

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HARLINGTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

Hayes

LEA area: Hillingdon

Unique reference number: 102451

Headteacher: Mr N Sherman

Reporting inspector: Mrs M J Kerry  
9931

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> March 2003

Inspection number: 249718

Full 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: Mixed

School address: Pinkwell Lane

Harlington

Hayes

Postcode: UB3 1PB

Telephone number: 020 8569 1610

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr G Tomlin

Date of previous inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> April 1997

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9931	Mrs M J Kerry	<i>Registered inspector</i>		The school's results and achievements The quality of teaching and learning Leadership and management
9736	Mr J Brasier	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Care Partnership with parents Accommodation and learning resources
2739	Mr I Benson	<i>Sixth Form Co-ordinator</i>	Geography Psychology Citizenship	All aspects as they relate to post-16
19413	Mr G Price	<i>Team inspector</i>	English	
30597	Ms R Howells	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics	
18453	Mr C Lower	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science Physics	
15051	Mrs L Kauffman	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art and design	
12721	Mr D Riddle	<i>Team inspector</i>	Design technology	
18281	Mr D Webster	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information communication technology	
5832	Mr M Morton-Thorpe	<i>Team inspector</i>	History	
31694	Dr M Sutherland-Harper	<i>Team inspector</i>	Modern foreign languages French	
12475	Mr S Johnson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Music	Provision for social and cultural development
14446	Mr B Simmons	<i>Team inspector</i>	Physical education	
4451	Mr R Howarth	<i>Team inspector</i>	Religious education	Provision for spiritual and moral development
20479	Dr V Williams	<i>Team inspector</i>	Business education Media studies	
15590	Mrs S Slocombe	<i>Team inspector</i>	Special educational needs	
19001	Ms C Cable	<i>Team inspector</i>	English as an additional language	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive Foundation school with 1268 pupils on roll, serving the southern part of the London Borough of Hillingdon. The school is larger than average with 155 students in the sixth form. It is ethnically very diverse and has a very high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language, both in the main school and sixth form. Most of these pupils are fluent English speakers and a small proportion (4 per cent) is at the early stages of language acquisition. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs is about average, but an above average number of pupils (50 in main school and 3 in the sixth form) have statements of educational need. Attainment on entry is below average, and well below average in some aspects such as reading. The school is heavily oversubscribed. Recently there have been significant difficulties in staff recruitment.

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

This is an effective and improving school. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form. Overall pupils make good progress from below average starting points, with progress being more rapid in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make good progress. Standards are rising, particularly in the sixth form and at GCSE. Achievement is good. The recently formed senior management team has planned clearly and coherently for improvement, and there is evidence of the effect of this work on pupils' learning. Standards in the sixth form are now in line with course expectations. Standards in the main school, although still below average, are improving, and the decline in standards in mathematics and English in Years 7 to 9 has been stopped. This improvement has been brought about despite considerable staffing difficulties. Above average standards are achieved in art and music, but standards are below average in religious education and design technology. The school provides good value for money.

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

- A very good climate for learning securely based on harmonious relationships between all groups in the school, with pupils who are strongly committed to their learning
- Good quality teaching which enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, to make progress and achieve well
- Leadership and management which plans coherently for improvement and consults widely
- Good support for pupils' personal development and academic progress
- Very good quality arrangements for the support and professional development of staff which have enabled the school to move forward despite staffing difficulties

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

- Raise standards at the end of Year 9. Continue the raising of standards in Year 11 and the sixth form.
- Provision for religious education and design technology
- Use of data to inform monitoring of pupils' progress and achievement, including detailed analysis by ethnicity
- Consistency of quality of teaching in the main school

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good progress since the school was last inspected in April 1997, with an acceleration in the pace of change recently. Teaching has improved significantly, both in the main school and sixth form. Standards have risen in Years 10 and 11 and post-16. In Years 7 to 9 a decline in standards in English and mathematics has been halted, whilst in other subjects standards have risen. The curriculum now has a clearer rationale and has been extended. There has been very good improvement in the provision for ICT with the introduction of separate teaching in Years 7 to 9, a rise in pupils' levels of attainment, and new courses in the sixth form. There has also been very good improvement in art. Results in the sixth form have improved from well below average to below average, and represent good achievement. There was particular improvement last year. Progress has been made in providing an act of collective worship for all pupils, but little improvement has been made in the provision of religious education. Leadership and management have put in place detailed plans for improvement which have been particularly effective in improving and maintaining the quality of teaching, supporting professional development, and implementing the Key Stage 3 strategy. Attendance has improved, particularly the rate of unauthorised absence.

## 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	D	D	D	B
A-levels/AS-levels	N/A	D	*	

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

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

Attainment on entry in Year 7 is below average, and well below average in some respects. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through Years 7 to 9, and attain below average levels in their end of Year 9 tests. There have been declining standards in English and mathematics, which caused results to dip to well below average in 2002, but the school has taken action on this and standards are now rising. Current work is below average. Standards in science have been rising steadily in recent years and standards of current work are now in line with the average. In physical education in Years 10 and 11, and in music, standards are above average. In art standards are well above average. In all other National Curriculum subjects standards are in line with the average, except religious education and design technology where they are below average. There is evidence of rising standards in geography, ICT, history and French. Progress is good in Years 10 and 11. Although results for 2002 are still below average overall, they are improving and are in line with the average for five or more grade A\*-G passes. When compared with similar schools, results at GCSE are above average. Until recently this improvement was at a rate above that found nationally, resulting in an achievement award for the school in 2001. It slowed in 2002 due to staffing difficulties. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils who have English as an additional language achieve at least as well as their peers. The school's targets are challenging and were not met in 2002 due to the falling back in the rate of improvement. Sixth form results were below average in 2001. They improved significantly in 2002: no national comparator is available. These most recent results represent good

achievement from a sixth form that encourages wide entry. Standards are in line with or above course expectations in six of the nine subjects inspected in depth, and in the sampled subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are highly committed to their learning and proud of their school. Collaborative working is a strength with groups which are mixed by gender and ethnicity working productively together.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave extremely well. A small minority do not, but the school deals with this firmly and effectively.
Personal development and relationships	This is a harmonious and inclusive community. Pupils make very good progress in maturity and responsibility as they move through the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory, and improved following a decline. The rate of unauthorised absence is now below average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good. Teaching in nearly two-thirds of the 186 lessons seen was good or better. In a small number of lessons (8) teaching was unsatisfactory and in one instance it was poor. Examples of excellence were seen in nine lessons covering a range of subjects: art, drama, food technology, science, geography and French. The quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics and science. Much work has been done to improve the teaching of literacy and numeracy and basic skills, including key skills in the sixth form, are well taught. In art teaching is very good and in design technology it is unsatisfactory, because the design element of the curriculum is not properly integrated into pupils' learning. Teaching in the main school encompasses a wide range of quality, and there needs to be more consistency to raise standards further. Teaching in the sixth form is consistently good. Pupils are highly committed to learning and work hard, with perseverance and concentration. Collaborative working is strong. Because of the inclusive nature of the school, and also because of good teaching that meets their needs, pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make good progress. Sixth form students are enthusiastic learners, and generally adapt well to the greater demands of post-16 work.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	<b>Good.</b> The provision is broad and balanced and generally meets the range of needs of pupils well. There is scope for further development of vocational and work-related courses. Extra curricular, community, careers and work related education is all very good and links with partner institutions good. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. Statutory requirements are met except in religious education and in the provision of a daily act of worship for all pupils
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	<b>Good.</b> Pupils are well provided for in a caring and supportive environment. Progress is good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	<b>Good.</b> Early stage learners are well supported by their individual education plans, and make good progress. Pupils achieve at least as well as their peers in public examinations. Better use needs to be made of data in monitoring progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>Very good</b> with many strengths, especially the support for social and moral development. Pupils show a high regard for these dimensions both in their learning and in the life of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	<b>Very good.</b> Well thought out procedures are in place to ensure pupils' welfare and promote good behaviour and attendance. The monitoring of progress, both academic and personal, is good.

