

INSPECTION REPORT

AUDENSHAW SCHOOL

Audenshaw, Manchester

LEA area: Tameside

Unique reference number: 106273

Headteacher: Mr A. Crompton

Reporting inspector: Mr J. Paddick
10308

Dates of inspection: 2-6 December 2002

Inspection number: 249681

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	11-16 Boys, Mixed Sixth Form
School address:	Hazel Street Audenshaw Manchester
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T. J. Hall
Date of previous inspection:	4-8 March 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Audenshaw School provides comprehensive education for 1187 pupils. There are 1007 boys aged between 11 and 16 and a sixth form of 182 students, 124 male and 58 female. The school serves an area in an industrial suburb to the east of Greater Manchester. The social and economic characteristics of the area are broadly average compared to the country as a whole. However, there are fewer pupils claiming free school meals than normal. Most of the pupils are white. Only three per cent come from ethnic minority backgrounds, mainly Indian, Pakistani and Chinese. None of these pupils is at an early stage of acquisition of English. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is just above average but gradually improving. The proportion of pupils on the school's special educational needs (SEN) register is below average. Numbers of pupils having formal statements of SEN, mostly relating to dyslexia, impaired hearing, and emotional and behavioural difficulties are also below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is outstanding. GCSE and A level results are well above average. Current standards in the school are also well above average. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school and has many very strong features. The climate for learning is excellent. Pupils respond to the school's high expectations with excellent attitudes to their work. Leadership and management are very good at all levels. The school provides excellent value for money.

What the school does well

- The school's expectations of pupils are very high.
- Pupils' standards are well above average and achievement is very good.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Pupils' attitudes are excellent.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.
- The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good.
- Leadership and management are very good.

What could be improved

- National Curriculum requirements for information and communication technology (ICT) are not fully in place in Years 10 and 11.
- Some aspects of teaching in some subjects including science could still be improved further.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in 1996. Since then great strides have been made in many directions and overall improvement has been very good. GCSE results have continued to improve and now exceed local and national averages by a considerable margin. The sixth form was introduced in 1997 and has had huge success. Good attention has been given to the key issues identified at the time of the previous inspection. These related to standards in religious education, provision in information and communication technology (ICT), provision for pupils' spiritual development, opportunities for pupils to experience investigative work, and the management of the development of the curriculum. Striking improvements have been made in the provision for pupils' spiritual development, which is now a major feature in the school.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A
A-levels/AS-levels	A	A	*	

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.

The school's results in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were well above average overall, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. They were well above average in English, mathematics and science. Results improved markedly in 2002 compared with 2001. The overall trend in results has been upwards as it has nationally. In 2002, the results were well above average for schools taking their pupils from similar backgrounds. Current standards in Year 9 are well above average, reflect the previous test results, and represent very good achievement. Over the last year, pupils with special educational needs have improved their capability in reading and spelling by a large amount.

GCSE results were well above the average for all schools in 2001 and 2002, exceeding governors' very demanding targets. The 2002 results were well above average for schools taking their pupils from similar backgrounds and represented very good progress from the end of Year 9. Individual subject results in 2001 were very high compared to national averages for boys in English language, English literature, French, mathematics, art, and design and technology. They were well above average in all other subjects apart from business studies where they were average. In 2002, GCSE results improved again. 74 per cent of pupils achieved five or more results in the range A*-C. There were 92 A* grades compared to the school's previous best of 69. For the last two years, virtually all of the school's Year 11 pupils have been entered for GCSE and have gained at least five graded results. Current standards in Year 11 are well above average, reflect the previous very good GCSE results, and represent very good achievement.

In 2001, A level results were well above the national average and represented very good achievement for both male and female students. In 2002, the school produced its best set of A level results since the inception of the sixth form. In both years female students did significantly better than males. Current standards in Years 12 and 13 reflect the previous A level results and represent very good achievement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school and to their work are excellent. They respond very positively to the school's very high expectations of them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good whether pupils are in class, moving round the building, eating lunch or socialising. Pupils are sensible, polite and conscious of the needs of others. Exclusions for poor behaviour are rare.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good. Pupils become increasingly mature and socially adept as they move through the school. Relationships between pupils themselves and with adults are excellent.
Attendance	Attendance is well above average and is an important factor in the very good progress that pupils make.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subjects, generally plan lessons very well, and expect high standards from the pupils. The boys respond extremely well. They have very good attitudes to their work, especially homework, and generally give of their best. The climate for learning in the school is excellent. There is a sense of calm in almost all rooms because pupils are fully engaged by the variety of approaches that teachers use. Relationships in the classroom are excellent. In response to this very good teaching, the pupils make great strides with their learning. They understand new concepts quickly because teachers explain them so well. There is plenty of opportunity for pupils to consolidate knowledge and practise skills in lesson time and through homework, which is used well. Teaching meets the needs of pupils very well in most lessons but there are occasions where teachers do not plan sufficiently well to cater fully for the wide range of ability. Teachers understand the requirements of GCSE, AS and A level examinations very well and ensure that pupils and sixth form students have every opportunity to be successful.

Teaching in English and mathematics is very good. In science, teaching is good overall but there are weaknesses in some lessons. These relate to lesson planning, occasionally control of pupils, and particularly to the marking of pupils' written work. In the school as a whole there is an almost uniform very good quality of marking. This enables pupils to know how they are getting on and what they need to do to improve. However, in science, some teachers hardly mark written work at all. Consequently, in some classes, technical spelling errors, incorrect statements, poor diagrams and poor presentation are not being challenged. This affects the overall quality of pupils' work in science as they move through the school.

Literacy is taught well as pupils move through the school. Standards are high and support learning in all subjects because pupils are able to express themselves well orally and in writing. Numerical skills are also generally developed well and support pupils' work in science, design and technology and geography. However, there are a few pupils whose progress is impaired by poor mental numerical skills. This needs further attention.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning opportunities is good. However, the school does not yet fully meet requirements for the teaching of ICT.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is very good. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, especially in reading and writing. This enables them to tackle GCSE successfully in Year 11.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils having English as an additional language make the same very good progress as the other pupils in the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is very good. For moral and social development it is excellent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for pupils' welfare are very good. The boys are all known well as individuals and are given very good support.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. He has a clear vision for the school's continuing development and communicates it very well to all of the staff. Management is very good. It ensures that standards remain high, that all school procedures are followed properly, and that there is a consistency of

	good practice.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors play a full role in shaping the direction of the school. They understand its many strengths and few weaknesses extremely well. They generally fulfil their responsibilities very well. However, the school does not meet requirements for collective worship or for the provision of ICT in Years 10 and 11.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has excellent procedures for evaluating its performance. It constantly seeks to improve provision and standards.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses all its resources very well. Available finance is spent very prudently and checked carefully. Savings are carefully planned and directed towards improving the facilities. The principles of best value are exceptionally well applied.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and are making good progress. • Behaviour in the school is good. • Teaching is good. • The school expects children to work hard and do their best. • Leadership and management are good. • The school is helping children to become mature and responsible. • There is an interesting range of extra-curricular activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents think that the school does not work closely enough with them and that they are not sufficiently informed about how their children are getting on.

The inspection team agrees with all of the parents' very positive views. They have an accurate picture of the school's major strengths. The team does not agree with the small number of parents who think that the school does not work closely with them and that they are not kept sufficiently informed about their children's progress. The quality of information provided for parents about progress is of excellent quality, regular and frequent.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form was introduced in 1997 to provide a high quality of education leading to A level for the school's pupils who had done well at GCSE. It has grown in popularity since its inception because prospective students have recognised the quality of the provision. Currently, there are 182 students on roll, 124 male and 58 female, all following courses leading to A level. Most of the students are male, transferring from the main school following GCSE, but the numbers coming from other schools, especially females, are increasing. Most students are white. Currently, around 30 per cent of sixth formers come from other schools. The attainment on entry to the sixth form is above average, partly because the school does so well at GCSE and partly because entry requirements have been raised. The school expects applicants to have gained at least five GCSE passes at grade C or better. There are other specific GCSE grade requirements for entry to certain courses.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form is providing a very good quality of education for its students. It is very cost effective and meets the needs of the students very well. A level results are well above average, represent very good achievement and exceed governors' targets. Current standards are also well above average and students are doing very well. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Leadership and management are also very good.

