stage 3 strategy**

42. The Key Stage 3 strategy is in the early stages of development. The aim of the strategy is to raise standards by strengthening teaching and learning, developing cross-curricular skills such as literacy and numeracy, and helping pupils who come into Year 7 below Level 4 (the level expected for their age) to make faster progress. The strategy now also embraces science, ICT and teaching and learning in the Foundation subjects. Its implementation is not as advanced here as in many other schools. However, it is well placed to continue to develop and improve achievement by age 14, and this is currently a priority within the school development plan.
43. The three-part lesson is almost in place in English and mathematics and this part of the strategy is being shared with other departments. The use of prior attainment data is improving but needs further development. There has been good liaison with partner primary schools through a transition project.
44. There is a good numeracy policy in draft form which is a very practical working document, showing methods of teaching many topics in mathematics. This now needs to be shared more fully with other departments in the school.

### **Give greater emphasis to the formal monitoring of teaching and sharing of good practice within departments**

45. There is already a programme of observations in place linked to performance management, and teaching which has improved in quality since the last inspection. In order to raise standards still further, the school development plan has identified the need for an additional series of regular observations of teaching. These will be undertaken by heads of department, and staffing additionality in departments will allow time for this to happen. Although there are currently a number of opportunities to discuss good practice, a regular programme of direct observations will allow heads of department to have a clearer picture of the quality of teaching. They will be able to evaluate directly the effectiveness of the implementation of change, for example the impact of the Key Stage 3 strategy. It will also enable good practice to be shared, improving the quality of teaching further.

### **Make more rigorous use of data in departmental reviews, evaluating its meaning and the areas it points to for further improvement**

46. A large programme of data analysis is currently undertaken centrally. This ensures that the achievement of, for example, different ethnic groups, is carefully monitored. At present departmental reviews make variable use of this information.
47. All departments need to make critical use of the data available, selecting what is most significant and using it as a way of identifying areas for improvement and the progress made. This, combined with additional observations of the quality of teaching, should play a key role in raising standards further. A programme for improving the use of data, with lead responsibility taken by a member of the strategy co-ordination group, is in the school development plan and is already underway.

### **Ensure all subjects are providing good opportunities to use ICT**

- 48. The school is now meeting requirements for the provision of ICT, and pupils generally are reaching about average standards at age 16. Those who take GCSE and GNVQ courses are reaching above average standards.
- 49. However, evidence from work scrutiny, particularly post-16, showed patchy use of ICT in different subject areas. Students use the Internet for research and information, but they do not make as much use of ICT as might be expected in the presentation of their work. There is some good practice in business studies where students use ICT to present data in tabular and graphical form.

### **Provide a progress report for parents before target setting days**

- 50. There is a highly effective system of target setting within subjects which is used consistently, is well understood by pupils and assists them in improving their work. The newly introduced target setting days provide a very good opportunity for parents and pupils to have an in-depth discussion with the form tutor about all aspects of the pupils' performance, including targets. Nearly all parents attended these interviews.
- 51. In order to gain the maximum benefit from these discussions, the quality of information provided to the form tutor, and that sent to parents prior to the meeting, needs to be improved. A progress report needs to be sent to parents in good time, and comments from subject areas need to be sharp and specific, so that the form tutor can have a detailed discussion with parents and pupils. It was the school's intention to do this on the last target setting day, and this intention needs to be put into practice.

### **Improve the quality and range of resources held in the Independent Learning Centre so that they are adequate for students' private study across the range of 6<sup>th</sup> form courses**

- 52. The Independent Learning Centre (library) provides a quiet space where students can work independently and have access to ICT. The available resources in the Centre, particularly books, provide inadequate support for students in a number of curriculum areas, including English, mathematics, science, geography, history and the social sciences. Access to better resources for private study would help students' to develop their independent learning skills. This is especially important for those students who find the transfer from GCSE work to A level work difficult.

**Improve the way in which some teaching promotes the development of post-16 students' independent learning skills**

53. Although overall teaching in the sixth form is good, there are some occasions when teaching dominates the lesson and students are not given sufficient opportunity to develop their skills as independent learners. Examples of such lessons are given in the main body of the sixth form report. Students in all subjects need frequent opportunities to explore their own understanding and to contribute and refine their perceptions, within a clear structure set by the teacher. This would help standards in the sixth form improve further.

**Improve the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of provision across the sixth form**

54. This is linked to the need for greater emphasis on the formal monitoring of teaching and learning in the school as a whole, but with particular reference to the sixth form. It is already identified within the school development plan as part of the additional teaching observations to be undertaken throughout the school.

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

55. In the context of what is already very effective provision, the school should:

- (1) Fully implement the Key Stage 3 strategy.\* [Paragraph 18, 42-44]
- (2) Give greater emphasis to the formal monitoring of teaching and sharing of good practice within departments.\* [Paragraph 8,45,95]
- (3) Make more rigorous use of data in departmental reviews, evaluating its meaning and the areas it points to for further improvement.\* [Paragraph 9,46-47, 85]
- (4) Ensure all subjects are providing good opportunities to use ICT. [Paragraph 48-49, 105,108,138,146,159,166]
- (5) Provide a progress report to parents prior to the target setting day. [Paragraph 50-51]

### **Sixth form**

In order to sustain improvement and raise standards further the school should:

- (1) Improve the quality and range of resources held in the Independent Learning Centre so that they are adequate for students' private study across the range of 6<sup>th</sup> form courses. [Paragraph 52, 98,146,153,167]
- (2) Improve the way in which some teaching promotes the development of post-16 students' independent learning skills. [Paragraph 53, 62, 69, 73, 108, 126,132,150,151,156,162]
- (3) Improve the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of provision across the sixth form.\* [Paragraph 54, 95,168]

In addition, the school should consider:

Making provision for religious education and a daily act of collective worship for all post-16 students

\* Already identified within the school development plan, and underway within the school



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	<b>Years 7 – 11</b>	51
	<b>Sixth form</b>	39
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		52

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
--	-----------	-----------	------	--------------	----------------	------	-----------

#### Years 7 – 11

Number	0	16	26	9	0	0	0
Percentage	0%	31%	51%	18%	0%	0%	0%

#### Sixth form

Number	0	9	22	8	0	0	0
Percentage	0%	23%	56%	21%	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 as each lesson represents two percentage points*

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	<b>Y7 – Y11</b>	<b>Sixth form</b>
Number of pupils on the school's roll	960	140
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	363	-

#### Special educational needs

	<b>Y7 – Y11</b>	<b>Sixth form</b>
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	26	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	352	2

#### English as an additional language

	<b>No of pupils</b>
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	210

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	<b>No of pupils</b>
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.1
National comparative data	7.8

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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	100	86	186

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	49	66	57
	Girls	63	66	51
	Total	112	132	108
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	60 (76)	71 (58)	58 (55)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	23 (29)	34 (28)	22 (20)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	73	67	47
	Girls	77	59	41
	Total	150	126	88
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	81 (65)	67 (56)	48 (38)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	32 (28)	26 (26)	23 (14)
	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	76	105	181

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	51	72	76
	Girls	76	101	104
	Total	127	173	180
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	71 (53)	95 (98)	98(100)
	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	54.3
	National	39.8

*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	102	98
	National		N/a

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations	Year	Male	Female	Total
	2002	15	20	35

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	15	20	35
	Average point score per candidate	15.7 (9.3)	17.7 (10.9)	16.7 (10.1)
National	Average point score per candidate	*(16.9)	*(18.0)	*(17.5)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	9	19	28	6	1	7
	Average point score per candidate	19.6 (10.3)	18.3 (13.3)	18.7(11.5)	9.3(6.0)	6.0(6.8)	8.9(6.5)
National	Average point score per candidate	*(16.9)	*(17.7)	*(17.4)	*(9.8)	*(11.4)	*(10.06)

*\*National comparison data for AS/A/AVCE results in 2002 are not yet available. Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	21	90.4
	National		N/a

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		N/a

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

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>
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***

<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
636	3	
0		
7	1	
105		
0		
10		
0		
162		
11		
1		
0		
146		
20	7	
0		
2		
0		
0		