The school works hard to bring parents into partnership, and is generally successful in doing so. Information about progress, both in annual reports, and through academic review days, is good. Other information provided for parents is generally of good quality. The prospectus and governors' annual report do not comply fully with statutory requirements, particularly as regards the reporting of results against national averages.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	<b>Very good.</b> Planning for improvement has been coherent and well implemented, based on well-chosen priorities directed towards raising standards. Leadership has created a climate of high expectations. The management of recruitment difficulties has been very effective, minimising the effect on pupils' learning. The work of middle management makes a very significant contribution to improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	<b>Very good.</b> Governors are closely involved with strategic planning and know the school and its pupils well. The governing body makes a strong contribution to the development of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	<b>Good.</b> The monitoring of teaching and arrangements for professional development are of very good quality. Better use could be made of data in monitoring pupils' progress and achievement, both in the main school and sixth form.
The strategic use of resources	<b>Good.</b> Financial planning is closely linked to development priorities at both whole school and departmental level. The best possible use is made of staff expertise and experience. Accommodation is good,

	and the curriculum is properly resourced. The principles of best value are applied well.
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**PARENTS’ AND CARERS’ VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's high expectations</li> <li>• The approachability of the school</li> <li>• Children like school</li> <li>• Children make good progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour</li> <li>• Information about progress</li> <li>• Working closely with parents</li> <li>• Homework</li> </ul>

Inspection evidence supported the parents’ positive views. Evidence showed that information about progress, through annual reports and academic review days, is of good quality and the school works hard to draw parents into partnership. The school has recently undertaken monitoring of the use of homework. Observations during the inspection showed that its use to support learning was satisfactory in the main school and good in the sixth form. Although a minority of pupils do not behave well, the school has good procedures in place for dealing with this and, overall, behaviour is good.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form of this 11-18 mixed community school has 155 students on roll. It serves an urban area on the boundary of Heathrow airport. Three students have statements of special educational need. Students come from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds: a high proportion has English as an additional language, none in the early stages of language acquisition. Typically about half of Year 11 proceed to the sixth form, and a small number of students join from outside the school. The post-16 provision includes a wide range of courses leading to certification at GCE Advanced, GNVQ and AVCE levels, the intention being to meet the learning needs and aspirations of all students applying for sixth form places. Programmes of enrichment and extra-curricular activities complement the taught curriculum. Personal organisation, study and key skills are taught within each course.

## HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The school encourages wide entry to the sixth form, in line with its inclusive philosophy. Standards on entry are below average. In 2001, results were below average but they improved significantly in 2002. Current students in the sixth form are achieving well, and reaching standards in line with course expectations or above in six of the nine subjects inspected in detail. Standards are rising. Retention rates are high. The quality of teaching is consistently good, and students are highly committed to their learning. The quality of leadership is good, and a wide range of courses is offered to meet students' aspirations. There has been good progress since the last inspection with improvement in standards and the quality of teaching, and a clear rationale for the curriculum offered. The sixth form is cost effective.

### Strengths

- Students have great pride in their school and enjoy very harmonious relationships, with each other and their teachers, showing a high commitment to work and to the wider life of the school community
- Teaching is consistently good
- The very wide range of cost effective learning opportunities, in courses, enrichment and extra-curricular activities, contribute to students' progress as learners and people
- Very effective programmes of support and guidance ensure that students make appropriate course choices, help to review their attainment and progress and, through target setting, improve the standard and quality of their work

### What could be improved

- The monitoring and evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the sixth form
- The effective use of data to better inform the monitoring of students' progress and achievement
- The attendance of students in Years 12 and 13
- Taking further steps towards meeting in full the statutory requirements to provide religious education and a daily act of collective worship for all pupils

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

## THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Standards are average. Good teaching and learning promote good achievement. Leadership and management are good
Physics	<b>Good.</b> Standards are average. Good teaching assists students to reach satisfactory levels of achievement. Leadership and management are good
Business studies	<b>Good.</b> Standards are in line with the average. Teaching is good and promotes good achievement. Leadership and management are good
ICT	<b>Good.</b> Standards are below average. Good teaching leads to good achievement. Leadership and management are good.
Leisure and tourism	<b>Good.</b> Standards are above average. Good teaching and learning promote good achievement. Leadership and management are good
Media studies	<b>Good.</b> Standards are above average. Good teaching and learning lead to good achievement. Leadership and management are good
Psychology	<b>Good.</b> Standards are above average. Good teaching enables students to achieve well. Leadership and management are very good
English	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Standards are below average: good teaching ensures that achievement is satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory
French	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Standards are below average. Good teaching ensures satisfactory achievement. Leadership and management are good

Work was sampled in seven other areas: three lessons in art and design, two each in geography, history and drama and one each in chemistry, biology and music. Teaching and learning are very good in art, geography, history, music and drama and good in chemistry and biology. Two lessons of general studies were also seen and teaching was at least satisfactory. Where teaching is at least good students reach good levels of achievement in their work.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	<b>Very good.</b> Students are well supported by a wide range of advice, support and guidance about their progress, careers and aspirations as well as to inform their decision-making. Feedback from subject teachers is detailed and valued for its evaluation of their work and is supplemented by regular reviews of progress each half term
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	<b>Very good.</b> Governors are highly committed to the sixth form. They have made good quality provision in a clear framework and made sure that all students have access to courses. The leadership by the head, senior management team and head of sixth form ensures a clear educational direction for its work. A programme for monitoring and evaluating overall sixth form effectiveness is in the early stages of development. Most middle managers have developed programmes for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning

## STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The wide choice of courses available</li><li>• Good quality printed information to help make course choices</li><li>• Students are well taught and challenged and encouraged to work independently</li><li>• Teachers are very accessible to give help</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The thorough assessment of their work</li><li>• The range of enrichment activities</li><li>• The extent to which the school listens to their views and treats them as emerging adults</li></ul>

Inspection evidence supports students' positive views about the school. However, work is usually well marked, providing good quality feedback. Enrichment activities add important balance to the curriculum; they also enable students to contribute to, as well as benefit from, the school's ethos. The school does not consult widely on every matter, but the decisions made by senior staff are informed by what is in the best interests of the students.

## COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Pupils currently come to the school with standards which are below average when looked at across the full range of subjects. None have achieved level 6 in the Key Stage 2 tests in English, mathematics and science, and this is typically the case for all year groups currently in the school. In English the proportion of pupils who have achieved National Curriculum level 5 or above on entry is well below average. In geography and design technology overall attainment on entry is well below average. There is fluctuation in attainment between different year groups, and pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 entered the school with lower standards than those in Years 7, 8 and 9. There is a significant number of pupils whose reading levels on entry are well below that expected for their age. Overall attainment on entry is below average, and well below average in some respects.

2. The school has rightly made the raising of achievement in Years 7 to 9 a major priority, and the results of this are beginning to be seen. Prior to this impetus, results in English and mathematics were in decline, although in other subjects, particularly art, music and physical education, they were showing clear improvement and were above average. Results in science are improving at a rate sufficient to keep up with national trends, and there are also signs of improvement in design technology and information communication technology (ICT). However, in terms of average points score taken across the three core subjects, results were well below average in 2002, and the trend of improvement was below that achieved nationally.

3. The relative performance of boys and girls has fluctuated, with boys doing less well in some years, but overall improving their performance as compared to the major difference found at the previous inspection. The school's own value added analysis showed that pupils needed to achieve better by the end of Year 9. From early in 2002 onwards raising achievement in Years 7 to 9 was a major focus for attention for the newly formed senior management team.