Strengths

- Standards are well above average and students achieve very well at A level.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Students' attendance is excellent and their attitudes to study are very good.
- The curriculum meets the students' needs very well.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form are very good.
- The school provides a very effective environment for serious study at A level.

What could be improved

- Insufficient use is made of ICT to enhance and support learning.
- The school does not meet statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship in the sixth form.
- There is further scope for work experience, foreign exchanges and the provision of social activities.

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	Very good. The combination of teachers' high expectations and positive students' attitudes results in standards that are consistently well above the national average.
Biology	Very good. Students are highly motivated and teaching is very good. A level results in 2001 were above average and further improved in 2002.

Design and technology	Good. Although A level results are average, students achieve well in relation to their GCSE qualifications. Teaching is good and supports students from different backgrounds well.
Business	Very good. A level results are well above average and represent very good achievement. Teaching and learning are very good.
Physical education	Very good. A level results were average in 2001 but current standards are well above average. Achievement is very good. Teaching and learning are very good.
Art and design	Very good. Results and standards are well above average and students are achieving very well. Teaching is very good and promotes independent working by students.
History	Good. A level results were average in 2001 but declined in 2002. However, standards have risen and are now well above average. Teaching and learning are very good.
English literature	Very good. Standards are well above average. The students are achieving very well. They respond enthusiastically to very good teaching that has some excellent features.
French	Very good. A level results are well above average. Current standards are well above average and students are achieving very well. Teaching and learning are very good.

The inspection team sampled all other subjects taught in the sixth form. Standards being achieved were generally well above average. The quality of teaching and learning was always good or better. The small groups in A level German were making particularly good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	The students receive very good quality support and guidance. The induction programme is very good. Relationships between students and teachers are excellent. Students know that teachers will always help them outside normal lessons. The assessment system is very good. Students have a clear idea of how they are getting on in relation to their target grades at A level.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. Since its inception in 1997, high standards at A level have been sought and achieved. The provision is very well organised and has a very clear sense of purpose and direction. Its quality is recognised by the students. Equal opportunities are promoted very well. Managers constantly probe and question, even when the highest standards are being achieved, so that the quality of provision is constantly under review and being improved.

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"> • Standards are high and A level results are very good. • There is a friendly ambience and very good teaching. • Students are expected to work hard. • There is plenty of choice of A level courses. • They received good advice when they were going through the application and joining process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some students feel that they could be given more independence. • Some students feel that they would value more social events involving the whole sixth form.

The students clearly recognise the main strengths in the sixth form. They are accurate in their assessment of the provision. They know that it is organised well and will give them every opportunity for success if they work hard. They are full of praise for the quality of their education, the opportunities it offers them and the hard work of the staff. Inspectors feel that the balance between freedom and regulation is appropriate and that the relatively structured form of the provision is one of its strengths. Inspectors do agree that the school could do more to provide larger scale social activities for sixth formers.

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

The school's expectations of pupils are very high.

1. Boys enter the school with an overall profile of attainment that is just above average. As they transfer from primary education, it is made clear that a great deal is expected from them in terms of standards, achievement, behaviour, attitudes to work and general participation in the life of the school. For example, the school is not content to set targets in line with normal rates of academic progress from Years 7 to 11; they are very much higher.

2. As pupils move through the school, their progress, both personal and academic, is monitored rigorously and frequently. Any absences from school, unsatisfactory attitudes or underachievement stand out clearly and are investigated thoroughly. The high expectations are underpinned by very good teaching, plenty of support for pupils of all abilities, and an excellent climate for learning, providing every opportunity for pupils to reach their potential. As a consequence, boys respond extremely positively. Their GCSE results are well above average for all schools in the country, very high compared with those from local schools, and represent very good achievement. Boys derive great personal benefit from their time at Audenshaw.

Pupils' standards are well above average and achievement is very good.

3. The school's examination results are well above average because teaching is very good and boys have excellent attitudes to their work. In the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9, standards have risen as they have over the country as a whole. They were well above average in 2000 and 2001, and improved markedly in 2002. Results in 2002 were well above average in English, mathematics and science compared to all schools in the country. Compared to boys' results across the country, the school's performance was also well above average in all three subjects. Current standards in Year 9 are well above average overall, reflect the previous test results, and represent very good achievement. These standards provide all pupils, including those with special educational needs, with a very good base for moving forward to GCSE in Years 10 and 11.

4. GCSE results were well above the average for all schools in 2001 and improved considerably in 2002, exceeding governors' very demanding targets. They were far better than GCSE results achieved locally in any other maintained school. Since the previous inspection, the school's GCSE performance has always been well above average and has followed the national trend for improving results. In 2001, 68 per cent of pupils achieved five results in the range A*-C, which was well above average. All pupils achieved at least five results in the range A*-G, which placed Audenshaw in the top five per cent of schools. Individual subject results in 2001 were very high compared to national averages for boys in English language, English literature, French, mathematics, art, and design and technology. They were well above average in all other subjects apart from business studies where they were average.

5. In 2002, GCSE results were again well above average. 74 per cent of pupils achieved five or more results in the range A*-C. There were 92 A* grades compared to the school's previous best of 69, and the combination of all A* and A grades came to a massive total of 304, almost 18 per cent of the total entry. Particularly strong results were recorded in English language, English literature, mathematics, design and technology, modern languages and art. Current standards in Year 11 are well above average overall and particularly high in English. They reflect the previous very good GCSE results, and represent very good achievement. For the last two years, virtually all of the school's Year 11 pupils have been entered for GCSE and have gained at least five graded results. Hence pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, do very well at Audenshaw.

Teaching and learning are very good.

6. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school and has improved since the previous inspection. In this inspection, five per cent of lessons were judged to be excellent, 39 per cent very good, 39 per cent good, and the remaining four per cent satisfactory. Teaching generally has very few shortcomings in most subjects and meets the needs of the pupils very well. It enables the boys to make very good progress as they move through the school.

7. The climate for learning in the school is excellent. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subjects, and particularly the demands of GCSE. They usually plan lessons very well so that they include a variety of approaches and activities to maintain the pupils' interest and attention. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and much is expected of the pupils. The boys respond with very good attitudes to their work, especially homework, and generally give of their best. Teachers provide plenty of opportunity for boys to consolidate knowledge and practise skills in lesson time and develop them further through carefully considered set homework. Relationships are excellent.

8. In a very good art lesson on cylindrical clay pots with Year 9, the teacher started by sharing with the class what they were about to learn, introducing key words very well. Management of pupils was excellent as they collected equipment and materials briskly and without fuss. Boys started to work immediately, and were soon fully engaged on the decoration of their slabs of clay. Many were clearly proud of the standards they had achieved. The teacher circulated offering advice and guidance in an enthusiastic manner, praising many pupils for their efforts. At the appropriate time, the whole class was brought together for a fascinating practical demonstration on how to convert the clay slabs to cylindrical pots. The boys listened and watched with rapt attention. Learning was very good because most boys were able to return to their work and repeat exactly what they had just seen.

9. In a very good German lesson, also in Year 9, the teacher revised previously learnt vocabulary in a very brisk and compelling manner. This was followed by carefully prepared exercises in sentence construction based on flashcards relating to well-known television programmes. These prompted an outstanding response from the boys who displayed very high levels of accurately spoken German. The teacher, a very fluent German speaker, conducted the entire proceedings in the foreign language, changing the focus of the lesson to maintain a brisk pace throughout. Standards, achieved in only four terms, were well above average for pupils learning a second foreign language.