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	58
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.9

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

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	555

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	71
---	----

#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13**

Key Stage 3	21.1
Key Stage 4	21.3

### ***Financial information***

<b>Financial year</b>	2002
-----------------------	------

	<b>£</b>
Total income	3,084,479
Total expenditure	2,876,162
Expenditure per pupil	2,661
Balance brought forward from previous year	36,754
Balance carried forward to next year	245,071

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	29
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	41

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1100
Number of questionnaires returned	147

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	56	4	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	47	49	3	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	49	9	3	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	52	16	1	1
The teaching is good.	36	52	8	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	39	19	4	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	39	9	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	35	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	29	44	14	5	8
The school is well led and managed.	39	43	9	1	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	49	5	3	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	43	8	5	11

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

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

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

56. The sixth form offers wide access. Many students are the first generation in their family to undertake post-16 education. This wide entry is in keeping with the school's inclusive philosophy of encouraging access and raising aspirations for further study. The entry requirement for GCE A level courses is five higher grade GCSE passes: there is no requirement to have achieved, for example, B grades. In practice, students who do not meet the entry requirements may also be admitted as long as they are highly motivated. When this is the case their study is closely monitored, and the work of some such students was seen on inspection. Students are highly committed. Retention rates on courses are very good with 93 per cent of students successfully completing their courses. This is the highest retention rate within the consortium.
57. Standards in the sixth form are improving. In 2001, results at GCE A level were well below the national average. They were also well below average when compared to all maintained schools and to all post-16 providers. Girls' results were better than boys. Results in AVCE were slightly better than A level results. Improvement in results was needed, and the sixth form was a focus for management attention, with a more systematic approach being adopted to monitoring and tracking student progress.
58. There are no national comparators available for 2002, but it is clear that results have improved significantly. The average points score for all students entering GCE A/AS level and AVCE examinations was 16.7 in 2002. This compared to 10.1 in 2001, when the national average was 17.5. In 2001, 23 per cent of entries resulted in grades A or B, whereas in 2002, the proportion was 33 per cent. Results for both A level and AVCE courses improved, but there was particular improvement in A level results with average points score rising from 11.5 in 2001 (when the national average was 17.4) to 18.7 in 2002. Boys' A level results showed considerable improvement. In 2002, all students on GCE A level and AVCE courses achieved passes, and this was also an improvement on the previous year. These results are a significant improvement from those being achieved at the last inspection. The success rate on other vocational courses was 90.4 percent. This is also a significant improvement from the previous inspection when it was 50 per cent.
59. Rising standards are evident in the work seen during inspection, particularly in art, business education, English and geography. In all the subjects inspected in depth the standards of work seen were at least in line with the average, indicating that improvement in standards has been secured. In mathematics and geography standards of work seen were above average. Although results are improving in history, the standards being achieved by the current Year 12 are cause for some concern.
60. The wide entry policy and the fact that a number of pupils do not progress to post-16 education mean that A level cohorts may be significantly different in profile from both the GCSE cohort in this school, and A level cohorts in other sixth forms. Standards at GCSE have also been rising very rapidly over the last three years, and there will be a time lag before this improved prior attainment begins to have an effect on standards in the sixth form. Although pupils in 2002 achieved well above average results in GCSE, this was not the case one, two or three years ago.
61. In this situation, value added data at individual pupil level is of particular importance to



supplement direct inspection evidence. Value added data for 2002 shows that most students achieved at least as well as might have been predicted, with a significant proportion achieving better. This supports the standards of the work seen during inspection, where achievement is good in mathematics, history, sociology, geography, business studies and art.

62. Where achievement is satisfactory, rather than good, this is sometimes because students find the courses intellectually very challenging, as was seen in English. Some teaching also is not sufficiently strong in developing students' independent learning skills, and this is an area for improvement in sixth form teaching which would raise standards further. Achievement by gender and ethnic group is carefully monitored and pupils from ethnic minorities achieve as well as their peers.
63. Although there is some variability in planning for the development of key skills, including the use of ICT, students have sufficient competence for the demands of their courses.

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

64. Sixth form students have a high commitment to the school and to their studies. They are proud to be members of a community where every student is known and acknowledged as an individual and where their achievements are recognised and celebrated. Students respond enthusiastically to the school's ethos and expectations, and contribute to its life and work. All students benefit from close and highly profitable relationships with staff, but especially with their form tutors and subject teachers. Students have a demanding daily timetable. In spite of the amount of travelling many undertake to study in other schools, they work very hard, are generally well organised and increasingly manage their time effectively. Attendance is good.
65. Students' relationships with both peers and teachers are outstanding. In lessons they work very productively with each other, in pairs and small groups. In some subjects, they are keen and eager participants, sharing prior learning and perceptions, eagerly answering and asking questions or providing illustrative examples of the topic being studied. In some lessons, this level of involvement in learning often results in excellent discussions and in the setting up of hypotheses that could be further explored. In other lessons, for example in history and English, students are less actively involved and, where this occurred, it contributed to their making less progress.
66. Students have a mature attitude to their life and work. They willingly accept the responsibilities of leadership, become role models in their work with younger pupils, help in the paired reading scheme, provide in-class support for Year 7 pupils and contribute much to the wider life of the school. A number are appointed as prefects, are members of the partnership schools' student council, their own school council, take responsibility for organising their own common room or are involved in working with partner primary schools. The behaviour of students is exemplary: their self-discipline is an important indicator of their response to the school, its aims and values.
67. The significant level of students' involvement in the wider life of the school and in their learning contributes greatly to their personal development. They also derive great benefit from the school's citizenship, enrichment and extra-curricular programmes. The provision includes a range of recreational sport, music, work experience and community and in-school involvement, as well as the opportunities for fieldwork. This rich provision meets the diverse needs of sixth form students and is generally valued by them.

68. Many students have clear and realistic aspirations and are very keen to do well in their courses of study. They value the opportunities provided to explore careers and higher education, and the availability of tutors and the Key Stage 5 co-ordinator to talk to them about their future. Many reflect carefully on their academic progress and value the detailed comments that subject teachers attach to their written assignments. These comments often form the basis of their own personal targets. Most students are brutally honest in evaluating their own performance and have clear perceptions about what they must do to improve the standard and quality of their work.

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

69. The quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form is good. Teaching was very good in one out of every four lessons and good in one out of every two lessons. In the remainder of lessons observed, teaching was satisfactory. Within the sixth form no excellent or unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This teaching profile is appreciably better than that reported at the last inspection. Students respond well to the good quality teaching and, where they participate fully in lessons, are keen and eager learners and productive workers.
70. Teaching was good in all the courses inspected in detail, except mathematics where it was very good, and in physics and ICT where it was satisfactory. The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in the sampled courses. These included biology, chemistry, psychology, performing arts, media studies and film studies. Teaching was very good in one lesson each of chemistry and performing arts.
71. Where teaching was very good, the planning and sequencing of both the teaching and learning were underpinned by good subject knowledge and well constructed schemes of work. The teaching included constant challenge, the active involvement of all students in the learning and the use of demanding tasks that enabled all learners to explore the subject content and develop as independent learners. In all of these lessons, teachers effectively build on the good relationships within the class and students' highly positive attitudes both to learning and to the subject. Many students have confidence to ask questions of clarification, share their perspective on the topic or challenge other views and ideas. For example, in a Year 12 chemistry lesson, following the teacher's authoritative exploration of the topic, students instigated questions to identify and then clarify their own misconceptions. A similar approach was observed in a Year 12 geography lesson on hydrological systems. In both of these lessons, students quickly made progress, their knowledge and understanding were enhanced and achievement was very good. They also gained markedly in confidence and independence as learners. In a Year 12 performing arts lesson, the quality of work undertaken, usually in pairs, and the open-ended nature of the tasks allowed students to explore acting techniques, including the use of mime. The sensitive feedback and discussion of practical work by both teacher and students assisted all participants to make further progress in their performances and also in their planning and characterisation skills.
72. Other strengths of post-16 teaching include the high expectations teachers have of their students and the effective use that is made of a range of teaching and learning strategies to meet the learning needs of all class members. Teachers often use sharp and well formulated questions and tasks that promote and extend knowledge and understanding of the topic. In many lessons, students work highly productively in pairs or small groups. In group activities, students challenge others' views through discussion and work co-operatively in research and in developing or testing

hypotheses. Such experiences make important contributions to students' learning but also support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