4. Currently pupils in Years 7 to 9 are achieving standards which are below national averages when taken across the full range of subjects. Standards are well below average in design technology, where weaknesses in planning for the design element of the curriculum hinder pupils' progress. They are below average but improving in English, mathematics, and geography, and standards are also rising in history and ICT. In religious education standards are below average, because insufficient curriculum time inhibits pupils from studying in the depth required by the agreed syllabus. Although standards in geography are below average, progress is good from a base of limited skills on entry. Steps have been taken to raise attainment in English and mathematics, and there are signs of improvement, but there has not been sufficient time for the effect of these to be fully felt. Standards are above average in art, with pupils making rapid progress, and in history, ICT, modern foreign languages, physical education and science, standards are average.

5. Given the low starting points of many pupils, achievement is satisfactory. It is very good in art, and good in geography, history, music, physical education and science. In religious education achievement is unsatisfactory because the time constraints on learning are too great for pupils to make adequate gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding

of the subject. Achievement in design technology is satisfactory when taken across the range of different areas taught. When 2002 results in core subjects are compared with similar schools on the basis of free school meals or prior attainment groups, they are below average. However, this is heavily influenced by the results in English and mathematics, which the school is addressing. Science results are in line with the average when compared with both benchmarking groups, and there is good achievement in a range of other subjects. Both standards and achievement in Years 7 to 9 can be improved further, and the school has strategies in place to accomplish this, particularly with regard to improving further the quality of teaching. Currently achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory.

6. Results at GCSE have shown steady improvement over the last four years, and in fact over the last nine. In 2001 the average points score was rising faster than the national average and the school gained an achievement award. The rate of improvement fell back a little in 2002, and the school did not meet its challenging targets. This was mainly due to staffing difficulties, but overall a trend of improvement in line with that nationally was maintained. In 2002 average points score was below average, as was the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A\*-C passes. In most subjects few pupils gained the highest grades. The exceptions to this were art, business education, drama and science where pupils gained a good proportion of A and A\* grades. In drama all pupils achieved a higher grade pass. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more A\*-G passes, or at least one A\*-G grade was average. Pupils from ethnic heritage, or who have English as an additional language, achieved results at least as good as those of their peers. As in Years 7 to 9, there have been fluctuations in relative boy/girl performance, with boys doing better in 2002.

7. Achievement is good in Years 10 and 11. Work seen on inspection showed that pupils generally make good progress through this stage of their school career. Although standards of attainment are below average in English, mathematics, design technology and religious education, they are above average in music and physical education and well above average in art and drama. In all other subjects they are average. Achievement is good in English, geography, music, physical education and science. It is very good in art and drama, and satisfactory in all other subjects. When the 2002 results are compared with similar schools in terms of free school meals, the average points score is above average and the capped average points score, based on each pupil's best eight results, is well above average. This good achievement in Years 10 and 11 is clearly linked to good quality teaching, which is much improved since the last inspection.

8. The majority of pupils with special educational needs have very low standards of attainment on entry to the school. They make good progress and they achieve well during their time in the school. Support from staff in the learning support department is effective in helping to raise pupils' confidence and self-esteem and in providing them with the skills to cope with challenging work. In particular pupils make significant progress in improving their literary skills, which has a positive effect on their achievements, as evidenced by their passes in GCSE and their success in other certificated courses. However, in a few lessons where work is not matched to pupils' needs, or there is insufficient support, pupils find the work difficult and progress is less evident.

9. The school does not currently analyse its own performance data by ethnicity although there are plans to do so. The local education authority's analysis of GCSE results by language stage, home languages and ethnic group is used and was supplied to the inspection team by the school. This indicates that pupils with English as an additional language at stages 3 and 4 are achieving results above those for the school. In so far as valid comparison can be made on the numbers involved, in 2002 results for pupils with

English as an additional language were above, and in the case of stage 4 pupils, sometimes well above, national as well as school averages. Pupils arriving too late to access GCSE accreditation are entered for Certificate of Achievement.

10. The standards of work seen in Years 7 to 11 are at least satisfactory and often good for the majority of pupils with English as an additional language. There was no significant difference seen during the inspection in the standards achieved by more fluent pupils with English as an additional language, and those achieved by their peers. All pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning and many are making good progress, especially where teaching takes account of the need to provide clear and supportive structures for learning and a variety of different learning opportunities. Early stage learners make good progress, supported by well formulated individual education plans which identify language needs. When support was provided by the bilingual teaching assistant, this enabled students to participate well in learning and reach appropriate standards. There is a clear method for ensuring that this support is directed towards the pupils who need it most.

11. Pupils' standards of literacy across all subjects are average. Pupils read sufficiently well to meet the demands in all subjects. Their writing is well presented and levels of accuracy are at expected levels. Pupils' spelling is above average but lack of fluency and a narrow range of expression often limit the overall quality of their written work. Standards in numeracy are average, with some subject areas making a good contribution to pupils' use of numeracy. In science, design technology, and physical education, pupils' numeracy skills are applied to collect and interpret data and for taking measurements. In ICT pupils prepare spreadsheets for the management of data. In an art lesson pupils applied their mathematical skills to accurately construct a template for use in a design. Standards in ICT are also average, and have improved since the last inspection.

### **Sixth form**

12. The school encourages wide access to the sixth form and about half of Year 11 continue into Year 12. A small but increasing number of students join from outside the school. There are clear entry requirements, which vary between subjects, but there is no requirement to have achieved, for example, grades A or B at GCSE. In practice the average grade on entry is somewhere between C and D. This is very much in line with the inclusive philosophy of the school, which encourages all students, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, to continue their education in the sixth form. Well over half the students have English as an additional language, almost all of them being at stage 4.

13. In 2001, the average points score was below average, with boys' performance being average and girls' well below average. Boys did better than girls in both GCE A level and vocational courses. Results were below average when compared to all maintained schools, and well below average compared to other post-16 providers. Even though students' starting points are lower than in some other sixth forms, and results had been improving at a modest pace since the last inspection, this represented an area for improvement, with increased focus on the monitoring of student progress.

14. Although there are no national comparators available for 2002, it is clear that results have improved significantly. The average points score has risen from 10.1 to 14.7 with particular improvement in girls' results at both GCE A level and vocational courses, and boys' results in vocational courses. There has been a rising trend in average points score since the last inspection, when results were well below average. Over the last three years there has been an upward trend in the percentage of passes obtained at A or B grades, from 15 per cent in 2000 to 24 percent in 2002. There has also been improvement in the pass rate for

vocational courses, which was 35 per cent at the time of the last inspection in 1997, and was 100 per cent in 2001.

15. The standards of work seen during the inspection confirm a picture of rising standards, which taken across all subjects are average and better than results in 2001 would suggest. Standards are below average in English, French, ICT and religious education, but they are well above average in art, above average in geography, history, psychology and leisure and tourism and average in mathematics, science, business education and media studies. Students' progress in key skills is regularly monitored, and they have sufficient competence to meet the demands of their courses.

16. Achievement is at least satisfactory in all subjects except religious education, where there is little provision made. Achievement is very good in history and art, and in geography, ICT, psychology, business education, media studies and mathematics, it is good. The school is just beginning to use value added analysis to monitor performance and the indications from the early stages of this work are that value added is at least satisfactory, with most subjects performing at or near expectations. The analysis indicates that art and business studies are giving a significant degree of value added.

## **Overall**

17. There has been good progress on the key issue from the last inspection on raising attainment. Standards have improved both at GCSE, which was the focus immediately following the last inspection, and in the sixth form. GCE A level results have improved from well below average to below average, and improved again in 2002. A rising trend in GCSE results has been sustained in conditions of some difficulty.

18. Standards at the end of Year 9, especially in English and mathematics, have been rightly identified as the current area of work, and the steps which have been taken have had a marked effect on the quality of teaching and learning, and hence begun to raise standards achieved. The determined implementation of the Key Stage 3 strategy has been highly instrumental in bringing about improvement in teaching, learning and standards.

19. There has been good progress on the key issue relating to ICT, from well below average standards and unsatisfactory progress at the last inspection, to standards which are average and achievement which is satisfactory in the main school and good in the sixth form. Standards in religious education remain unsatisfactory.