10. Lessons like this are not unusual at Audenshaw! Half of the teaching observed during the inspection was of a similar quality. The remainder was mostly good, and never less than satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes are excellent.

11. Pupils' attitudes to all aspects of school life are excellent. They enjoy their lessons and the large number of extra-curricular activities that the school provides for them. The climate for learning is excellent and lessons proceed without interruption or distraction. This is because the boys respond so well to the school's very high expectations of them. Whilst moving around the school, pupils behave in a thoroughly courteous and sensible fashion. Misbehaviour is relatively rare and the number of exclusions is very low. Relationships are excellent.

12. Members of staff act as excellent role models for the boys in terms of personal appearance, attention to detail, hard work, and social interaction. Boys respond extremely well to these examples which underpin the general ethos of the school. They are genuinely enthusiastic about making good progress in their learning and work hard in lessons, often maintaining concentration for long periods. Attitudes to homework are very good.

13. Boys' attendance at school is well above average for the country as whole. Coupled with their excellent attitudes to their work, this very positive feature helps the pupils to reach their full potential for progress in their studies and the achievement of high standards.

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent.

14. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. It pervades the life of the school and actively supports pupils' personal development at all times. Provision for pupils' spiritual development, criticised at the time of the previous inspection, has improved so much that it is now one of the school's major features. Although the school does not fully meet requirements for collective worship, the quality of the morning assemblies is very good indeed. A visit to one of these is a moving experience. Here, pupils provide music of high quality and boys all sing hymns with feeling and respect. The homily, expertly presented, enables boys and staff to step outside their busy lives for a few minutes and reflect on issues connected with people's belief in God and how it often guides and transforms their lives. Frequently, the presentation is so good that boys give the impression of being spellbound! The school has planned carefully to ensure that the spiritual content of the curriculum is not confined to assembly. It is evident in the work of all subjects but particularly in religious education where boys have the opportunity to explore their own beliefs and those of others and how they affect people's lives.

15. Pupils develop extremely well in a social and moral sense as they move through the school. The stated aim of seeking to fight against the negative aspects of society is achieved with great success. In fact, there are times when visitors stop to reflect on being in such an oasis of calm where the boys and their teachers demonstrate the highest qualities of personal conduct. The headteacher and senior staff set the tone but all members of staff act as excellent role models, make their expectations very clear, and consistently insist on high standards. Boys, whose personal development or conduct does not meet these high expectations, are soon informed that they are not meeting the standards required and are provided with appropriate advice and assistance to help to improve. As a consequence, when boys leave the school premises to take part in activities away from the site, the school frequently receives the highest praise for the way that they have conducted themselves. For example, a work experience report reads, 'He has demonstrated tremendous enthusiasm, willingness, adaptability and versatility. He built excellent working relationships with both staff and pupils in a very short space of time. He volunteered himself for many more tasks than were required. Further to this he worked beyond normal school hours helping out with lunchtime and evening extra-curricular activities'.

Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.

16. Parents say that the school takes very good care of its pupils with special educational needs. They are justified in having this view. The teaching and attention provided for special needs pupils is very good and ensures that they make very good progress as they move through the school. The pupils have special needs relating to dyslexia, emotional and behavioural problems, autism, and hearing impairment yet from the outset they are regarded as potential GCSE candidates just like all other boys.

17. Special needs teachers ensure that their pupils make up lost ground in literacy as quickly as possible so that they can fully access the work in all subjects. Where pupils have considerable difficulties with reading, spelling and writing, they are taught to overcome them. Last year, the pupils with the greatest literacy problems made good gains, particularly in reading.

18. The GCSE results achieved by pupils with special educational needs bear testimony to the very good quality of education that they receive. It is very rare for a pupil not to be entered for the examination. Almost all pupils on the school's special needs register achieve at least five GCSE results in the range A*-G, representing very good achievement.

The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good.

19. Parents are very happy that the school is not just striving for academic success. They really value the attention given to all angles of pupils' personal development, often through the very good range of extra-curricular activities. The school has a very strong tradition in sport and the numbers of pupils involved in team games on Saturday mornings and after school are impressive. Inter-form competitions are provided in order to involve as many pupils as possible in team games outside lessons.

20. Apart from sport, the school encourages boys to become involved in a very good range of other extra-curricular activities. Several of these provide valuable experiences for boys away from the school site. Fell walking, theatre visits, camping, and foreign and local educational visits are all examples. The school band, art club, library and the very well attended shows offer very good opportunities for boys who are interested in further cultural experiences. The Christian forum provides opportunity for debate.

21. The Combined Cadet Force is one of the school's major features, prompting many boys to pursue careers in the armed forces as a direct consequence of their experiences. Charity fundraising is also a strong feature, enabling boys to consider people less fortunate than themselves and to make an effort to help them. All of these extra-curricular activities enrich the quality of provision and enable boys to explore a multitude of possibilities for future life-long interests.

Leadership and management are very good.

22. The leadership provided by the headteacher is outstanding. He sets the tone for the school and leads by example. He has a clear vision and constantly seeks to improve the quality of the school's education programme and the standards achieved. He receives very strong support from the governing body whose members put a great deal of time and effort into the formulation of plans for the school's continuing development. Governors understand the school's many strengths and small number of areas for development extremely well. They set demanding academic targets which the school strives hard to exceed.

23. The senior management team is instrumental in ensuring that a consistency of approach and high standards run through the school. The quality of these managers' work is often evidenced by their own performance in key roles, for example, in the delivery of moving assemblies with a strong spiritual content, which often keep staff and pupils spellbound as they reflect on their messages. A very comprehensive staff handbook guides the day to day running of the school. Managers at all levels ensure that their teams follow these procedures accurately and monitor and evaluate their own performance.

24. The school has excellent procedures for evaluating its academic standards. It constantly compares the pupils' progress and examination results with national figures and with those obtained by local schools. Managers know which subjects are performing well and which ones need to improve. Teaching and learning are monitored rigorously, and often without warning, in an effort to drive standards further upwards.

25. The overall very good quality of leadership and management are evidenced clearly in the high personal and academic standards achieved by the pupils, the very good quality of teaching and learning, and in the planning and development of a very good sixth form in only five years.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

National Curriculum requirements for ICT are not fully in place in Years 10 and 11.

26. Pupils receive their full National Curriculum entitlement for ICT in Years 7 to 9 through regularly timetabled ICT lessons and across the subjects of the curriculum. However, in Years 10 and 11, there are no specifically timetabled ICT lessons and, although all pupils experience ICT regularly in their work, National Curriculum requirements are not fully met. The school has recently carried out an audit of all of the ICT used in Years 10 and 11 but there is currently no scheme of work for Key Stage 4 setting out how pupils' capabilities are to be developed. This means inevitably that there are gaps in the provision and it is not clear to what extent the different strands of the National Curriculum for ICT are being taught.

Some aspects of teaching in some subjects including science could still be improved further.

27. Teaching is consistently good or very good in most lessons in the school. However, in science, there is a variation in quality from satisfactory to very good. Hence, the standard of teaching, which some pupils receive in this subject, does not match the consistently good or very good quality that they benefit from elsewhere in the school. In some lessons, the teaching has a number of shortcomings even when it is satisfactory overall. In one lesson, there was evidence of weak planning and an almost complete domination by the teacher, resulting in pupils becoming restless and inattentive. In another, the less than interesting presentation of topics and rather weak demonstration again resulted in pupils becoming bored and inattentive.