73. On some occasions, the teaching dominates the lesson by, for example, the lack of questions or enquiries about students' prior learning; not seeking their perceptions and views as the exploration of the topic develops; or in the lack of opportunities for them to explore questions or issues in depth. For instance, in a Year 13 English lesson on *The Merchant of Venice*, students were entirely dependent upon the teacher for the structure and direction of their learning, even when they were offered the interesting task of examining images of Shylock. Also, in a Year 12 history lesson on the Russian revolution, students' thinking was structured by the teacher through the use of worksheets, questions that were relatively undemanding and by limited opportunities for students to contribute to the learning, as well as benefit from the expert knowledge of the teacher. In both cases, progress in the development of knowledge, understanding and critical skills was limited. However, in a Year 12 psychology lesson, while the teacher provided a clear structure for the learning and informative detailed handouts, every opportunity was taken by students to contribute their perceptions about the causes and nature of stress and they both asked and answered well formulated questions.
74. In a large number of lessons, good use is made of homework to extend and develop knowledge and understanding of work already explored in class. The design of interesting homework tasks enables all students, including those with English as an additional language, to make good progress. The good quality and detailed feedback, orally as well as through marking and assessment, helps all students identify and set targets for what needs to be done to improve their work. Students respond well to the learning opportunities provided, including coursework, lengthy assignments and practical fieldwork, to develop their subject and independent learning skills. Although key skills are well taught through subjects, and students have sufficient competence to meet the requirements of the courses they are following, not all make sufficient use of ICT to support learning.

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

75. The school's curriculum statement is very well conceived and aims to meet the learning needs of all students, whatever their background and aspirations. The philosophy embraces not only the provision of a wide range of courses, with a variety of routes for their certification, but also provision to support the academic and personal development of all students. This includes those who have special educational needs, English as an additional language, are gifted or talented as well as those who have a diverse range of academic and personal needs. The provision made reflects the extent to which the school has made every effort to meet these needs within a diverse, yet cost effective, curriculum. As a result, the curriculum is constantly under review and subject to regular detailed challenge.
76. The partnership with four other schools, and a further education college, ensures that there is the broadest possible provision made to achieve the curriculum's strategic objectives. Currently there are 40 courses available across the partnership from which post-16 students can choose their subject options. Of these 40 courses, 26 lead to GCE Advanced level; six to a GNVQ Intermediate award; eight attract AVCE certification, three for a double-award and five a single award. The school's contribution to this provision is strong and includes 16 courses in Year 12 and 15 in Year 13. Within each course in this school, provision is made for teaching the key skills of application of number, communication and ICT.
77. This highly innovative approach to making provision for the taught curriculum ensures maximum choice and excellent access for all students, including those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The provision for each course is just over four and half hours - a separate morning and afternoon session during the week.
78. In both Year 12 and 13, students' choices of courses are complemented by an enrichment programme. This includes provision for career planning, sport and the arts, citizenship activities and a range of opportunities to broaden their learning experiences. Available as part of this programme are, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, health related fitness, working with local primary schools, providing assistance and support in Year 7 classrooms, being peer mentors and hearing lower school pupils read, working in the community or having work experience and gaining skills in local commerce, trades and the leisure industry. Students also have access to a considerable range of extra-curricular activities, educational visits, fieldwork and opportunities to travel overseas. However, statutory provision is not made for religious education and a daily act of collective worship for all students.
79. Every opportunity is taken to ensure that each student has a broad and balanced study programme. At each stage, during Year 11 and at the end of Year 12, students have access to individual counselling and guidance as well as careers information, and can sample courses in which they are interested. This highly structured and well-managed approach for admission to Year 12 and Year 13 also includes an induction programme that sets out the school's expectations of each student and the procedures for supporting them at each stage of transition in their school life. The acting deputy head responsible for the curriculum, the Key Stage 5 co-ordinator and post-16 form tutors monitor carefully the work and progress of every student.
80. The curriculum provides very good opportunities for progress into further and higher education as well as into employment or training. At the end of the 2000-01 academic

year, about half of post-16 pupils opted for higher education, some deferring entry, while equal proportions of the remainder entered further education, employment or training. This school enjoys highly productive relationships with other post-16 providers, as well as with further and higher education, statutory and voluntary agencies and local employers.

81. The post-16 curriculum is well conceived and is carefully planned to ensure access to the greatest number of students. The provision is very rich and varied. Other opportunities, within both the enrichment and extra-curricular programmes, not only extend sixth form students' learning but also contribute significantly to their personal development.

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

### **Assessment**

82. Across much of the curriculum there is regular and detailed assessment of students' work. Detailed marking is usually undertaken, often using examination assessment criteria. It provides an evaluation of each student's work and offers advice and guidance regarding what has been done well in addition to what areas need to be improved. Most students find the marking extremely helpful and motivating, value the analysis and comments and use them to formulate their own targets for improvement. Many subject teachers also provide oral feedback to the class: this often refers to generic issues relating to, for example, the structure of responses, the development of higher order skills or to sources that could have been used in the completion of the task. Those students that have a specific concern about an assignment are often provided with further guidance, usually in twilight or lunchtime sessions.
83. Students' work is usually carefully monitored through the detailed records of marks and grades awarded across the range of assessment criteria. Of those subjects inspected in detail, good practice is found in English, mathematics, art, geography, history, ICT, business and sociology. Recently there has been a more systematic approach to monitoring and tracking of progress. Each half term, across all subjects, progress is reviewed and forms the basis of a discussion with each student. The process operates across all of the post-16 courses in partnership schools and ensures that the tracking and monitoring process contributes to higher student motivation, improvement in attitudes and attendance as well to the achievement of improving standards.
84. Target setting has improved since the last inspection. The school has set aside days when parents, pupils and their teachers can review progress and formulate appropriate targets to improve the standard and quality of work across the courses being studied. Attendance by parents was high and students found the experience extremely helpful. The same comments apply to the provision of information prior to the day, as to the main school.
85. There is a regular analysis of internal and external performance data within subjects. There is also monitoring of overall achievement by different ethnic groups and by gender undertaken at whole school level, for example the value added to different groups of pupils in post-16 results. However, in some subjects little use is made of these more sophisticated approaches to the analysis and use of data in, for example, considering the performance of students by gender; by different ethnic groups; against individual examination assessment criteria; by teaching group; or by consideration of prior attainment. Where a more considered approach is adopted, good use is made of

data analysis and other assessment information to review plans for future teaching and guide curriculum development.

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

86. Students are well known by their teachers and form tutors. From the time of their application for a place in the sixth form and through Years 12 and 13 they have an effective programme of support and guidance, within tutor groups as well as through their courses of study. Each student has access to a wide range of information, advice and guidance. This enables appropriate course choices to be made, ensures that learning needs can be met and that successful study will contribute to the achievement of each individual's career aspirations.
87. Year 11 pupils are well advised about entry and are provided with good quality written information and clear subject specifications to help them to decide on their proposed courses of study. The entry criteria for acceptance into the sixth form, and to follow courses in partnership schools, are well known by students and parents. The counselling and guidance offered takes account of the learning needs and aspirations of each student as well as helping them to choose courses in which they will be successful. Students are able to sample courses prior to making a provisional decision. Detailed guidance is also offered in the light of each student's GCSE results. A similar detailed programme is adopted at the end of Year 12 to inform decisions about courses for Year 13.
88. Throughout Years 12 and 13, form tutors continue to provide each student with support and guidance on career planning and on applications for places in further and higher education. Form tutors also play an important role in monitoring students' effectiveness in managing their workload and meeting deadlines, among other things. The regular progress review also enables students to discuss with their tutor things that cause concern or need improvement. Information about students who follow a course within a partnership school is shared with the Key Stage 5 co-ordinator and form tutor. There has recently been a more systematic approach to tracking and monitoring progress, and this still needs greater coherence across the partnership, with its effectiveness being monitored. Meeting and supporting the needs of each student is a major objective in the current arrangements.
89. Students also receive support and guidance within their courses, especially about further and higher education as well as employment opportunities. Some students are concerned about the provision of careers advice, largely because the demands of their course programmes and travelling to other schools mean that their available time rarely coincides with that of the careers team. Most, however, have managed to gain the information they need.