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

20. Relationships, attitudes to school and to learning, respect for others and the appreciation of the effect of one's actions on others are all very good. Behaviour, including the lack of oppressive behaviour, is good, as is the pupils' ability to show initiative and take responsibility.

21. Pupils are very proud of their school. Their attitudes in lessons range from satisfactory to excellent and are generally very good. This represents an improvement compared with the last inspection, when attitudes were judged to be generally satisfactory. Pupils usually apply themselves well, remain on task despite any distractions, and demonstrate considerable enthusiasm for what they are doing. For instance, in a Year 10 art lesson creating lino prints in two colours, the pupils were totally absorbed in what they were doing and in some instances the looks of concentration were intense. Around the school and at lunch and on the playground attitudes are very good; civilised conversation is the order of

the day, and ball games take place with minimal disputes. Supervision is sparse, but it is sufficient because of the harmony in the school, and the pupils' own self-discipline.

22. Behaviour is good. It is not better than this because there are a few pupils in the school who have yet to learn to control their emotions or appreciate what amounts to civilised behaviour. The school is addressing this problem, but it accounts for the relatively high rate of exclusions [60 per annum] and very occasional interruptions to learning in some classes. Half of the exclusions are for abusive language to members of staff. Incidents of poor behaviour are recorded and are analysed where necessary. Racial incidents are recorded and are confined to the use of unsuitable language in the heat of a moment. Such incidents are unusual because there is excellent racial harmony in the school. Friendship groups on the playground almost always include a variety of ethnic groups and cliques of a single ethnic group are not seen. Bullying occurs, but pupils were clear that it is unusual and usually confined to the younger pupils. When it happens it is dealt with effectively.

23. Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are very good. Adults in the school treat pupils as mature persons, and give them plenty of encouragement and praise, without being patronising. Pupils work together well, assisting each other where appropriate, and forming teams with a strong sense of collaboration. For instance in a Year 9 physical education lesson the team spirit was so strong that it was an example of excellence. Pupils take good care of the disabled members of the school community and see the chance to support them as a privilege.

24. There are many opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and take positions of responsibility and they respond well. For instance they run the school council, support newcomers as buddies, raise money for charity, work in a hospice, help younger pupils read and act as 'listeners' to pupils who have problems to solve. The 'listeners' are fully trained Year 11 pupils, trained by professional charities. They take it in turns to hold a surgery for whoever needs support. They are very enthusiastic and fulfil a valuable role.

25. Attendance is satisfactory. But for an intensive virus epidemic this term the current year to date figure could have exceeded the 2001/2 national average. Attendance in the Autumn term 2002 was 94.1 per cent, compared with 90.6 per cent in 2001/2 and 88.7 per cent at the last inspection. Unauthorised absence has also fallen dramatically since the last inspection. Lateness is kept to a low level by vigorous monitoring. School starts on time and there is good timekeeping throughout the day.

### **Sixth form**

26. Students have a strong commitment to school and a mature attitude to their life and work. They value the school's highly positive ethos that recognises each pupil as an individual and marks and celebrates their success. They feel that they owe a debt of gratitude to the school for all it has done for them and, with pride and a sense of responsibility, they undertake leadership roles and contribute to its life and work. Students enjoy very good relationships with their form tutors and subject teachers and benefit significantly from the high levels of support and guidance provided for them.

27. There are very harmonious relationships between students in this ethnically and culturally diverse sixth form. The quality of these relationships are recognised by all students as a significant source of strength and mutual support both in their studies and personal development. In lessons they work very productively with each other and, in discussions, listen to the views of others and sensitively challenge each other so that other ideas and evidence can be heard and considered. Students are actively involved in their learning and in most lessons respond keenly to demanding tasks that will extend their knowledge and

understanding.

28. Students are keen to accept leadership roles within the school, as prefects, role models, being a reading partner with younger pupils or supporting form tutors and their pupils. A number of them are appointed as prefects and carry out their duties responsibly. Students also organise their own common room, help and support charity events and are involved in community activities, for example visiting patients in the local hospice. They derive great benefit from the school's citizenship, enrichment and extra-curricular programmes, including sport, music, work experience, community and in-school involvement and opportunities for educational visits and fieldwork. They clearly value their involvement in these activities and recognise the great contribution these experiences make to their learning and personal development.

29. Many students have clear and realistic aspirations: they are also very keen to do well in their studies. They value the opportunities provided for them to find out more about possible careers and higher education courses. Form tutors assist their students by talking to each of them about their future. Many students reflect carefully on their academic progress and value the detailed comments subject teachers attach to their written assignments. These comments often provide the starting point for them to set their own personal targets. Most students are very realistic when evaluating their own performance and have clear perceptions about what they must do to improve the standard and quality of their work.

30. This school derives great benefit from students' very positive responses to its ethos and expectations. Their achievement in their work is good. The behaviour of students is very good: the high quality of their relationships, with each other and their teachers, and the self-discipline with which they conduct themselves are important indicators of their response to the school, its aims and values. Although their punctuality, to school and lessons, is good their attendance needs to improve.

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

31. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, when there was unsatisfactory teaching in one in five lessons in the main school, and one in six lessons overall. The amount of teaching which is unsatisfactory has been substantially reduced, there is now significantly more which is good and very good, and some that is excellent. The quality of teaching is good overall.

32. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. In the lessons observed the quality of teaching was judged to be good or better in just over half, satisfactory in slightly less than half, and unsatisfactory in a small proportion (four lessons) with one lesson where teaching was judged to be poor. There were four lessons where the quality of teaching was judged to be excellent, and overall the teaching in one in five lessons in Years 7 to 9 was very good or excellent. The quality of teaching is good in Years 10 and 11. Nearly one third of the teaching seen was very good or excellent, with three examples of excellence. About one third of the teaching was of good quality, and as in Years 7 to 9, there was a small proportion of unsatisfactory (four lessons).

33. A major factor in improving the quality of teaching has been the determined implementation of the Key Stage 3 strategy over the past year. All departments have produced Key Stage 3 action plans, and the effect of this work is evident in the lessons observed. Well-structured lessons with clear learning objectives are the norm in most departments. This teaching quality has been achieved and maintained despite difficulties in the recruitment of staff, which have been considerable in some departments. The monitoring and support undertaken by the senior managers and heads of faculty has been exceptionally

well planned. The effect of this improved teaching on pupils' learning and standards of achievement is apparent, particularly in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form, where standards are rising faster than in Years 7 to 9.

34. There has been considerable improvement in the quality of teaching in several subject areas, notably English, mathematics, geography, science and modern foreign languages where significant amounts of unsatisfactory teaching were observed at the last inspection. In ICT the quality of teaching has improved from unsatisfactory to satisfactory in main school and good in the sixth form.

35. The quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, geography, history, music, physical education, psychology, leisure and tourism, business education and media studies. It is satisfactory in modern foreign languages, ICT and religious education. In art the quality of teaching is very good, with several examples of excellent teaching. The quality of teaching in design technology is very variable across the department, and is overall unsatisfactory. This is because the content of lessons in some areas does not enable pupils to learn in a coherent way.

36. Teaching in Years 7 to 11 shows a greater degree of variation than that seen in the sixth form, where teaching is consistently good. In Years 7 to 9 in particular the quality of teaching ranges widely from excellent to poor. In order to raise standards, the consistency of this teaching needs to be improved still further.

37. Key strengths of the teaching are teachers' subject knowledge, the well-structured planning of lessons (where the influence of the Key Stage 3 work is apparent) and the use of a range of methods. The restricted methodology reported on last time has been significantly improved. The relationships within the classroom are also a strength, both between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good. They are based on mutual respect and tolerance, providing a climate for learning that is calm and purposeful.

38. The degree of racial harmony commented on in the last report remains a very evident strength. Pupils spontaneously sit and work in groups which are mixed by gender and ethnicity, and collaborative working is a strength. This supports the learning of pupils who have English as an additional language. The general climate of the school is conducive to productive working, and pupils work at a good pace, with good motivation and involvement. Pupils who are gifted and able make good progress, although there is not enough consistency in what is provided for them.