28. The marking of pupils' work in science is also very variable. In the best practice, written work and diagrams are thoroughly marked so pupils know if they have spelt technical words incorrectly or if the statements that they have made are imprecise or wrong. Good clear guidance is provided on exactly what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. Not all of the boys receive help of this sort because some science teachers hardly mark the pupils' books at all. Surprisingly, classes including some of the school's lowest attaining pupils are not receiving sufficient support through frequent rigorous marking of their work. Hence, pupils are not learning through their mistakes and they are not receiving enough support for the improvement of their writing. This lack of adequate marking also affects some average and higher attaining pupils. Frequently they answer written questions, which would be good practice for GCSE, only to find that there is no response from the teacher. Hence, some books are riddled with unchallenged errors and cannot be used for examination revision.

29. In some subjects, for example history, geography, religious education and science, otherwise good or very good teaching is aimed at the large majority of pupils in classes containing pupils with a fairly wide range of ability. Here, there is sometimes insufficient challenge for the highest attaining pupils and often too little extra support for the weakest learners.

30. In mathematics, there is an urgent need to tackle effectively the weak mental numerical skills of a small number of pupils. Some of the pupils who join the school in Year 7 do not know their multiplication tables and tend to count on their fingers. These weak numerical skills affect the quality of their work in mathematics as they move through the school and act as a brake on progress. Currently, there are no comprehensive records detailing which pupils cannot solve straightforward mental questions involving the use of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of whole numbers. Although these topics are revised regularly in class there is no mechanism for ensuring that all pupils actually master them fully.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

31. In order to improve the education programme, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Provide pupils in Years 10 and 11 with their full National Curriculum entitlement in ICT by:
 - Preparing a scheme of work for ICT in Years 10 and 11,
 - Monitoring and evaluating its operation,

(Paragraph 26)

- (2) Improve specific aspects of teaching by:
- Eliminating shortcomings in the teaching of science,
 - Ensuring that teaching meets the needs of all pupils in classes where the range of attainment is wide,
 - Ensuring that written work and diagrams in science are marked properly.
 - Ensuring that the weakest attaining pupils improve their mental numerical skills in mathematics and master the four rules of whole number.

(Paragraphs 27, 28, 29, 30)

Sixth form

- (1) Incorporate more use of ICT into the A level courses by:
- Auditing the current provision in A level subjects,
 - Planning further ICT work in A level subjects to support and enhance learning,

(Paragraphs 33, 36, 50, 56, 66, 67, 73, 86, 88, 102)

- (2) Ensure that sixth form students receive their entitlement of religious education by:
- Checking the Locally Agreed Syllabus,
 - Deciding how to provide its requirements,

(Paragraphs 38, 44)

- (3) Provide opportunities for work experience for A level students, and exchanges, visits and links with France and Germany for students studying modern languages.

(Paragraphs 39, 58, 67, 103)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	41
	Sixth form	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	5	16	16	4	0	0	0
Percentage	12	39	39	10	0	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	2	24	26	0	0	0	0
Percentage	4	46	50	0	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 around two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y 7 – Y 11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1005	182
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	72	0

Special educational needs	Y 7 – Y 11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	14	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	57	0

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	22

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance

Authorised absence

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	8.1

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	198	0	198

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	174	164	180
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	174	164	180
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	88 (77)	83 (81)	91 (84)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	50 (39)	66 (51)	51 (49)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	155	185	183
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	155	185	183
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	79 (76)	94 (89)	93 (82)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	32 (34)	69 (59)	51 (37)
	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	190	0	190

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	141	187	188
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	141	187	188
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	74 (68)	98 (100)	99 (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	School	46.4 (45.7)

per pupil	National	39.8 (39.0)
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

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

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

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	51	14	65
	Average point score per candidate	24.5 (21.7)	32.1 (25.8)	26.2 (22.5)
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		
		Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	51	14	65	0	0	0
	Average point score per candidate	24.5	32.1	26.2	0	0	0
National	Average point score per candidate	*	*	*	*	*	*

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

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani

No of pupils on roll
1150
1
3
1
1
9
6

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
4	3

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

6
8
2

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y 7 – Y 11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	68.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.2

Education support staff: Y 7 – Y 13

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	239

Deployment of teachers: Y 7 – Y 13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78%
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Average teaching group size: Y 7 – Y 11

Key Stage 2	N/A
Key Stage 3	26.5
Key Stage 4	21.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2
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	£
Total income	3062827
Total expenditure	3006989
Expenditure per pupil	2630.8
Balance brought forward from previous year	279021
Balance carried forward to next year	334859

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	15

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

1187

Number of questionnaires returned

245

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	50	3	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	52	46	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	45	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	60	6	0	0
The teaching is good.	49	47	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	57	5	1	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	40	47	4	1	8
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	42	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	40	48	8	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	48	47	1	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	48	1	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	50	2	0	6

PART D: THE SIXTH FORM

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

32. The school has done very well at A level since the sixth form started. The first entries were in 1999 and results were well above average for the group of 27 male and seven female students. Numbers of students being examined increased in 2000 and 2001 to 57 and 64 respectively. Results were maintained at a well above average level compared to the country as a whole, represented very good achievement and exceeded governors' demanding targets. Female students achieved better results than males in both years. Particularly strong performances were recorded in business studies, French, and mathematics. The only subjects recording below average performances were design and technology, geography and physics. As with A level, AS level results were also well above average in 2001. There were 65 students taking examinations at A level in 2002. Results improved considerably compared to 2001. Over half of the subject entries resulted in the higher grades A and B. Particularly strong performances were recorded in English literature, French, German, business studies, and mathematics. Only in history were the results somewhat disappointing because seven students out of 40 failed the examination. Since the start of the sixth form in 1997, very few students enrolling on A level courses have failed to complete them.

33. Current standards in Year 13 are well above average overall and reflect the previous results at A level. Students in Year 12 are building well onto the foundation provided by above average results at GCSE and are moving confidently towards AS level examinations. In the nine A level subjects inspected in detail, standards in Year 13 are well above average in English literature, French, mathematics, biology, art and design, business studies, history and physical education, and average in design and technology. As a whole, this represents very good achievement because high standards are being maintained. In design and technology, standards represent good achievement because the students on this course entered the sixth form with somewhat modest results at GCSE. Generally, the students display good standards of literacy and their numerical competence supports work at A level. ICT skills are adequate but they are not used sufficiently to support and enhance learning.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

34. Students have very positive attitudes towards their learning. The oversubscribed nature of the sixth form bears testimony to their appreciation of the high academic standards achieved. In lessons they have a conscientious and mature approach to their studies. Attendance levels are excellent and contribute strongly to students' academic success.

35. Relationships are excellent. Students have a high regard for their teachers and tutors. They feel very well supported both on an academic and personal level. They take a very active role in helping the younger children in the school. Many participate in paired reading sessions in the morning tutorial sessions or after school and some have set up and run a computer club. Others help with homework clubs, the running and coaching of sports teams or provide learning support in lessons of mathematics and science. Students make good gains in personal development in the sixth form through these opportunities, their lessons and the wide range of extra-curricular options.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

36. The quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form is very good overall. It meets the needs of the students very well. During the inspection of the nine focus subjects and the sampling of other subjects, 52 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. All of these lessons were of at least good quality and frequently better. Overall, four per cent of lessons were excellent, 46 per cent were very good and the remaining 50 per cent were good. This very good standard of teaching, which is responsible for the very good A level results, was also evident in the scrutiny of students' previously completed work. In the nine

focus subjects inspected, the quality of teaching was at least good and frequently very good. However, it can be improved further by incorporating a greater amount of ICT to support and enhance learning.

37. Teaching is of an almost uniformly very good quality across the whole of the sixth form curriculum. Teachers have an excellent grasp of their subjects and understand clearly the demands of examinations at A level. They plan their lessons very well and conduct them in an enthusiastic manner. This fully engages the students who find the work interesting, compelling and rewarding. Expectations are very high and students respond by completing work on time and studying diligently. Teachers' relationships with their students are excellent. Students say that they recognise the quality of the work of their teachers, which they consider will give them every opportunity to reach their full potential at A level. Frequently the level of debate between the students and the teacher would not be out of place on university degree courses.