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

90. The school enjoys a strong and increasingly effective partnership with its parents. They value the fact that the school creates an ethos in which all learners are recognised and valued as individuals. Many parents recognise that central to the school's values is the drive to help all learners to be successful in whatever they do. The confidence of many parents was evident in their response to the parents' questionnaire.
91. Parents praise the school for providing such a wide range of sixth form courses and for the help, support and guidance it offers all students. They also recognise the opportunities that it provides for students to contribute to the wider life of the school, enabling each of them to develop a responsible and mature attitude and concern for others. Students' involvement in working with younger pupils and in enrichment and extra-curricular activities is seen as a significant contribution to their personal growth.
92. Parents recognise that the sixth form has not only recently gained a higher profile within the school, but has also improved significantly, and that new partnership arrangements do offer considerable breadth of study beyond the school. They are also generally very pleased with sixth form teaching. They receive both progress and annual reports. Their involvement in target setting day has provided them with a new perspective on the standards and progress being made but also on the high expectations that this school has for each student.

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

### **Leadership and management**

93. Overall, the leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The governing body provides a clear and effective framework within which this area of the school can operate, as both a beneficiary of and a contributor to the extensive curriculum provision made within the local post-16 partnership arrangements. The governors have a significant interest in the sixth form and are represented on the post-16 partnership committee by their chair, another member and the headteacher. Governors' commitment to the post-16 partnership enables the school to make very good quality provision for its students as well as effective use of its own resources.
94. The operational leadership and management of the sixth form provide a clear educational vision and direction for its work. The establishment of well defined priorities and expectations have resulted in a more strategic approach to providing a very broad curriculum, and challenging and supporting students through a more systematic approach to monitoring and tracking their attainment and progress. This is a very significant improvement since the last inspection, when strategic planning was weak. There is good communication between students and their tutors as well as with the deputy head and Key Stage 5 co-ordinator. The school's aims, values and expectations are strongly reflected in sixth form life and work.
95. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating effectiveness are currently under review. The school uses a variety of indicators to judge the effectiveness of post-16 provision, including the quality of teaching and learning. Sources include evidence from monitoring by the local authority and Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools, the analysis of learning outcomes and examination results as well as from student comments on their satisfaction. The level of support and guidance provided, and the contributions

made by students to the school's life and work, are also as viewed as contributing to their personal success. There is some formal monitoring of teaching within subjects, but it is in the early stages of development. A programme of informal monitoring of teaching and learning is used, but this is insufficient to judge their effectiveness, especially in relation to students' on-going progress. More formal monitoring would improve standards further.

## Resources

96. The school works hard, and plans very effectively, to manage its resources. Within tight financial constraints, very good quality provision is made for post-16 courses. Currently, within the wide range of sixth form courses, the take-up and retention rates are high and group sizes are viable. However, while the current arrangements are well managed, there is a small imbalance between the income generated by the sixth form and the expenditure made on sixth form provision. This is not adversely affecting the quality of provision, due to the highly effective partnership arrangements, but it should be kept under review.
97. The principles of best value are routinely applied, and there is widespread constant challenge in all aspects of decision-making. Students also contribute their views on a range of issues, as do parents. The cost effectiveness of the sixth form is good.
98. Teachers are well qualified for the courses they teach and they are well supported by good professional development opportunities, many of them provided by external examination boards and, where applicable, the graduate trainee programme. The level of resources available for the teaching of post-16 courses is satisfactory. It is good in mathematics, physics, art and geography. The provision and availability for ICT is good and networked machines are well used. This is an improvement since the last inspection when ICT resources had been provided but were not well used, and resources provided for many departments were inadequate. So great is the demand, however, that some sixth form subjects and individual students still have difficulty in gaining access to computers. Accommodation for teaching and social use is generally good and highly effective use is made of specialist teaching rooms and equipment. All students have good access to study rooms and the Independent Learning Centre. The range of available resources, particularly books, in this latter facility provide inadequate support for students in a number of curriculum areas, including English, mathematics, science, geography, history and the social sciences. This is having an impact on the standards students achieve in the development of their independent learning skills.



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

In the inspection, nine 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 2002. National comparisons for 2002 are not yet available.

### **GCE AS level courses**

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	4	100		0		3	
English	5	100		0		3.2	
Geography	1	100		0		6	
History	2	100		0		5	
Mathematics	2	100		0		4	
Media Studies	1	100		0		2	
Psychology	3	100		0		2	
Sociology	2	100		0		4	

### **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
Art and design	8	100		62		7.5	
Biology	2	100		50		7	
Business AVCE	13	100		8		4.6	
Chemistry	2	100		0		4	
Economics	8	100		25		6	
English	11	100		27		6.5	
Geography	1	100		100		8	
History	10	100		30		6.2	
ICT	8	100		12		4.5	
Mathematics	4	100		25		5	
Media Studies	11	100		54		6.7	
Music	2	100		50		5	
Psychology	2	100		0		5	
Sociology	13	100		15		4.6	

*Note: These are results for all students at Heath Park High School, regardless of where they were taught in the consortium. Results referred to in subject paragraphs may differ, as they refer only to*

students taught at Heath Park High School. Results for AS level reported here are “cached-in” results.

#### Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Health and Social Care	4	100		50		-	
Business Education	3	66		33		-	
ICT	1	100		-		-	

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

### MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

99. The focus of the inspection was on mathematics and physics, but two lessons of chemistry and one of biology were also sampled. In biology in 2001, standards were above average. In 2002 of 2 students were entered, both gaining passes, one at grade A. One lesson was sampled in Year 12. The quality of teaching was good. Students were beginning a unit on genes and genetic engineering. They showed a good understanding of relevant earlier work from GCSE and made good progress in this introductory lesson. In chemistry, results were also above average in 2001. In 2002 two students were entered and both gained a pass grade. The quality of teaching was very good in one chemistry lesson and satisfactory in the other. Students responded well to the very good teaching and their achievement was high. In the other lesson, where teaching was satisfactory, students' attitudes and achievement were never less than satisfactory.

#### Mathematics

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

#### Main strengths

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Students are well motivated, work hard and have very good relationships with their teachers.
- The provision is well managed and shared effectively.
- Retention rates to A2 are better than those nationally.

#### Areas for improvement

- The use of information and communication technology to support learning.

100. The inspection covered the AS and A level mathematics courses. In the GCE A level examination in 2001 all three students achieved a grade A or B. Because of the small number of students taking the examination these results cannot be compared with the national average. In 2002 all three students taking the GCE A level examination achieved a pass grade. In the AS level examination in 2001 over four-fifths of the students entered achieved a grade in the A to E range and a quarter achieved a grade A or B. In 2002 nine-tenths achieved a grade in the A to E range, one-fifth an A or B grade. These results represent good achievement.