39. Most staff are aware of the students with English as an additional language in their classes and have a copy of a register identifying their stage of language development and their home language. In the most effective lessons, teachers ensure that early stage learners receive support from their peers during pair and group work and provide visual support and practical activities to support understanding. Peer support for learning was observed working effectively in art, music and ICT. In geography a wide range of visual support is provided including maps, diagrams, photographs, video, audio and ICT resources which support understanding and achievement.

40. The implementation of the Key Stage 3 Strategy means that the teaching generally provides a supportive structure for pupils with English as an additional language with explicit lesson objectives and a focus on literacy. Good support for language and learning is provided by the highlighting of key words, teacher modelling and support for writing through the use of writing frames. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to whole class discussions and many teachers use praise and encouragement to good effect.

41. All early stage learners are supported by well written individual education plans which give good guidance to class teachers and support assistants which enable good progress to be made. Very occasionally, there was evidence of work which was not well matched to language and subject learning in class. In general however, work was well matched to needs. In mathematics good practice was seen in identifying needs based on attainment in the subject and enabling pupils to overcome barriers caused by language needs. Pupils are clearly allocated to sets in mathematics according to their attainment in the subject, and help in writing is sought for them in order to undertake examinations at the relevant level.

42. The bilingual teaching assistant provides good quality individual support for early stage learners in English lessons. She liaises with teachers prior to the lesson and provides additional support in the form of bilingual dictionaries and picture books. During lessons students' understanding is supported through sensitive questioning, they are encouraged to contribute their ideas in full class discussions and differentiated homework is provided. Pupils respond positively to the additional support they receive. The organisation of lessons occasionally means that the assistant can spend too much of her time listening to the teacher and opportunities to interact with targeted pupils are then limited.

43. From the clear information provided by the learning support department, most teachers take into account the range and diversity of pupils' learning requirements when planning their lessons. Work is generally well matched to pupils' needs with tasks that are challenging yet achievable. In a few lessons where teachers misjudge pupils' competence by providing work that is not sufficiently broken down into small steps, or there is little additional support, pupils have difficulty in understanding and completing work, with the result that they lose interest and concentration.

44. Some pupils with special educational needs are taught both in mainstream lessons and in withdrawal groups in the Learning Support Centre. Learning support assistants provide effective help and guidance to the pupils throughout the school. They are knowledgeable regarding the pupils' needs and interests, work well with subject teachers, and make a significant contribution to improving pupils' confidence and progress. Although there are occasions when it is appropriate to withdraw pupils from subject lessons so that they can be taught in the Learning Support Centre, this procedure is too frequently used. Teaching and support would be as effective within the mainstream lesson where pupils would have access to subject specialist teaching, work alongside other pupils in their class and allow the expertise of the support staff to be shared with other pupils requesting help.

### **Sixth form**

45. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teaching is very good or excellent in about three out of every ten lessons, good in about five out of ten and satisfactory in the remainder. Teaching was good in English, ICT, mathematics, science, psychology, media studies, business studies and leisure and tourism. In the subjects sampled in the sixth form, teaching was very good in art, geography, history, drama and music and good in biology and chemistry. Excellent teaching was seen in two lessons in art: in the two lessons of general studies (which forms part of the enrichment programme) teaching was at least satisfactory. This is a much-improved teaching profile from that reported at the last inspection.

46. Teaching is well planned and is informed by detailed schemes of work and teachers' good subject knowledge. Learning is carefully sequenced and is punctuated with well designed tasks that have levels of demand that enable all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have English as an additional language or who are gifted and able, to explore the learning and make rapid progress. All pupils are encouraged to be actively involved in their learning. They respond to and ask questions; work in pairs or small groups to undertake research or to develop understanding of an aspect of the learning; they propose and test hypotheses, or animatedly engage in whole class discussion and, by their contributions, provide challenge to peers and to the teacher. In all cases, teachers regularly check the progress made in the levels of pupils' understanding. Where the three-part lesson model is used, pupils benefit from the lesson review as they check their own levels of understanding and progress.

47. The teaching that is very good or excellent is characterised by considerable pupil involvement in the learning, consistently high levels of intellectual challenge, demands for creative thinking and exploration of the concepts being studied as well as interesting and imaginative solutions to questions or problems. A range of teaching methods and demanding tasks are used to explore the learning, supported by a range of well-chosen resources. Pupils' discussions provide high levels of challenge, demonstrating significant understanding, both in breadth and depth, of the topic. For example, in one Year 12 English lesson, pupils explored the theme of nature in Wordsworth's poetry with confidence, using prepared questions as the basis of their group work. Their levels of intellectual engagement with the theme and the poetry showed impressive levels of understanding. The learning of a Year 13 French class was enhanced by the extensive use of authentic materials and the constant challenge of teaching in the target language. This resulted in the increasingly extensive responses of pupils in French as they developed arguments regarding different attitudes to driving and the causes of accidents.

48. Even where teaching is satisfactory or good, occasionally in a minority of lessons pupils' progress in learning or levels of conceptual understanding may be adversely affected by a number of factors. Examples are, when lesson planning does not take sufficient account of the time needed for each stage of learning (in a Year 12 media studies lesson and a Year 12 psychology lesson): the pace and level of challenge (in a Year 13 psychology lesson) and the range, nature and level of demand of the tasks needed for learning in depth (in a Year 12 business studies lesson and in leisure and tourism courses). Attention to all these areas would help pupils to make more consistent progress and reach higher levels of achievement.

49. The teaching of the key skills of communication, application of number and ICT are integral to the planning of learning in all subjects and is satisfactory. In teaching, key words and ideas are skilfully used, and note made of them on the whiteboard so that they are placed in context and used in the exploration of subject specific concepts and ideas. Similarly, number is applied at appropriate levels across the sixth form courses and satisfactory levels of understanding are established. ICT is an integral part of the programmes of teaching and learning, and most students also use and apply ICT beyond the classroom to support their learning of the course material. However, only the adventurous and confident computer users venture beyond the use of basic applications.

50. Homework is well used and provides good opportunities for students to consolidate knowledge and further develop understanding and skills. Work is well marked and assessment outcomes are well used to inform the planning of further teaching and learning.

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

51. The curriculum is good overall. It is very well managed by the deputy headteacher who has this responsibility, annually reviewed by the curriculum review committee and discussed by the school advisory board prior to submitting to the governors for approval. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects in Years 7 to 11 except for religious education where there is insufficient time provided to teach the locally agreed syllabus adequately.

52. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 has good breadth and balance. It has been improved since the previous inspection with regard to the balance of time, the removal of the rotation of certain subjects, and of lessons that provided additional but unrelated support to core subjects. Drama is taught to all pupils as a separate subject. Religious education, personal, social and health education and citizenship are taught in a one-hour programme throughout Years 7 to 9, by a department known as RS plus. All pupils study French but no second modern foreign language is offered due to staffing recruitment difficulties. The provision for literacy development across the curriculum is good. The provision for numeracy and ICT is satisfactory overall but their application across the curriculum is variable.

53. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is good. There have been major improvements including the opportunity for pupils to take a double science option or single science and media studies. ICT meets requirements in Years 10 and 11 but, as in years 7 to 9, more needs to be done to make sure that the subject is fully applied across the curriculum. There are plans to provide a GCSE course in ICT as from September 2003. There is currently a good range of GCSE options including a small vocational element, with NVQ and GNVQ courses. There is a need to provide still more opportunity to study vocational courses in Years 10 and 11 to meet pupils' needs better. Part-time off site provision is also made in partnership with Uxbridge College. Pupils with English as an additional language can study home languages through links with adult education, and recently pupils have achieved results in Arabic and Punjabi. Overall the curriculum is developing flexible, varied and relevant programmes of study across the attainment range with increasing emphasis on the needs of those pupils who thrive on applied practical courses.