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

38. The quality and range of curriculum opportunities are very good. The eighteen AS and A level courses, including general studies, are of the traditional academic nature and very responsive to the needs of the students. In each of the last three years, more than sixty have progressed to higher education. Recruitment is high with the overwhelming majority of students successfully completing their studies and gaining good qualifications. The very good provision results in the school building very effectively on students' previous qualifications and meeting their needs and aspirations. However, provision for statutory religious education and collective worship does not meet requirements.

39. In addition to the AS and A level courses, students benefit from a very good range of extra-curricular opportunities, particularly in the sporting field. They also benefit from a personal and social education course and regular reviews of progress towards their target grades. Students can contribute to the life of the school in many ways, for example by helping younger children with their reading and providing valuable help to the teacher in lessons. The school makes good use of visits from specialists from the local community. However, some students justifiably feel that more could be provided in terms of social activities, work experience, links with industry and foreign exchanges.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

Advice, support and guidance

40. Students receive very good quality support and guidance. Induction procedures for the sixth form are very good. The information provided by the school gives a clear picture of what to expect in the sixth form. All students are interviewed prior to admission and there are regular reviews to sort out any potential problems. On their first day in the sixth form, students benefit from team building exercises, which help to bond relationships within their tutor groups.

41. New admissions are assigned to tutor groups already containing students from Year 13, enabling the Year 12 students to benefit from the experience of those who have already completed their first year. The form tutor plays a key and effective role as a mentor to help and guide students as they progress towards A level. Students meet with their tutors for regular effective individual personal and academic monitoring sessions when targets are set and reviewed.

42. Relationships with staff are excellent. The sixth form provides a secure, well-structured environment, which enables students to learn and study without too many distractions. The atmosphere is calm and productive but expectations of effort and attendance are very high. Procedures used to promote and monitor good attendance are excellent. Well-planned sessions on study strategies, debate, careers, and

preparation for higher education in the daily tutor periods help students to develop further personal skills and to prepare for the future. The LEA careers service also plays an important and effective role in the provision of advice for students as they prepare for higher education and future careers.

Assessment

43. The school's procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are very good. Marking of students' written work and tests is generally very detailed and helpful. It gives students clear indications about errors and tells them clearly what they need to do to improve. Marking is usually related to A and AS level criteria for examination grades so students know how they are doing in relation to their examination targets. As students progress through their courses, the school regularly and frequently provides them with assessments on standards being achieved and progress being made in all subjects. These are invaluable to them. Students who are thought to be underachieving are always interviewed and provided with new targets and further help to enable them to reach their potential.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

44. Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. The high quality of all aspects of its work, achieved in such a short time, bears testimony to the huge amount of successful effort put in by the school's managers on behalf of its students. The governors, headteacher, head of sixth form and heads of subject are all very effective in their different roles. Consequently, since 1997, high standards on A level courses have been sought and achieved. The provision is very well organised and has a very clear sense of purpose and direction. Equal opportunities are promoted very well. Managers constantly probe and question, even when the highest standards are being achieved, so that the quality of provision is constantly under review and being improved. All statutory requirements are met except for the provision of collective worship, and religious education in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus.

45. The development of the sixth form is guided by a good development plan, which has been discussed fully at all levels of staffing. Prudent use of funding means that the principles of best value are applied extremely well and no resources are wasted. The sixth form is very effective and provides excellent value for money.

Resources

46. There is a very good match of qualified teachers to the demands of A level subjects offered by the school. This means that teaching group sizes are cost effective overall but yet enable students to have sufficient individual support. Only in business education and history are group sizes rather large. Accommodation for sixth form lessons and resources for learning are generally satisfactory.

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.

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	36	94		61		3.6	
Chemistry	18	94		22		2.4	
Biology	27	81		19		2.3	
Physics	22	77		14		1.8	
Design and Technology	18	100		22		2.5	
Business Studies	24	96		58		3.7	
Computing	20	85		15		2.2	
Information Technology	14	43		7		0.9	
Physical Education	8	88		25		2.9	
Art and Design	14	93		57		3.5	
Music	3	100		0		2.0	
Geography	18	78		28		2.2	
History	32	91		50		3.2	
English Language and Literature	13	92		15		2.5	
English Literature	31	97		55		3.5	
French	7	100		57		3.7	
German	2	100		50		4.0	

* National comparison data for AS level results for 2002 are not yet available

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	31	100		74		8.1	
Chemistry	14	100		43		6.1	
Biology	11	91		64		6.2	
Physics	13	100		31		5.9	
Design and Technology	4	90		25		4.0	
Business Studies	20	100		75		7.9	
Physical Education	6	100		33		6.7	

Art and Design	6	83		50		6.0	
Music	3	100		33		5.3	
Geography	6	100		33		5.3	
History	40	83		28		5.0	
English Language/Literature	10	100		70		6.8	
English Literature	27	100		59		7.5	
French	3	100		67		8.7	
German	4	100		75		8.0	
Urdu	2	100		100		9.0	

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

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

47. The focus of the inspection was on mathematics and biology, but chemistry, further mathematics and physics were sampled. Two lessons were observed in chemistry and in both standards were above average. A level results in chemistry were at the national average in 2001. Two further mathematics lessons were seen and the students' natural aptitude and enthusiasm for the subject were reflected in the high quality of their work. Two physics lessons were observed and standards were above average. Physics A level results in 2001 were below the national average.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Standards are well above average and students achieve very well.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Students have a mature, positive and enthusiastic attitude to study.
- Relationships between students and teachers are very good.

Areas for improvement

- ICT is not used sufficiently to enrich and support learning.
- Teachers' questioning techniques could be developed further.

48. The 2001 A level results were well above average and represented very good achievement. Results improved significantly in 2002 with half the students attaining a top grade. All students taking A level mathematics since 1999 have passed the examination. There is no consistent difference in performance between male and female students. AS level results in 2001 were well above the national average and improved in 2002. Retention rates are very good and it is rare that a student does not complete the course.

49. Standards in Year 13 are well above average and reflect previous examination results. Most students are achieving very well and producing work of high quality. Female students are well integrated into teaching groups and there is no discernible difference between their work and that of males. The quality of notes and exercises is generally very high and they are usually extremely well organised. Most students annotate their notes to suit their individual needs and their written solutions are well structured and systematic. The work of these students is rigorous and thorough and reflects their very good levels of understanding and the quality of the teaching. This applies across the modules and their competence with pure mathematics enhances their understanding and progress in mechanics and statistics.

50. Year 12 AS level students are making very good progress in their new course and this is due in large part to the strength of their prior learning, particularly in their fluency with algebraic manipulation. ICT, though not routinely used in lessons, is well used in coursework, particularly in statistics. Schemes of work do not prescribe the use of ICT as a tool for supporting teaching and learning. Consequently, the ICT experience of students is insufficiently planned and varies between teaching groups. A few students occasionally fail to complete an adequate amount of work but they are speedily identified in the assessment process.

51. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have high expectations of their students and their detailed command of the subject ensures that they can confidently formulate questions and use strategies to illuminate understanding. In the best lessons, the teacher's enthusiasm for mathematics is infectious. In a very good mechanics lesson, the students' overall grasp of vectors, motion and calculus was skilfully utilised by the teacher to construct jointly a range of appropriate equations that meet the requirements of typical examination questions. Learning was with clear understanding and at a level required for students to achieve the highest standards. In less successful, but nevertheless good lessons, there is insufficient engagement of the students during the exposition. Teachers' marking is thorough and usually includes extensive correction notes and pointers for improvement, a feature much appreciated by the students.