101. Standards of work seen in the inspection in the sixth form are above average and reflect the standards required for the higher examination grades. In Year 13, students' algebraic skills are well developed and this enables them to cope with the demands of the differentiation and integration parts of the course that form a considerable part of the pure mathematics course. The clarity of diagrams in the students' statistics work is good in Years 12 and 13 and promotes understanding. In Year 12 students' diagrams and notes on discrete mathematics indicate that they had been well prepared for their module examination just completed. The standards of the students' work, indicated by their examination results and by the work seen during the inspection, are mostly better than predicted from students' prior attainment and achievement is good. Male and female students do equally well.
102. Teaching is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, their planning is good and the pace at which the work is undertaken is well matched to the needs of the students. Teachers give clear explanations. They question students well and students answer questions confidently with a good level of understanding. Students feel secure in the learning environment created. Teachers involve students well in the derivation of formulae. For example, in a Year 12 statistics lesson, students derived two formulae for working out standard deviation by the teacher's skilful questioning. In a Year 13 lesson, the students built on their prior knowledge to derive a formula for the volume of revolution of a solid formed when a curve is rotated round an axis. As the quality of the learning environment was so positive, the students had confidence to answer questions and discuss differences of view about a range of issues. The students in a Year 13 lesson were being well prepared for a module examination in statistics by thorough and careful questioning.
103. As a result of the effective and supportive teaching the students are making good progress.
104. Relationships between the students and with their teachers are very good. The students work hard, are committed to achieving high standards and co-operate with their teachers. They find the course interesting and challenging. Much of the written work demanded of students takes the form of questions that test the level of their understanding. Homework and tests are set regularly and marked in a sufficiently detailed way to help the students make progress in their understanding. They are aware of their progress and predicted grades and recognise and appreciate the support given by the teachers. Teachers know individual students' strengths and weaknesses well.
105. The curriculum for sixth form mathematics is appropriate and meets the needs of the students because of its interesting and relevant nature. Some students use graphical calculators confidently but no other use of ICT was seen. The sixth form work is well managed and the two staff teaching the sixth form work well together to plan and share the work. The number of students studying mathematics in the sixth form is now rising. The vast majority of students who start the AS level course complete it and last year all the students who achieved an AS grade continued on to the A level course which is much better than the national picture. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## Physics

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

### Main strengths

- Students' results are in line with their prior attainment.
- Teaching is satisfactory, with good features.
- Students enjoy physics.

### Areas for improvement

- Broaden the range of teaching and learning approaches to include, for example, more research, independent work, presentations and use of ICT.
- Plan for the systematic development of key skills.
- Increase the amount of homework set.
- Give students more regular feedback on their standards of work.
- Further develop schemes of work to include more detail of teaching approaches.
- Liaise with teachers in partnership schools to share expertise.

106. In 2001 only one student took physics, obtaining a B grade. None were entered in 2002. The popularity of the subject has increased and there are now eight students in the current Year 13.
107. The standards of work of current students are about average. In the lessons seen, they were making good progress in revising from past questions and ICT resources on topics such as diffraction and simple harmonic motion. Students were confident in explaining diffraction and the Bragg equation and could explain different order spectra in terms of the path difference. They confidently plotted graphs to determine the diffraction spacing,  $d$ .
108. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with good features and as a result students make sound progress. The teacher has good knowledge of his subject and he uses appropriate practical work to develop students' understanding. While explanation is generally clear, on occasions more care needs to be taken over explaining mathematical relationships. The range of teaching approaches is at present rather narrow, however, and needs to be increased, as planned. More emphasis needs to be given to research, independent work, presentations and use of ICT, for example.
109. Homework is set regularly and marked but the amount of homework needs to be increased. Marking procedures need to be adapted to give students more regular feedback on their standards of work before they have been given support with the questions. As a result of current practice, students are not clear about their actual level of performance. Some work is set to develop key skills such as comprehension, for example on physics and road safety, but this now needs to be increased so that these skills are developed in a systematic and thorough fashion.
110. Students make sound progress. They enjoy physics and respond well to the learning opportunities provided. Students work individually and co-operatively in groups and take an active part in lessons.
111. Good progress has been made in re-establishing the teaching of physics in the school. Leadership in the subject is sound: a scheme of work has been produced with outline content and references to resources and practical work. This now needs developing to include more detail of teaching approaches and to ensure a greater breadth of learning opportunities. It would be beneficial to liaise with colleagues in partnership

schools to share expertise. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

## **ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING**

112. As the school currently makes no provision in this curriculum area, there was no detailed focus or sampling during the inspection. However, provision is made elsewhere within the partnership.

## **BUSINESS**

113. The detailed focus in this area of work during the inspection was AVCE Business Education and GCE Economics and Business Studies. GCE Business Studies in Year 13 was sampled. The quality of teaching is good, attainment is in line with the average and achievement is good. Progress is also good.

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

### **Main strengths**

- The quality of teaching is good: lessons are well planned, expectations are high and progress is good.
- The very good attitude of the students to learning.
- The good quality of leadership and management of the subject which provide a clear vision and high expectations.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The use of visiting speakers, periodicals and newspapers to promote a wider understanding of current issues relating to business and society.

114. The GCE examination results in economics and business studies over the past two years have been below average in the higher grades. During this same period all students entered for the examinations both in Year 12 GCE AS level and Year 13 GCE A level gained a pass.
115. The numbers of students taking AVCE examinations in both 2001 and 2002 was too small for meaningful statistical analysis against national averages. All students entered in both years achieved a pass. This represents good achievement and considerable value added development when consideration is given to the prior attainment of the students. Students are tracked through from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 results, GCSE grades and then through to AS and A2. In 2002 significant numbers of students met or exceeded their personal targets for attainments.
116. In the lessons seen progress is good due to effective teaching which, coupled with positive student attitudes, is raising standards. Portfolios are well-organised providing evidence of good research skills and some analytical ability when dealing with hypothetical situations in business. In all lessons there was evidence of students engaged in discussions on a range of issues that demonstrated reasonably well-developed skills in forming and defending opinions.

117. Students in both years, but particularly in Year 13 are generally adept in planning their own work when researching and completing assignments. The department has access to a number of computers and expects all assignments to be completed in typescript. Some impressive work was seen where students converted raw data into graphs and a variety of charts. Evidence available demonstrated a good level of attainment by the students.
118. Overall the quality of teaching is good, often very good. The teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject: this fosters interest and understanding in the students through carefully planned lessons. Relationships between the teachers and the students are excellent, promoting high levels of mutual respect and understanding. Teaching strategies are carefully orchestrated to promote knowledge and understanding through whole class and small group activities. Expectations are high and therefore the work is challenging, allowing students to experience the complex nature of business.
119. Students are given effective tuition and advice, which prepares them for their unit tests and examinations. All students have attainment targets and they are capable of discussing their progress towards achieving them. A number of students interviewed also had career plans and were knowledgeable and articulate when discussing their work. They fully appreciated the quality of teaching, support and guidance given to them by their teachers.
120. The department is well led and managed, and there has been a good improvement since the last inspection. The teacher in charge of business studies has a clear vision, promotes high expectations and is knowledgeable about the present and future development of the subject. The teachers work as a very effective team, sharing best practice and supporting each other. Schemes of work are detailed and effective. Student assessment is also detailed and is used to influence the planning of lessons. Students have a clear understanding of their progress, attainment and future expectations.
121. Accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. A small number of lessons are taught in the school's Independent Learning Centre, and this has a detrimental effect upon the quality of teaching and learning. Because the space is a library it is difficult to manage in a way which allows effective class or group work. The students would benefit from greater awareness of the business community through the provision of periodicals and relevant newspapers, and the use of visiting speakers.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths

- Teaching is good in some lessons.
- Effectively managed provision with well developed monitoring and evaluation procedures.
- Good quality computer resources.

### Areas for improvement

- All students obtain a pass but few achieve the higher grades.
- Restricted practical skills of some students.
- Lack of vocational course provision.

122. GCE AS and A level examination results for information and communication technology are broadly average. The school has only recently begun to offer these courses, with the first group of students completing GCE AS level in 2001 and GCE A level in 2002. In 2001 nine students achieved GCE AS level and obtained grades in the range C to E: only one failed to obtain a grade. No students achieved either grade A or B passes. In 2002, the results for GCE AS level improved, with 8 students obtaining grades in the range B to D and none failed to obtain a grade. Eight students also completed GCE A level in 2002 and all passed with grades in the range B to E. The majority of students however achieved either grade D or E.
123. Achievement and progress for the majority of students are satisfactory. Some students make good progress. Previously many students commenced the courses with relatively restricted knowledge and previous experiences of ICT. However the majority of students currently commencing GCE AS level ICT do so with a greater range of knowledge and skills. Retention rates for these courses are also generally satisfactory.
124. Standards of work seen in both GCE AS and A level courses in ICT are generally at the expected level. Standards seen in a number of classes did, however, range from below to above this level. In a Year 13 GCE A level class, for example, students showed a good range of knowledge relating to information systems in organisations. The class was preparing for a forthcoming examination by undertaking a timed writing exercise. Most students made good progress with the exercise and worked well independently. However, several students in a Year 12 GCE AS level class showed limited practical skills whilst undertaking activities designed to prepare them for undertaking the coursework aspects of the programme. Some of the students had restricted previous experiences and had been given very limited opportunities on the course to further develop their practical skills when using a standard software package.
125. Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory and some is good. Lessons are well planned and during them students are now engaged in an appropriate range of activities. Until recently GCE AS level students had received only restricted opportunities to further develop their practical skills. Group work includes appropriate questioning of the students to check their level of understanding and to further consolidate their learning. The teachers involved have a secure grasp of the subject matter. During several lessons, good use was made of a digital projector in supporting aspects of the work.
126. Assignments are regularly set and marked with appropriate feedback to the students.