54. Overall the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are well provided for in a caring and supportive environment where established routines and helpful staff enable pupils to make progress and enjoy learning. The school has a number of pupils with physical disabilities whose placements are specially funded by the local education authority. A learning support assistant co-ordinates all aspects of provision for these pupils and provides a useful first point of contact for their parents and carers. The Learning Support Centre is open to pupils at break and lunch times, giving them the opportunity to mix with their friends in a protective and calm environment where there is always a learning support assistant on duty to help when required. Pupils have frequent opportunities to use the computers in the Centre to develop their keyboard skills and to make use of computer programmes to support areas of learning.

55. Additional literacy lessons have been introduced to assist pupils with poor reading skills. These, together with the literacy sessions that take place on a Saturday morning, are proving to be successful in helping pupils make good progress in reading and comprehension. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, can choose to study and gain certification on courses that are more appropriate to their interests and attainment rather than take so many subjects at GCSE. Pupils who are poor attenders or who find it difficult to settle in school, take part in a work related learning course as a means of improving and broadening their vocational skills. This is proving to be successful in motivating pupils and improving their attendance. The school's ethos of including and valuing

all pupils has a positive effect on the development and learning experience of all pupils in the school.

56. The provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is good. It is well supported by the literacy strategy. School and departmental action plans for the area were produced two years ago. These contained many positive recommendations including establishing a 'buddy' system to provide support for students in lessons, developing subject specific vocabulary lists and designating a named representative in each faculty responsible for raising achievement. Supportive practice as outlined in these plans was clearly seen in many subject areas. Now that a new co-ordinator has been appointed, this area of the school's work needs to be pulled together and its effectiveness evaluated against these plans. This is on the school development plan for 2004.

57. The procedures to identify gifted and able pupils are good. Heads of year, or their deputies, set additional targets and extension tasks for the pupils and monitor their progress regularly but these arrangements are inconsistently applied and are yet to be fully implemented.

58. Across the curriculum the impact of the school literacy policy is good. The national literacy strategy is having a substantial effect on the teaching of basic literacy skills across subjects. Regular literacy work at Saturday schools for lower-attaining pupils in Year 6 is improving their standards of reading and writing when they enter the school in Year 7. Departmental policies and practice are increasingly focusing on literacy. The strategies are well co-ordinated and all staff have undergone training. Many teachers are correcting spelling and encouraging pupils to acquire a good working vocabulary of subject-specific words. Good practice in science, art and design, geography and physical education is helping pupils to improve their reading through explanation of terms, frequent reading aloud, provision of good resources for research and ensuring that worksheets are matched to pupils' differing reading levels. Good support for pupils' writing is seen in history, art and design, science, music and geography. In religious education and design and technology support for literacy is limited to the display of keywords in subject areas.

59. The implementation of the numeracy strategy is satisfactory. Some subjects have already prepared a policy on numeracy, and most incorporate the application of number in their teaching. To ensure consistency, the mathematics department will need to provide other departments with training and documentation giving advice on preferred methods of teaching the mathematics that pupils encounter in other subjects.

60. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) provision is well planned, making good use of staff expertise and of visitors with specialist knowledge from outside school. There are some good displays around the school of careers opportunities for pupils and the school drugs policy and support systems are well presented. The PSHE co-ordinator monitors pupils' self- assessment of elements of the course but the overall coherence of the course need further review in the light of recent changes made to include citizenship to meet national requirements.

61. The school offers a very good range of extra curricular provision that is available to all pupils and which extends the quality of their learning opportunities. It is particularly strong in the arts and sport. There is a wide range of activities in music, and theatre visits in drama. The good range of team sports is enthusiastically supported by pupils who perform well in inter-form, local and national school competitions. Very good additional study facilities are available for pupils through lunchtime and at the end of the school day. These include activities that directly support academic studies ranging from paired reading with sixth formers and Year 7 pupils, through booster classes in core subjects in Years 7 to 9 to

coursework and revision classes for pupils in Years 10 and 11. There are also many other enrichment opportunities.

62. The school has developed good links with partner institutions. The school works effectively to ensure a smooth transition for pupils from primary to secondary education. The school has good links with a group of four schools in the borough, which work with the local Education and Business Partnership to provide a range of enrichment activities. These are designed for pupils involved in work related courses such as ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network), Skill Power and vocational courses, including the health and social care and vocational preparation programme provided with Uxbridge College. Initial teacher training links with local universities provide the basis for a good professional partnership.

63. The provision for careers education and work related education is very good. A well considered programme exists in Years 9 to 11 provided through the PSHE programme. The guided choice programme in Year 9 involving pupils and their parents with the school in deciding on options for Year 10 is especially good and this is acknowledged by pupils and parents. The careers advisory service offered by Connexions staff is of very high quality and provides very valuable professional guidance and advice on careers through individual and group interviews. All pupils undertake a well organised and valuable two weeks work experience in the local community in Year 11. The school has a well-furnished careers library and resource base that meets pupils' needs very well.

64. Overall the contribution of the community to pupils learning is very good. The school has an extremely effective partnership with the community and benefits from the facilities located at the school including the modern, well resourced public library and fully equipped sports centre. There is also a very active and vibrant adult education centre on-site that makes an important contribution as it runs a number of courses in the evenings, weekends and during holidays that are attended by pupils. Through the Education and Business Partnership there are very good links with local businesses.

65. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The school has many strengths in the way it promotes these aspects of pupils' development. For their part, pupils show a high regard for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions in their learning. The school has maintained and improved its provision in these areas.

66. Since the last inspection the school has improved its provision for the daily act of collective worship, by establishing a system of year group assemblies combined with a tutor group 'Thought for the day' led by tutors. This is well resourced with ideas and material to stimulate the pupils. It provides opportunities to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of human experience whilst at the same time providing collective worship. What is now provided is very effective in developing social, moral and sometimes the spiritual dimensions, especially in year group assemblies. However, there were occasions when 'Thought for the day' was not used in tutor groups, particularly in Years 9, 10 and 11. In Year 10, activities forming part of the citizenship programme were taking place, and it was very difficult to combine both elements. In one Year 11 tutor group however, 'Thought for the day' was very well used, with a pupil re-phrasing the thought in his own words. Although progress has been made in offering very thought-provoking and worthwhile assemblies, not all tutor sessions were similarly effective in the quality offered.

67. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. All subjects provide some opportunities to promote pupils' awareness of the spiritual dimension. In art, science, religious education, history, music and ICT there is particularly good or very good provision.

In the combined RS plus course, the opportunity to reflect upon beliefs and values is actively encouraged in many lessons. For example, human feelings were sensitively explored by Year 7 pupils in a history lesson on the Black Death. The pupils respond well to these opportunities, especially in assemblies. The multi-cultural, multi-faith composition of the school community is a strength with the varied backgrounds and faiths present showing good tolerance and understanding of each other. Differing beliefs and values are respected within the school community.

68. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school has identified ways in which moral development should be actively promoted and this extensive list extends beyond teaching to tutor activities, race equality statements, behaviour policy and individual responsibilities within the school community. All subjects promote the moral dimension, either through specific topics or behavioural expectations, and pupils grapple with moral dilemmas thoughtfully. Provision in all subjects is always satisfactory and more frequently good or very good. Moral issues are very effectively explored in assemblies and in the RS plus course through topics such as euthanasia. The policy of Governments towards Third World countries was discussed as part of Comic Relief assemblies and the importance of individual actions was explored in tutor group sessions. Pupils are encouraged to develop a moral code of behaviour through the school's code of conduct. A significant number of pupils bring into the school a respect for each other and, for some, a set of moral principles derived from their religious backgrounds. Pupils know right from wrong and thrive in a school community that is rich in valuing and promoting sound ethical and moral behaviour.