52. Students' views of the subject and the progress they feel they are making are very positive. They are particularly appreciative of the accessibility of teachers when they require extra help and generally share their teachers' enthusiasm for the subject. When discussing mathematical ideas they display good levels of articulation and demonstrate both knowledge and understanding.

53. The subject is well managed and there is clear sense of direction. High expectations are reflected in a shared determination to strive for constantly improving performance. The monitoring of students' progress is very good. Improvement since the previous inspection when there were no A level subjects has been excellent.

Biology

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Students are highly motivated.
- Standards are well above average.

Areas for improvement

- ICT is not used sufficiently.
- Links with universities and industry could be stronger.

54. A level results in 2001 were above average overall. Results in the range A to B were well above average but the proportion of students gaining grades A to E was below average. In 2002, results improved in both categories. The vast majority of students starting the course in Year 12 complete it successfully.

55. Currently, standards in Year 13 are well above average and achievement is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. Coupled with very positive attitudes, they promote students' very good progress through the course. Students in Year 13 are able to answer complex questions on the nervous system, correctly describing the structure and functions of nerves and their role in co-ordination in living organisms. They can explain the importance of the kidney in regulation of water content in the body and competently carry out relevant diagnostic testing. Students in Year 12 are successfully building on work covered at GCSE. They have a good understanding of biological molecules, such as carbohydrates and

proteins, and their importance to life. They are also able to explain the processes involved in cell division, using the correct technical vocabulary.

56. Teaching and learning in biology are very good. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject, enabling them to give clear detailed explanations. Lessons are very well organised, have a brisk pace, and include a variety of teaching and learning styles to maintain students' interest. Students are encouraged to share ideas and help each other. Their independent learning skills are fostered by project work, which they present to their peers. They are encouraged to keep abreast of new subject developments by reading biological journals but more use could be made of ICT, especially in relation to data logging during practical work. Teachers' expectations are high and they question students frequently during lessons to establish and reinforce knowledge and understanding. The pleasant working relationships between teachers and students promote an atmosphere where students feel able to ask questions if they need to. Marking is thorough and appropriately annotated, giving clear guidance to students on areas for improvement, with plenty of praise and encouragement. Targets are regularly reviewed, enabling students to be always fully aware of their progress.

57. Students learn well and make very good progress in lessons because of the very good teaching and also because they are mature and highly motivated. Many of them intend to continue with biologically related studies when they leave school. They respond well in lessons and rise to challenges during question and answer sessions and are keen to contribute to class discussions. They work co-operatively together in both theory and practical lessons, help each other and share ideas in a mature and sensible way.

58. The department is led and managed very well. There is a good team ethos, clear direction and a commitment to the continued achievement of good examination results. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good. Assessment and record keeping are very good. However, more use could be made of outside agencies such as local universities and industries in order to broaden the students' horizons.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

The focus was on design and technology. The school offers no other subjects in this curriculum area.

Design and Technology

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

Strengths

- Students achieve well in relation to their GCSE results.
- Teaching is good and supports individual students well.
- Students have positive attitudes to the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Students do not work sufficiently independently.
- Design work follows a set routine too closely.

59. A level results in product design in 2001 were below average but AS level results were average. Students achieved well in relation to their GCSE results. A level results in 2002 were better than in 2001. Male and female students achieved equally well even though the female students all had a GCSE background in food technology and limited experience of the materials used in product design. Results are not as high as in the school in general because students' attainment on entry to the course is generally lower than in most other subjects.

60. Overall, standards of work in Year 13 are average and students are achieving well. They carry out design work systematically and present their work well. However, some of their design analysis follows a

set routine too closely and its potential for having an impact on their subsequent work is limited. Ideas are well drawn but do not always show clear independent lines of enquiry and development. However, modelling is used well to resolve both visual and technical problems. For example, full-size and scale modelling are used to inform constructions. Products are usually well made.

61. Standards in Year 12 are average and students are achieving well in relation to their GCSE results. Most have used a very structured approach to designing in their GCSE courses and find it difficult to work more independently and rigorously in their early projects. Hence, research tends to follow a set routine too closely and has insufficient effect on final designs. For example, human data is recorded systematically but not used with sufficient discrimination in the design of furniture. Development drawings often lack fluency although modelling is well used to resolve problems. Some students have a limited background in the materials used in the course but overcome this with the help of good individual help from their teachers. Students make good use of ICT for designing graphic products and for presentation.

62. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Teachers give very thorough individual help to ensure that students with different backgrounds learn equally well. Marking is thorough and accurate. Teachers monitor students' progress well and ensure that they know what they need to do to improve. Expectations are high. Lessons are well prepared to focus on key areas, although students need more consistent preparation for the written papers. Although teachers stress the need for students to develop their designs independently, they have not yet developed a teaching strategy to promote this fully.

63. Students have very positive views of the subject. A measure of this is the rapid increase in the number taking design and technology to over thirty. Students work hard and take care with their design folders. They discuss their work effectively with each other. All students who start the course normally complete it.

64. The subject is well managed and the courses are well designed to ensure that students from a range of backgrounds can succeed. Teaching and learning are monitored well and teachers are developing effective strategies to raise standards.

BUSINESS

The focus was on business studies. The school offers no other subjects in this curriculum area.

Business Studies

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Students have very good attitudes.
- The monitoring of students' progress is very good.

Areas for improvement

- ICT is not used sufficiently in students' written work.
- There are not enough visits to business locations.

65. Results at A level in 2001 were well above the national average and represented very good achievement. This standard was maintained in 2002 and is continuing in the current Year 13. Results at AS level for 2002 were very good. Completion rates at both levels are very high.

66. Standards in the current Year 13 are well above average and achievement is very good. This is a result of very good teaching and very positive students' attitudes. Students show very good understanding of business terms and can respond fluently when questioned. They are able to analyse technical material

and data quickly. They use graphs and statistics well and can interpret complex material effectively. However, they do not use ICT sufficiently in their written work. Relatively small class sizes permit very good individual support.

67. In Year 12, standards are also well above average and students are achieving very well. In a large class with a wide range of ability, students were working rapidly and with great interest in producing budget plans. They demonstrated a good command of business language and a good level of numerical skill in solving difficult problems. They all produced evidence of an Internet search into government finances. Working in small groups, they were able to give very good accounts of their enquiries. Students of lower levels of attainment made good progress and could produce well-organised budget plans, but the size of the class prevented the teacher from giving much individual attention. The students have been encouraged to take initiatives in their learning and are responding by using newspapers, textbooks and ICT in their enquiries. However, there are too few opportunities for visits to local businesses.

68. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in all lessons. Teachers are very well qualified and experienced and keep up to date with the changes in requirements for A level. They constantly refer to the syllabus in lessons to focus the students on what is needed in the examinations. They set very high expectations and communicate their enthusiasm to the students. They conduct lessons at a rapid pace, with a range of well-planned activities, using very good resources, national business news and very good textbooks. Teachers monitor students' progress very well by means of a monthly review sheet. This ensures that students know clearly their present rate of progress and their future targets. Parents are fully involved in this review process.

69. Students are very highly motivated. They chose this sixth form because of good teaching, good results, good support and guidance and a structured routine, which has a good work ethic. They also believe they are given good guidance about entering higher education and make frequent visits to universities. The learning style of encouraging discussion and independent thought, they say, is significant in their preparation for higher education.

70. The subject is very well managed and the curriculum exactly reflects the requirements of A level, a very important factor in the very good and consistent success rates. Learning is very well monitored. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

71. The school offers computing and ICT at AS level in Year 12 and A level in Year 13. Both subjects were sampled. Teaching was very good in one computing lesson and good in the other. Teaching was also good in the ICT lesson. These two courses have been recently introduced so there were no results in 2001.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus was on physical education. The school offers no other subjects in this curriculum area.

Physical education

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

Strengths

- Standards are well above average and students achieve very well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Students have very positive attitudes to learning.