Teachers keep detailed records of individual students' progress. Good relationships are developed with the students. High quality computer hardware and software support the teaching and learning well. During some lessons the students are expected to take extensive notes. Teachers should consider ways of more effectively covering some aspects of the courses, which allow students to be more actively involved. Overall, students have a positive attitude to their ICT work.

127. The sixth form provision for ICT is effectively managed. The recent change in staffing has been well managed. All of the staff involved in the planning and teaching of ICT meet regularly, both formally and informally. Effective monitoring and evaluation procedures are in place. Regular lesson observations are undertaken and annual written reviews of the subject include an analysis of GCE AS and A level examination results. Computer resources are of high quality, with students having good access to them during timetabled classes and outside of these. The school currently operates vocational courses at the intermediate level in the main school. Progression to advanced level courses can only be achieved by students transferring to other schools in the sixth form consortium. The school has recognised this difficulty and plans to begin offering an AVCE in ICT from September 2003. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

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

128. The school currently makes provision for Intermediate GNVQ in Leisure and Tourism, but this was not a detailed focus for inspection.

### **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

129. The school currently makes provision for Intermediate GNVQ in Health and Social care but this was not a detailed focus for inspection.

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

130. The focus of the inspection was on art, but one lesson in each of performing arts and film studies were also sampled. In performing arts, teaching was very good. Students were highly motivated, actively involved in their learning and very well supported in their personal development. The standards of work seen indicated very good achievement. In film studies, teaching and achievement were good. Students were interested in their work but did not always have enough opportunities to participate in the learning.
131. There was a significant sampling focus on media studies because of its strong take-up. Media Studies at A level was sampled. Two lessons were observed, one with Year 12 and one with Year 13. A small sample of students' coursework was scrutinised. The results for 2002 were much improved on previous years and show attainment to be good. Eleven students were entered and all achieved a pass grade (grades A-E) with 50 per cent achieving grades A or B. In 2001 six students were entered and, although all attained a pass, there were no higher grades (A or B). There are no national figures with which to compare these results but the head of department uses previous GCSE scores to assess achievement. Achievement is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. At AS level in 2002, 90 per cent of students achieved a pass grade, of which 40 per cent were grades A and B. The overall pass rate was better than in 2001 though more students achieved higher grades in 2001. Groups vary in the percentages of boys and girls taking the subject but grades are broadly equally distributed.



132. Teaching seen was good in one lesson and satisfactory in one lesson. Major strengths of the teaching are the teacher's very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm, the very clear lesson plans which enable students to know exactly what their objectives are and the clear exposition of ideas. Sharp questioning helps students to clarify their ideas and develop them. Well produced resources are also a feature of lessons. In one of the lessons, which was otherwise very effective, the students were too passive and the lesson was too teacher directed. Students' attitudes to the course are positive. They work hard and show interest in the subject matter. Coursework is well produced and presented. Leadership and management of the course are good: assessment is thorough and detailed; data is used well for prediction, targeting and the analysis of results; resources are good.

## **Art and design**

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

### **Main strengths**

- The standards in the sixth form continue to improve due to the quality of teaching and the range of opportunities available to the students.
- The quality of teaching is having a positive influence upon the good progress being made from the start of Year 12 to the end of Year 13.
- The attitude of the students and their relationships with their teachers is very good, providing an effective learning partnership in lessons.
- The quality of leadership and management provides clear vision and the promotion of high expectations and is having a positive effect upon achievement.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Consideration to be given to offering vocational education, AVCE, as a strategy for improving the numbers of students electing to study Art in the sixth form and providing additional opportunities for success.
- Greater use of ICT to support creative development.

133. Overall the standards at the end of Years 12 and 13 are average. Standards have improved since the last inspection. In 2002, the number of students entered for the GCE A level examination was too small for statistical comparisons with national averages although both gained a pass. In GCE AS level examinations in 2002, nine students were entered and all gained a pass, seven gaining grades A or B. The results in 2002 demonstrate a significant improvement in attainment over previous years. The level of student achievement is amongst the best in the school when compared to all other subjects. The quality of work seen during the inspection confirms that standards are improving, particularly in the present Year 12. Some of the work produced is impressive. Portfolios and personal studies show that students have carried out thoughtful investigation and creative exploration of ideas. A number of students in Years 12 and 13 show flair and imagination and are producing work of quality and originality.
134. The majority of the students are confident when working with a variety of materials and resources. The students are articulate and can discuss their work with confidence and have pride in their achievements. Their attitude toward the subject is of a high order and is a major contributor to the quality of the work produced in their portfolios and displayed throughout the art department and in the public areas of the school. Achievement is good by the end of both Years 12 and 13, when account is taken of the relatively broad range of attainment indicated by the students' entry qualifications.

Progress is also good due to students' positive attitudes and the good quality of the teaching.

135. Teaching is good, often very good. Lessons are challenging and well planned, providing all students with opportunities to make good progress. Classroom organisation and management are extremely effective. The relationship between teachers and their students is very good and provides a pleasant atmosphere in the lessons. Regular references are made to the work of significant artists and cultures in order to raise creative and visual appreciation. Teachers are also successful in drawing on the range of cultural diversity represented within the school population in order to stimulate creative ideas. Project briefs are well designed: they include clear aims and objectives, well-defined assessment criteria and deadlines for completion. Students learn well as a direct result of good teaching. They rise to the challenges set by their teachers and use their time well. They often work outside set lesson times in their own designated area of the department. Creative development would be enhanced by a greater emphasis on the use of computers.
136. Students support and help each other, talking and listening to each other. There is a very good level of independent learning because teachers encourage students to try to solve their own problems. This generates reasonably good levels of originality in finished work. Work is monitored on a regular basis. Assessment is particularly effective as an influence on future curriculum development and lesson planning. Assessment includes a certain amount of pupil self-assessment and, therefore, when questioned the students were well aware of the teacher's expectations and their own strengths and weaknesses. Work is assessed at intervals, usually on completion of a project. Many students speak highly of the support provided by teachers.
137. The quality of leadership and management is good. The programmes of study are well managed. There is clear vision and very effective planning which promotes high standards in lessons. The teachers work as a cohesive team and therefore students receive good advice and support. The quality of teaching is monitored and a member of the senior management team acts as a line manager of the subject. Teachers maintain detailed records: targets are set for achievement, and retention and attendance rates are monitored. The quality of the work of the students on display in the department and public areas of the school is impressive promoting high standards and interest in the subject and celebrating achievement. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.
138. Resources are good and are well managed. Accommodation is good but the limited amount of storage space is placing a strain on the quality of education being provided. The variety of work and the scale and size of work produced is being affected. Computer aided art applications need to be more readily available. Department documentation needs to be reviewed to ensure that policies and schemes of work are regularly updated.

## **HUMANITIES**

139. The focus of the inspection was on geography, history and sociology, but one lesson of psychology was also sampled. The quality of teaching in psychology was good. All students were very involved in their learning, showed good levels of knowledge and understanding and their work showed good levels of achievement.

## **Geography**

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

**Main strengths**

- Outstanding relationships between students and with their teachers.
- Good quality teaching and learning that leads to students' good achievement.
- Good monitoring and tracking of students' attainment and progress.
- Detailed marking with comments that enable students set their own improvement targets.
- The outstanding commitment students have to the subject and to their learning.
- Good quality leadership and management.