69. Provision for social development is very good. The extensive range of extra-curricular activities play a significant part in helping pupils to develop positive relationships. In the classroom there is a strong emphasis on group work and collaboration in all subjects. Pupils are encouraged to help their peers, particularly those with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Pupils take part in and organise charity work. They learn about the workings of democracy in a practical way, through the school and year councils and the election of Youth MPs, and also through citizenship lessons. This understanding is heightened by practical work, such as taking part in a community project to clean up a local park. The school provides opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and show leadership through such activities as the "buddying" system, or organising and taking part in tutor group assemblies. Through the careers education and work experience programme the pupils gain first hand experience of the expectations of the world of work.

70. Provision for cultural development is good. The school holds multi-cultural concerts and assemblies, which focus on different religions and their important calendar dates. Displays are multi-cultural in style and content. The topics covered in religious education are drawn from the six main religions, and the relationship between religion and culture is sensitively treated. Many other subjects make a strong contribution both through the curriculum and through the various trips and visits that they organise. In history, for example, there is study of the richness and variety of African culture and the contribution of Black and Asian peoples to the British war effort in the First World War. Pupils are given opportunities to visit theatres, cultural institutions, art galleries and exhibitions, as well as visits abroad.

## **Sixth form**

71. The school's curriculum aim is to meet the learning needs and aspirations of all students. The curriculum aims to encompass all needs, including those of students who have special educational needs, English as an additional language, are gifted or able as well as those who have a diverse range of academic and personal needs. The provision, therefore, reflects the extent to which the school has made every effort to meet these needs within a diverse, yet cost effective, curriculum. The curriculum is constantly under review and

is subject to regular evaluation against a range of criteria.

72. At present provision is made for a total of 20 courses from which post-16 students can choose their subject options. Of these 15 lead to GCE Advanced level; three to a GNVQ Intermediate and two to GNVQ Foundation awards; and one attracts AVCE certification. As a result of pupil choices there are currently 15 courses being taught in Year 12 and 12 in Year 13. Within each of these, students are taught the key skills of application of number, communication and ICT. This range of provision ensures maximum choice and very good access. The provision for each taught course is five hours each week, which is above that that found in many schools. Where groups are small, students in Year 12 and Year 13 or following different routes to certification in the same subject, may be taught together.

73. In both Years 12 and 13 taught courses are complemented by an enrichment programme. This includes careers education, personal, social and health education, and religious education as well as opportunities to benefit from community involvement. All students also have the opportunity to gain an internationally recognised qualification in ICT. They also have access to a considerable range of extra-curricular activities, educational visits, fieldwork, overseas travel and group visits to a number of university open-days. Many sixth form students work with lower school pupils, hearing them read, supporting tutor group activities and by listening to their concerns. The totality of provision ensures that all pupils have a broad, balanced and relevant range of learning opportunities that contributes to both their academic and personal growth. However, although there has been an improvement since the last inspection in the provision for religious education and a daily act of collective worship, the statutory requirements are not yet fully met.

74. Care is taken to ensure that all students are following appropriate courses that will enable them to progress to further education, university, training or employment. The process of admission to the sixth form includes careers education and guidance as well as the sampling of lessons in preferred courses. The induction programme also includes the teaching of study and organisational skills through each of their chosen courses. Tutors and subject teachers provide regular monitoring of each student's academic progress and personal development.

75. Links with partner post-16 providers, local business and industry are good. They provide a wider perspective for pupils' learning and also contribute to their awareness and understanding of life beyond school.

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

76. Pastoral care is very good, with good monitoring of academic performance and personal development, and good educational support and guidance. This is an improvement on the already good work in evidence at the last inspection.

77. Arrangements for ensuring welfare are very good. There is a staffed medical room offering advice as well as medical attention to pupils. There are a number of first-aiders in the school. The police officer attached to the school offers help and support through a weekly surgery every Tuesday lunchtime. Guidance is offered on giving up smoking and a wide variety of advice on problems encountered by young people is offered by heads of year and others. Pupils may seek help from any teacher in the school. Counselling is available, supported by the Education-Business Partnership. Healthy living is also promoted. Breakfast is available in the school and the take up of school meals has almost doubled to 80 per cent in the last four years, to the benefit of 'healthy living'.

78. The procedures for improving attendance are very good. A system is in place to

contact parents on the first day of absence if no message has been received. It is entirely automatic – telephone calls are made until 8pm if no one has been at home, and text messages and e-mails are also used to alert parents that their children have not been at school. A home/school liaison manager is employed to encourage attendance. She makes home calls, sometimes accompanied by the school's police officer or the education welfare officer, with the aim of getting pupils in to school. Generous prizes are given for good attendance and classes are made aware of their attendance performance every week. These measures have been successful in raising attendance. The school is about to institute much more effective means of analysing absence data and a trial of fast-track prosecution of parents who do not send their children to school.

79. There are very good procedures for improving behaviour. A new policy was put in place one year ago, after much consultation with staff, pupils and parents. This has resulted in a much more uniform approach to managing classes, more effective sanctions, and a greater awareness of the expected behaviour in the school. Where pupils have not reached the maturity needed to comply with the policy, other initiatives are sought, such as anger management, pupil support plans or extended work experience and a tailored curriculum. These procedures are backed up by senior management and teachers consistently promoting the caring and civilised ethos of the school. This is also the route to eliminating harassment and oppressive behaviour.

80. There are good procedures for providing academic support for pupils. This is particularly important given the above average pupil mobility. The chief feature of this is a fifteen minute interview every term with the pupil's tutor to look at the workbooks and diary, discuss academic progress and, where available, the results of regular testing in lessons. These "booklooks" are supplemented by academic review days when parents and pupils attend for an extended interview with the form tutor. There is scope for the information available to tutors to be considerably enhanced, especially for younger pupils. Selected pupils in Years 7 to 9 who are not meeting the targets set at academic review days are invited to a second review interview later in the year.

81. For older pupils this system is extended by the provision of much more frequent advice and encouragement, together with frequent analysis of the results being achieved. When the options for GCSE are being discussed, each pupil has an interview with a teacher, a member of the senior management or a governor to help them to come to the best decision for their interests and capabilities. Monitoring the progress of pupils with English as an additional language follows the same pattern as that of other pupils, except that for early stage learners individual education plans are in place. When pupils first arrive in school their needs are quickly identified and support put in place. Individual plans contain suitable targets focussing on language needs, act as a measure of progress and identify class and support strategies to enable targets to be reached. They give good support to progress and achievement. The school is still using just two stages of need for early learners. This needs to be reviewed, having regard to recent developments in the practice in this area and the recognition of more closely defined stages of progress in language acquisition.

82. There are good procedures for encouraging pupils' personal development through the tutor system and the interest shown by heads of year and tutors in the progress in maturity pupils are making. The welfare of all pupils, including those with English as an additional language and special educational needs is carefully monitored by heads of year. All information about a pupil's behaviour is passed through the tutor and tutors are able to have a good picture of the pupil's personal development. Where appropriate more detailed reporting on a pupil's performance is put in place. Members of the senior management team and heads of year are very approachable and pupils appreciate this.

83. The head of learning support effectively manages the process for the identification and assessment of pupils' individual needs, using information from a number of related agencies, particularly that from the pupil's previous school. The procedures for transitional and annual reviews fully meet statutory requirements and are attended by pupils and a high percentage of their parents and carers. Pupils receive appropriate support and additional teaching as indicated on their statements of special educational needs, or as decided at reviews or subsequent meetings. Targets on pupils' individual education plans are known to the majority of school staff but are not always specific enough to assist in measuring their progress. The school has effective relationships with external specialist agencies from whom good advice and guidance is received, this enhancing the quality of support for those pupils with special educational needs. The progress and achievements of all pupils are documented and monitored by heads of year. Pupils with special educational needs are not easily identified within this system and the head of learning support does not keep separate records of these pupils' achievements and progress. The withdrawal of individual or groups of pupils from mainstream lessons is not regularly monitored and it is not always clear why, how often, and from which subject, they are withdrawn.