Areas for improvement

- The proportion of students obtaining higher grades could be greater.
- ICT could be used more to analyse and display the results of investigations.

72. In 2001, A level results of the group of six students were broadly average overall but the better qualifications were gained by some of the male candidates. In 2002, results improved. Two of the six candidates obtained the higher A or B grades. The others all passed in the range C to E. Eight male students sat the AS level examination. All successfully passed, with two obtaining the higher grades. All students who have ever taken the examination have obtained at least a grade E. The numbers of students choosing to follow A level courses, although still relatively small, are increasing. The subject is now attracting more female students with the strong background in sport essential for the achievement of higher grades. Consequently, overall standards are rising.

73. Current standards in Year 13 are well above average and achievement is very good. Standards in practical activities are uniformly high and students' written work is above average. Students are maintaining and, in some cases, improving upon the standards already reached at AS level. They tend to reach higher standards in their knowledge and understanding of psychological aspects of performance than in exercise physiology and their comparative study of physical education in other countries. Theoretical knowledge is linked well to practical performance. Most students write at good length in their explanations of theories of aggression and frustration, linking this well to their chosen sporting activities. However, work could often be improved by using ICT to analyse and display data.

74. Students in Year 12 have made rapid progress in building on the strong foundation provided by their very good GCSE performance in physical education. Written work on the nature of play and its comparison with sport indicates a good understanding, is written at a good length and contains well chosen references to the classic work of sociologists. Work on psychological aspects is a strong feature with higher attaining students. The quality of the work of the weakest students is inconsistent even within the same part of the course. Students' logs of their hill walking expedition are of high quality and show a good sense of engagement with and enjoyment of their work in this area.

75. The overall quality of teaching and the learning that it promotes are very good. Teachers have high expectations of students and lessons move at a fast pace. Relationships are good and lessons are characterised by a relaxed but purposeful atmosphere. Students are routinely expected to take a full part in the learning process, for example by researching topics and making presentations to the class. Teachers plan lessons very well to ensure that students are continually making links between theory and practice and at the same time are helped to understand what is needed for their written work on the topic to meet the highest standards. Homework is used regularly and effectively to consolidate and extend the learning but the marking, although generally good, does vary in quality. There is also some inconsistency evident in the extent to which students are helped to support their own learning, for example by annotating photocopied resources provided by the teacher.

76. Students' very positive views of the subject are supported by the increasing numbers choosing to follow A level courses and the very high retention rates. Students reach high standards, and some achieve representative honours at area and occasionally national level, in a wide range of team and individual sporting activities in which they participate in school as well as for local clubs and teams. They appreciate the fact their A level studies have helped to improve their performance in their own chosen sporting activities. Several students intend to continue to study physical education or related topics in higher education.

77. Management and organisation of the subject are very good. A level physical education is now well established. Its introduction was very carefully planned. Very good relationships have been created between teachers and students and there is evident concern to promote students' personal as well as academic development through the subject. Students' progress is well monitored. However, their current learning is not always precisely related to their targets in a way which would enable them to monitor their success accurately. Progress since the previous inspection has been very good.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The school does not offer courses in this curriculum area.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

78. The focus was on art and design but music was also sampled. In music at A level in 2001, the three candidates passed but there were no A or B grades. In 2002, there were again three candidates and all passed, one achieving grade B. Numbers taking music are too low to be compared with results nationally. One Year 13 lesson was sampled. The quality of teaching and learning was very good. Students were highly motivated and were achieving well.

Art and Design

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

Strengths

- Standards are well above average and students achieve very well.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Students have very positive attitudes and work well independently.
- The subject is very well managed.

Areas for improvement

- Students do not do sufficient observational drawing early in Year 12.

79. A level results in 2001 were well above average and these high standards were maintained in 2002. Overall, students achieved very well in relation to their GCSE results. Male and female students did equally well. Results in art and design compared very favourably with other subjects in the school.

80. Overall, the standards in Year 13 are also well above average and students are achieving very well in relation to their GCSE and AS level results. They have very good observational drawing skills and use these to record visual research in their sketchbooks. Their development of ideas is imaginative and thorough, making use of a wide range of media and techniques. They experiment extensively with different ways of expressing ideas in preparation for final compositions. A particularly strong feature is the quality of discussion of their own work and that of others with fellow students and with their teachers. During these discussions, students draw on knowledge of the work of established artists, extending beyond those of immediate relevance to their own projects. Final pieces of work are very well executed.

81. Standards in Year 12 are also well above average and students are achieving very well in relation to their GCSE results. Some students who did not take art and design at GCSE have made particularly good progress as a result of very good individual teaching. In the first term of Year 12, students concentrate on still life oil painting. They use photography to record the still life compositions but some rely too heavily on this secondary source and do not carry out enough drawing from direct observation. However, they learn to experiment well with a variety of media. A period of life drawing at the end of the year is highly effective in developing the fluency of students' drawing and their ability to work on a large scale. This provides an excellent preparation for work in Year 13.

82. Overall, teaching is very good in both years. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject, enabling them to conduct the mature discussions with the students. These are a foundation for the fluent development of students' ideas and help them to develop their research and general discussion skills. Teachers' own personal skills enable them to teach by example. They generate an enthusiasm for art and design amongst their students. They are very systematic in marking work and keeping records of progress so students always understand about the quality of their work and what they need to do to improve it. This

style of teaching promotes very good independent working by students. Teachers make good use of visits to exhibitions to enhance students' understanding of art and design.

83. A significant factor in the high standards achieved is the very good management of the subject. Very systematic and detailed analysis of students' performance has led to effective changes to the organisation of teaching. As a result, high standards have been achieved within a short time since the introduction of A level. All students who start on the course normally complete it. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good.

HUMANITIES

84. The focus was on history but geography was also sampled. Two geography lessons were observed. The quality of teaching was good. A level results in geography in 2001 were well below the national average but they improved significantly in 2002.

History

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Students have a very good command of literacy.
- Students have very good attitudes to learning.

Areas for improvement

- One class in Year 12 is too large for all students to have sufficient individual help.
- ICT should be used more extensively to support learning.
- More visual resources and visits would enhance the course.

85. Results at A level in 2001 were average and represented satisfactory achievement. However, there was a decline in 2002 caused by some underachievement and a less than full appreciation by the staff of the requirements and rigour of the new examination. Results at AS level were above average in 2001, and improved in 2002. Most students who start the course complete it.

86. Standards have risen quickly. The students in Year 13 have built upon their success at AS level in Year 12 and are achieving very well. Current standards are well above average. This is a result of very good teaching, positive students' attitudes and their very high standard of literacy. Students work very well in analysing documents and can draw out hidden meanings. In a lesson looking at the reasons for the fall of Lloyd George, they could skilfully interpret a series of factors. They can research topics very well and give fluent presentations. They can work quickly on historical extracts and can write very good responses. However, their written work and research would be enhanced by the use of ICT, evidence of which is rarely found in their folders. In class, students of lower levels of attainment make very good progress as a result of very good lesson planning and emphasis on exact language. Students from ethnic minority backgrounds show very good language skills and make good progress.

87. In Year 12, most students are achieving very well and overall standards are well above average. This is because most students have very good GCSE grades and are keenly interested in history. However, a few students of middle and lower levels of ability have difficulty in understanding the causes and consequences of wars. This is partly because the size of class is too large to enable the teacher to give more individual attention. Most students are able to follow documents and can argue a point of view very well. They were able to demonstrate, in their studies of the Eastern Crisis of 1875-78, good discrimination between facts and propaganda, and showed good oral and written skills. They were able to deal very well with the teacher's rapid questions, designed to sharpen their understanding. The students' written folders

show a good standard of literacy, but no evidence of ICT or numerical work. Despite very good attitudes and very good teaching, large group sizes are restricting the progress of students of lower levels of attainment.

88. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers are well qualified, plan lessons very well, and have high expectations. They build very good relationships with students and give very good support. They place great emphasis on correct historical language and ensure that the students have a high level of understanding of documents. There is a need to expand this to include the use of ICT and to use more visual materials, especially maps. Teachers use good assessment techniques in monitoring progress on a regular basis and the students say they are made fully aware of their target grades. Teachers are now fully aware of the exact requirements of the examination board and incorporate these into their teaching.

89. The students have a very positive attitude to the subject and many of them wish to take it at university. They express a keen interest in history, developed earlier in the lower school, and only a few intend to drop the subject after the AS level. They appreciate the efforts of teachers, particularly with extra help after school. They mention the importance of the work ethic and think that the school has struck the right balance between freedom and regulation. Those joining the sixth form recently had visited all the alternative providers and cited their reasons for joining as the school's record of success, high expectations and its well structured regime. All noted that work was quickly marked, with good feedback and grading.

90. The subject is now well managed and organised. Teaching and learning are monitored well. Since the previous inspection, standards in the lower school in history have risen, giving a better basis for the sixth form study. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. There is a determination and a capacity to raise standards further.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

91. The focus was on English literature but combined English language and literature was also sampled. A level results were average in 2001 but improved dramatically in 2002, particularly in relation to the higher grades A and B. Results were not as strong in the 2002 AS examination but these students' standards were above average when observed in class in Year 13. Teaching and learning were both good. Following a remark of the papers of two AS candidates and a significant increase in their marks, the papers of the whole entry are to be reassessed.

English Literature

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

Strengths

- Standards are well above average and achievement is very good.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Marking and assessment are excellent.
- Students are very hard working and value the very good quality teaching.

Areas for improvement

- The writing techniques of average attaining students could be better.

92. Results of the eight candidates in the 2001 A level examination in English Literature were above average overall but only one candidate achieved a higher grade. Results improved significantly in the 2002 A level examination. All twenty seven candidates gained a grade in the range A to E, sixteen gaining grades A and B. In the 2002 AS examination, more than half the thirty one candidates gained grades A and B. Achievement was satisfactory at A level in 2001 and very good at A level and AS in 2002. Results improved significantly in 2002 because of the rigorous response made by the teachers to the challenge of the new AS and A level courses. Teachers took them as an opportunity to devise improved

schemes of work and to focus more effectively on the assessment objectives for each module. Consequently, students are now taught and prepared better than previously.

93. Standards in the current Year 13 are well above average, confirming the students' AS results of 2002 and their very good achievement. Students have an extremely detailed knowledge of their texts. However, some would value a glossary to help them with the correct use of terminology and of the social, cultural and historical factors that influence texts and writers. The very good standards result from the teachers' excellent specialist knowledge and the quality of the students' research. A dedicated English website devised by a teacher and several students provides very good additional material to enhance the students' independent research. Students who attain the highest grades write assignments of a very high level of accuracy. Their work is consistently evaluative. They focus sharply on an author's use of language and analyse in detail its impact on our response and its link with the author's intentions. Strong examples included close analysis of religious symbolism and the use of meter, diction and imagery in Donne's poetry and of the restrictive mood of entrapment permeating Blake's perception of the lives of many Londoners.

94. Glimpses of this close analysis were also apparent in the written work of other students but it lacked the same intensity and consistency. They occasionally assumed that the reader would infer how well they understood the text instead of making their understanding explicit. As a result, some did not do justice to the strong conceptual understanding they revealed when answering questions in lessons. The work of a few students is also undermined by some inaccuracy in spelling, punctuation and expression.

95. Students in Year 12 have settled well into their work. They acknowledge that the step up to A level is challenging but their writing shows very good progress in perceiving texts and characters as representations of themes and attitudes. Some are not yet at ease with some methods of working such as giving presentations and discussing clearly and confidently their response to the texts. There was also some evidence of this during a Year 13 lesson on Romanticism, although the students persevered with great determination on a topic they found challenging. During the inspection, students had little opportunity to discuss with and challenge each other, although some confirmed this does happen.

96. The students' attitudes are extremely good. They work hard, their folders are well organised, they concentrate very well, and they put a lot of effort into assignments. Year 13 students were full of appreciation for the work of their teachers. They felt encouraged, required to live up to high expectations, and treated as mature adults whose opinions mattered. This final point was clearly evident during a lesson on 'The Great Gatsby' and 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest'. The deft skills of the teacher and the students' mature response gave the appearance of a discussion between equals rather than between teacher and students.

97. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have very high expectations of their students as well as a high level of subject expertise. Students have a very strong knowledge of their own learning because of the teachers' excellent marking. The recently introduced method of scrutinising assessment criteria before attempting assignments helps the students to reach their goals. Very good planning leads to very good learning. In a very good lesson, students had an example from their teacher to emulate and progressed very quickly when identifying similarities between 'The Great Gatsby' and 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest'.

98. The overall organisation of the subject is very strong. All students who start on the course normally complete it successfully. Teachers work very well together and support each other. Furthermore, their enthusiasm for the subject constantly enthuses the students. Their commitment to success is strong and shared. They set target grades for students and monitor their progress towards them rigorously. However, the targets themselves are not sufficiently related to national rates of progress from GCSE. At the time of the previous inspection, there were no sixth form courses in English. Therefore the achievement of current standards and the 2002 results represent very good improvement.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

99. The school offers courses in both French and German at AS and A level, complemented by Latin to AS level for one student and by a starter course in Italian. French was the focus subject and German was sampled both in Year 12 and in Year 13. In one lesson the teaching was excellent and in the other it was good. All four students taking A level in German in 2001 achieved grades A or B. In the one Latin lesson sampled, teaching was good. Staff absence prevented sampling in Italian.

French

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- There are three native speakers of the languages taught.
- Students' attitudes are excellent.

Areas for improvement

- Wider use could be made of ICT.

100. A level results in 2001 were well above average and were an improvement on the average results of 2000. High standards were sustained, albeit with only three candidates in 2002, when all passed and two of the three were rewarded with A grades. At AS level in 2002 four of the seven candidates gained A or B grades and all passed in the range A to E.

101. Students enter the sixth form with above average GCSE results. Many are from other schools, and now include female students, who make up almost half the total of those taking French at AS level. Student numbers have increased greatly this year, without any reduction in standards. Over half the students are working towards targets of grades A or B at AS level, and the standards of work observed were already above average, some well above. Students' attitudes to their studies are excellent. They respond well to teaching planned to build on the strengths reached earlier, and their confidence with the spoken language reflects the progress they have made since GCSE. Students starting the Year 12 course have always completed it because the exclusively language content suits both specialist linguists and those with main academic interests elsewhere. In Year 13, standards are well above average and the committed linguists who remain after AS level are achieving very well. What brings them on is the very good use made of set books, from which they acquire a richness of vocabulary as well as understanding of human situations. For example, in one outstanding lesson on a Balzac novel, the teacher, a native speaker of French, succeeded in creating a learning environment more akin to work in a university. Students recognise the quality of their course and are extremely appreciative of it.

102. Teaching is very good overall. It rests securely on very good planning which defines teachers' roles carefully. This is implemented in turn equally carefully by the pairs of teachers teaching a given year group, who meet weekly to co-ordinate their work. The strength is their insistence on correct pronunciation and grammatical accuracy and mastery of the language, which produces in many lessons the experience of immersion learning for the students. Good opportunities are provided for students to work independently, though not all students are as yet sufficiently experienced in reading electronic text or listening to broadcast French. Currently, there is scope for more skimming and scanning of Internet texts and the exploitation of satellite TV resources.

103. Very good leadership and management have now succeeded in establishing viable French groups in the sixth form. Day to day management is ensuring that high standards are maintained and where possible developed. Contacts with schools and other organisations in French-speaking countries are taking longer to develop, but to reach the present position from a standing start since the previous inspection has to be seen as very good improvement.