**Areas for improvement**

- The effective use of information and communication technology to support learning.
- The range of geography resources within the independent learning centre.

139. Insufficiently large numbers of students have been entered for GCE A and AS level in the subject for any detailed meaningful statistical analysis of results. However, in the past three years all but two students entered for GCE A level have gained grades in the A to E range. The proportion gaining grades in the A to B range has improved, as has the average points score of each student. In GCE AS level over the past two years all students entered have gained pass grades in the A to D range, most of them being at C and D. However, given the prior attainment of candidates, this represents good achievement.
140. The standard of work seen, in class and in a sample of students' work, supports the results achieved. However, standards of work in the current Year 12 indicate that standards are rising as those students respond to the challenging teaching provided in lessons. Students have good levels of understanding of physical processes, including hydrological systems and plate tectonics. They can define and explain the stages in each process and offer in-depth explanation of their impact on the environment. Year 13 also have good levels of understanding of urban environments, although they sometimes find recalling prior learning demanding. However, they work well as a group and provide helpful prompts to peers as they analyse the differences between urbanisation and urban growth.
141. Students' attitudes to the subject and to their work are outstanding. They are keenly interested in the subject. All students, including those with English as an additional language, are active participants in learning, work very well as a class and in pairs, readily ask and answer questions and challenge their peers both with sensitivity and intellectual rigour. Relationships are, as a result, outstanding, both with their teachers and within the class. Students work productively in a range of groups that are, of their own choice, mixed by gender and ethnicity.
142. The quality of teaching is good: and in one lesson it was very good. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. Teachers' planning is underpinned by very good subject knowledge and well-constructed schemes of work. It includes interesting and demanding tasks that provide considerable challenge to all students, whatever their level of prior attainment. The pace of both teaching and learning is brisk, encourages a high level of student participation in brainstorming, asking and answering questions, devising mind-maps as well as in taking part in class discussion. In a Year 12 lesson, students were given overhead transparencies showing the range of different plate boundaries. They were required to show the nature of plate activity and their impact and outcomes. The task was well done and clearly informed the teacher of the high levels of understanding students had of this aspect of their learning. Teachers

constantly provide challenge throughout, using well formulated questions, noting key concepts on the whiteboard or through the sharing of a map or diagram: all require a detailed and informed response. For example, in a Year 13 lesson students were producing a mind-map of the causes and implications of urbanisation. On a number of occasions, the teacher's prompt brought a flood of new suggestions and concepts into the discussion and helped illuminate that area of the task.

143. Tasks both in class and for homework provide opportunities to extend both knowledge and understanding as well as to develop higher order thinking and writing skills. The teaching of key skills is satisfactory. Standards in communication and application of number are above average but computing skills are not sufficiently well used to support students' learning.
144. Students value the high quality of the detailed marking, especially the evaluative comments that enable them to set targets to improve both the standard and quality of their work. Teachers also provide oral feedback and regularly discuss with each student their attainment and progress.
145. Leadership and management of the department are good. There is a clear sense of direction for its work and the annual review and development plan are both most helpful. The analysis of external assessment data, however, needs to be further developed. The curriculum is well structured and is enhanced by good quality fieldwork. Geography teachers are well qualified and supported by good quality professional development opportunities. Although there are good levels of resources in the department, the Independent Learning Centre does not provide a sufficient range of books and other materials for post-16 students' independent work.
146. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection. However, further attention is needed to improving the use of ICT to support learning and to the development of post-16 resources in the independent learning centre. The drive to raise standards even further is to continue and is featured in the development plan.

## History

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

### Main strengths

- Teaching is mostly good across a cohesive team.
- Achievement is good for most students.
- Teachers produce high quality information and guidance materials.
- Students enjoy history and consider they are well taught and guided.

### Areas for improvement

- Developing confidence and independence through dialogue, debate and presentations.
- The routine use of data to track students' progress.
- Standards and progress of the current Year 12.
- Enrich students' historical experience through more books and by visits.
- The range of historical resources in the Independent Learning Centre.

148. The number of students choosing history has recently increased: the current Year 12 group has sixteen students. Most are well qualified for the GCE AS level course as the school has ensured that this is an appropriate choice for them. Retention rates are good. Several students are also following GCE AS level history courses at a partnership school. In recent years, most students have completed the GCE AS level course and continued through to GCE A level. Each year several students continue further into relevant higher education courses such as law and political theory. Current students said that they valued the thinking skills given to them by history whatever their career intentions, and all of them made it clear that they enjoy history and find the lessons stimulating and interesting.
149. Results have been improving for three years in GCE AS and A levels. All students have achieved a grade in the past two years. The percentage gaining the higher grades of A and B has increased, so too has the average point score. The 2001 results met the national average and in 2002 the results were better. There is no significant difference in the results of male and female students or between any other groups. All students entered for the new GCE AS level examination have succeeded in gaining grades for the past two years, and the average point score has increased a little. Standards are satisfactory overall and represent good achievement for most students. Where data was available, it was clear that most students had met or exceeded their target grades.
150. The standards of work seen in Year 13 are satisfactory. There is a range of attainment but all the students knew the main points related to British poor law and welfare reforms across one hundred years from 1830 and they could identify the key turning points. The higher attaining students also had a good grasp of theories such as socialism and utilitarianism. In Year 12, students had just completed a unit of study on the civil rights movement in the United States. This is a popular unit and past students have gained high marks. The students are in the early stages of new work on the Russian revolution and continuing work on Nazi Germany. On all the evidence from lessons and files, the standards in Year 12 are not as high as in Year 13: their skills have not progressed as well as they should from the end of GCSE. Some need help to learn to make notes effectively, to be organised, and to develop habits of self-discipline and independence in their studies. There was little evidence of using their initiative beyond the minimum. This is also true for the weaker students in Year 13. All these students also need more opportunities for developing the confidence and maturity that

comes with debate and dialogue and having the experience and responsibility of working with others on a presentation to the rest of the class. The personal studies, now underway in Year 13, do allow students to work independently and some good quality work was seen. Little evidence of the use of ICT was seen except for personal studies work.

151. Teaching is good overall. Although there are very different teaching styles, it is clear that teachers' subject knowledge is very good. This was illustrated very well in a lesson on the background to the Russian revolution. Some oral contributions were heard from the students, particularly in a lesson with group work, but more opportunities need to be given for students to reason aloud and give sustained explanations. In some lessons, there are not enough gaps for this. Helpful guidance was given to Year 12 students for writing an essay on Nazi Germany with extended and logical argument. In this instance, the lesson was particularly well pitched for students who are a little weaker than average. Teachers produce a wealth of helpful material for the students to supplement the textbooks, and to give guidance in revising and answering questions. Marking is good: it does relate to examination assessment levels, and it gives important points for progress. Students find the marking helpful. However, it could be developed further to relate more closely to the assessment objectives. Sometimes students have access to marking schemes that make it clear how each level of marks is awarded; this shows them how to gain marks to be awarded the highest level. They have the chance to assess some work themselves: this is good practice.
152. Relationships between teachers and students are warm with mutual respect on both sides as the students do appreciate their teachers' efforts. Several old students have returned recently to discuss their progress and to get advice for their studies.
153. Improvement has been satisfactory with regard to maintaining standards and implementing new courses successfully. However, the range of historical resources in the Independent Learning Centre, which would help students improve their independent learning skills, has not improved. Occasional visits or speakers would also enrich students' learning.
154. Both the leadership and management are good. The schemes of work are good quality. There is a strong teaching team and a good collaborative approach to the department's work. However, more training opportunities, in addition to those provided by the examination board, are needed to help to improve standards. Informally and through occasional departmental meetings there are checks on teaching and marking to try to ensure a consistent approach. One administrative aspect that could be improved is the recording of individual student data in a way that is easier to use than at present so that it becomes part of the routine tracking of students' progress.

## Sociology

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

### Main strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Good relationships between teacher and students contribute well to learning.
- Most students achieve well.
- The majority of students are very positive in their approach to sociology.
- The subject is managed well by a committed and enthusiastic leader.

### Areas for improvement

- Some students have difficulty in applying theoretical perspectives to unfamiliar situations.
- Current targets are not always explicit enough to help students understand what they need to do in order to improve.
- There is no access in the designated sociology room to information and communication technology, including video equipment.

155. Sociology is a popular subject. All students gained a pass grade in GCE A level in 2002, although the proportion gaining the higher grades was modest. Although only one student achieved a grade B, the overall results represent at least satisfactory achievement in the light of the students' prior attainment. For several students their results represent good achievement. The GCE AS results in 2002 were very similar to the grades at GCE A level: they were also broadly in line with the teacher's expectations. Almost all the candidates were girls. Retention rates are satisfactory.
156. In Year 13, the standards of work seen during the inspection broadly support the most recent examination results. The work of Year 12 students is in line with the average. Several students answered questions with confidence during lessons, whilst a small minority experienced some difficulty in recalling aspects of their previous work on methods of sociological research. Year 13 students have a sound theoretical understanding. Most can use appropriate terminology competently. Students understand the difference between crime and deviance. They can comment sensibly and with maturity on aspects of social control. However, they are less confident in applying specific sociological perspectives to situations with which they are less familiar. The quality of their written work is generally good in terms of organisation and content. Although students are encouraged to make use of the internet in their own time, there is little evidence of its use for independent study.
157. The majority of Year 12 students have made a sound start to their GCE AS level course. Their written work indicates that most have developed a good understanding about the family, a topic that has been covered in some depth during the first term. The conclusions reached in essays on different aspects of family life are generally well balanced, although not always linked to particular theoretical perspectives. Most students are beginning to develop a good understanding about the significance of different methods of sociological research. For example they can distinguish between participant and non-participant observation, although they are less confident when commenting on the specific advantages and disadvantages of each method. Several students in this large class are content to remain completely passive and leave it to others to contribute. A very small number of students lack the interest and motivation necessary for a course of this nature.



158. Teaching is consistently good and contributes to students' good achievement. Meticulous planning is evident in all lessons. Learning objectives are very clear and are shared with students. The teacher is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Relationships are positive and encourage learning. Questions are used perceptively to challenge students to think in greater depth about aspects of their work. The teacher recognises that in Year 12 it is necessary to direct more questions towards individual students to ensure that all are fully involved in oral work. Students are given opportunities to discuss and share ideas through group and partner work to increase their knowledge and understanding. The students in Year 13 are particularly positive in their approach to the subject. Their enthusiasm was palpable in a lesson on social control when they were discussing sentencing policy in preparation for a forthcoming visit to the magistrates' court.
159. The teacher who has sole responsibility for sociology manages the subject effectively. Documentation is in the process of being improved with the introduction of a departmental handbook and revised schemes of work. Students have access to a range of resources: textbooks are new and up-to-date, and printed handouts are of high quality and contribute to learning by presenting information in a clear and understandable way. Students spoke appreciatively about the level of support that they receive and about the guidance given in marked assignments. Although some target setting has been introduced, the targets identified are not always specific enough to help individual students understand exactly what they must do in order to improve. Group size places a strain on accommodation, and on the use of specialist resources. The subject does not have its own information and communication technology or video equipment, limiting the enrichment experiences available to students on a regular basis.

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

160. The focus of the inspection was on English. Provision is made for French at one of the partnership schools but it was not sampled.

### English

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

#### Main strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Students have positive attitudes towards the subject.
- The teaching team is committed and hard working.
- Leadership and management are good.

#### Areas for improvement

- Continued improvement in results, especially at GCE AS level.
- The development of independent learning and research skills.
- The monitoring of teaching.
- The use of ICT for research, study and presentation.

161. The GCE A level results in 2002 were an improvement upon those of 2001. There were ten candidates who all achieved a pass grade. Of these 30 per cent were of the higher grades A and B. There are no national comparative figures available for 2002 as yet, and the small numbers entered make valid statistical comparison difficult. In 2001, seven students took the examination; all gained a pass grade, one student achieved a



B grade but there were no A grades. The average point score was below the national average. At GCE AS level in 2002 most students achieved grades from B to E, but four failed to gain a pass grade. These results were below average and below expectations based upon the students' GCSE results. In 2001, 18 students took the examination: almost all gained a pass grade and one fifth of them achieved the higher A and B grades. These variable results can, in part, be accounted for by differing attainment levels of year groups and changes in staff during courses. The numbers taking the course at GCE A level have been relatively small though retention rates on the course are good. There are currently 22 students studying English Literature in Year 12.

162. The standard of work of students currently studying English is average overall, with a range from above average, mostly in Year 12, to below average. The range reflects, in part, the prior attainment of students but also their varying ability to deal with the greater intellectual demands of the GCE A level course. Achievement overall is satisfactory. Essays, notes, presentations and other work on texts such as *Hamlet*, *The Wife of Bath's Tale* and *The Handmaid's Tale* demonstrate mainly thoughtful and personal responses. Higher attaining students are able to engage with details of the text, use text to underpin analytical argument, adopt an appropriate style and write at length. They demonstrate an awareness of literature in its social, historical and cultural contexts and are able to employ appropriate subject terminology in both written and oral work. Students of lower attainment find difficulty in thinking and writing at the necessary conceptual level for literary analysis. Their written expression and limited vocabulary sometimes prevents these students from expressing their ideas fully. In addition, some students demonstrate limited knowledge and understanding of texts. Progress for some students is good: these students have an impressive work rate and can make effective use of independent study and research skills.
163. Students' attitudes to their work are at least good and often very good. They are committed and hard working. They work well in pairs and groups of mixed gender and ethnicity and interact harmoniously.
164. Teaching is good overall, frequently very good and never less than satisfactory. Relationships between students and teachers are very good. This is a major strength of the English provision. Students respect their teachers' very good subject knowledge. It helps most students to gain mastery over complex ideas in texts: for example, the nature of Hamlet's personality. Teachers sometimes use interesting strategies to encourage students to take ownership of texts. For example, Year 12 students worked on exploring the nature of the Wife of Bath in small groups and then shared their discoveries. In another lesson Year 12 considered, also in small groups, the subtle and contradictory nature of Hamlet's character. Year 13 students were encouraged to actively explore the relationship between Blake's poetry and its social and cultural context. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives and the pace is often good, helping to maintain motivation. The best teaching encourages discussion, debate, exploration and hypothesis.
165. Marking is mostly thorough and detailed. It provides encouragement and also sets targets. Occasionally, marking is of less help, being brief and general in comment. Teachers use questioning well to encourage students to dig deep into their knowledge and understanding. Expectations are high: teachers expect students to have close knowledge of texts and use text as evidence in analysis. There is a very good emphasis on examination techniques, past papers, timed essays, and mark schemes for those students who are approaching examinations.

166. Sometimes teaching is too teacher directed and prescriptive. This leads to the students being too passive and the pace too slow. At these times students do not receive encouragement to approach texts through exploration and individual thought. Little use is made of information and communication technology to develop independent study, research and presentation skills.
167. Learning is good overall. Students are usually encouraged by teachers to explore texts for themselves but with guidance. Independent research skills need further development to enable all students to extract maximum benefit from the good teaching they receive. Further development of students' independent study techniques will encourage their powers of analytical thought and interpretation. Students' learning is not well supported by the Independent Learning Centre at the present time. Stocks of appropriate GCE A and AS level reading and critical texts are needed for reference; some have recently been ordered but not yet received.
168. The subject is well led and managed. The head of department joined the school a term and a half ago but has already clearly formulated a vision of how post-16 provision should develop. The teachers work well together and are committed and hard working. At the present time, however, there is no monitoring of teaching by the head of department. This is a weakness. Students' work is carefully assessed and targets for improvement are set. Progress is tracked and students receive feedback. Resources, with the exception of the library, are good. Some useful theatre and lecture visits help to develop students' understanding of their texts. Schemes of work are appropriate and specify teaching strategies and available resources. Given the strength of teaching and leadership, the department is well placed to continue to improve. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.