84. The premises manager and the assistant headteacher in charge of health and safety are highly committed to ensuring pupils' welfare. All the expected safety precautions are in place and detailed reviews of aspects of safety are regularly take place. At present the premises manager undertakes routine safety inspections without support from a governor or senior manager and findings are not reported in writing to governors or senior management. This practice is in need of review.

85. Child protection procedures are very good. Effective training of all adults has been provided and the nominated person has knowledge of local procedures and agencies. The nominated person and other members of staff demonstrated awareness, sensitivity and commitment to achieving thorough protection for pupils in the school. There are several pupils looked after other than at home, and these are carefully supervised, as are all pupils living in difficult circumstances.

## **Sixth form**

### ***Assessment***

86. Across the curriculum there is regular and detailed assessment of students' work. In most subjects work is marked regularly, usually with reference to examination criteria. The written comments provide an overall evaluation and sensitive critique of the content of the assignment. Students value the care and attention many of their teachers give to this task, especially the written guidance about what has been done well and the areas that need to be improved. Many see this process as being highly motivating and develop their own personal targets for improving the standard and quality of their work. Many teachers provide oral feedback, to the group and to individual students and often provide additional help and support for them outside of lesson time.

87. Students' attainment and progress is systematically monitored through the detailed records of marks awarded across the assessment criteria and progress measured against their target minimum grades. Amongst those subjects that were inspected in detail, good practice is found in English, mathematics, physics, French, ICT, business education, leisure and tourism and psychology. Subject teachers formally review with each pupil the standards reached and the progress made in their learning each half term.

88. Form tutors, however, regularly review with at least three students each week all of the areas that affect their life and work in the sixth form. These discussions enable areas

such as attendance and punctuality, organisation and the meeting of deadlines, their attitude to school as well as progress in their work and personal development to be identified and reviewed. Students value these occasions and commend the school for recognising their achievements and success in letters to parents and carers.

89. Target setting has improved since the last inspection. The school has set aside academic tutoring days when parents, students and their teachers can review progress and set appropriate targets to improve the standard and quality of work. Attendance by parents was good and students also found the experience extremely helpful.

90. There is regular analysis of internal and external assessment data in all subjects. The degree of sophistication of the analysis varies, however, with little use of analysis of students' performance by prior attainment, gender, ethnic group, class or teaching group or against individual examination criteria. Most subjects do, however, make good use of data to plan further teaching and learning and further development of the curriculum.

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

91. Students are very well known by their subject teachers and form tutors. From the time of their application for a place, and throughout their time in the sixth form, they have a systematic programme of support and guidance. Through the enrichment programme all students have access to careers advice, guidance on application for further and higher education, training or employment as well as through access to specialist information and counselling. Students also benefit from seminars and discussions about life beyond school, personal health and finance. Such a comprehensive range of support ensures that students are well prepared for the next stage of decision-making and the achievement of their career aspirations.

92. In Year 11 all students are clearly advised, and provided with good quality information, about entry to post-16 study. Entry criteria take account not only of the prior attainment of students but also of their career aspirations and the courses each wishes to follow. Specific guidance is given and choices reviewed following the publication of the GCSE results. This ensures progression to the right courses that will meet the learning needs of each student. This meticulous approach to admissions is an important contributor to the high retention rates.

93. Students expressed concerns about the thorough assessment of their work; enrichment activities; and the extent to which the school listens to their views and treats them as emerging adults. Inspection evidence shows that, in most cases, work is thoroughly assessed and opportunities are provided for feedback. The enrichment activities do provide breadth and balance to their demanding study programmes as well as providing for opportunities to contribute to the wider life of the school. While the school generally treats them as emerging adults, there are occasions when consultation about issues is not as wide as they would wish. However, most students would agree, and inspection evidence confirms, that decisions made by the senior management team are motivated by what is in the best interests of the pupils.

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

94. As demonstrated by the extent of over-subscription for entry, parents value highly the education at the school. Most of the ten per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire were appreciative of the school. They singled out for approval its high expectations, its approachability, and the contentment of their children with their school, where they make good progress. The parents who answered the questionnaire raised concerns about

behaviour, information about progress, working closely with parents and the amount of homework, that are not substantiated by inspection evidence. Observations during inspection showed the use of homework to be satisfactory, the provision of extra-curricular activities to be very good and the other areas to be good.

95. The information provided for parents is good. There are good annual reports on their children's progress. There is a detailed description of progress towards National Curriculum and GCSE targets and a separate hand-written report on the pupil's attitudes, efforts and contribution to class work. These are summarised also on a numerical scale, but attainment is not currently linked to National Curriculum levels, although this is being introduced. Targets for improvement are included and the Head of Year makes pertinent comments.

96. The Governors' Annual Report is a missed opportunity to tell the local community about the strengths and achievements of the school. It fails to provide information that is statutorily required, such as Key Stage 3 targets, the destination of pupils at the end of Year 11 and the provision of national comparative data alongside the school's results. This is also a weakness in the prospectus; the information about results is opaque and very difficult for a parent to understand, as well as omitting national comparative data.

97. The prospectus has a splendid cover that gives a good impression of the school. The document gives much useful information about the school, but the curriculum opportunities provided are not given any prominence. There are also omissions of information that is required by statute, for instance a statement on the school's ethos and values and the right to withdraw from religious education.

98. The academic review days provided each year are a very good opportunity for parents and pupils to receive a detailed report on the progress being made. There are other useful evenings on choices for GCSE, work experience, the curriculum and the results of the mock GCSE examinations. Every pupil has a diary in which detentions, test results, homework and awards are entered, so parents can have a very good picture of their children's progress by reading their diaries. The school makes every effort to involve parents with both good and bad news. For instance, Year 11 pupils told us that their parents are bombarded with information in the run-up to GCSE. Parents are invited in to discuss problems and help plan further action. They are involved in the regular reviews of pupil support plans and individual education plans.

99. Parents of students who have English as an additional language feel welcome in the school and a high percentage attend student review meetings. There is multilingual signing outside the school, but this does not continue inside the building. Parents and carers are invited to the annual reviews of pupils with special educational needs. Attendance is very good. Some are involved in supporting at home the targets on individual education plans by, for example, listening to their child read each evening. The staff in the learning support department welcome parents who wish to discuss issues or problems related to their child or the school.

100. Parents' contribution to their children's education is good. They help with projects and support homework. They attend events and support academic review days, over two thirds attending. There is good support for reward ceremonies. Parents contribute comments to the planners and sign them every week. Parent governors make a full contribution to the work of the governing body and help in school, for instance, in helping with the option process and mentoring pupils.

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

101. The headteacher provides perceptive leadership based on clear principles and wide consultation. In the period since its formation in January 2002, the senior management team has identified relevant priorities and pursued them with determination and attention to detail. The major areas of work have been part of an overall objective of raising achievement, and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Good progress has been made since the last inspection, with acceleration recently in the pace of change, and the quality of leadership is very good.

102. There has been a strong emphasis on improving the quality of teaching. The significant difficulties in recruitment have been very well managed. Robust procedures have been put in place to support temporary or agency staff when this is needed. Although, inevitably, the situation has had an effect in some departments, notably English, mathematics and modern foreign languages, the impact on pupils' learning has been kept to a minimum, and improvement has been sustained despite the difficulties.

103. The school development plan is a working document which is frequently reviewed and revised. The re-structuring of senior management roles is part of a coherent plan which also involves aligning responsibilities more closely with governors' committees. Responsibilities have been allocated with skill and care. There is thorough implementation of plans, such as those for the Key stage 3 strategy for example, and monitoring to ensure that progress is being made.

104. Management has a keen awareness of what is happening within the school. An example of this was seen on inspection when the unexpected absence of a teacher was swiftly and very effectively managed, so that little disruption to pupils' learning resulted. Reviews of the work of departments and areas are undertaken to a structured format that forms a framework but not a straitjacket. Intelligent flexibility is used to tailor the level of support and review needed to particular circumstances. The quality of management is very good.

105. The governors have a close involvement with the school through their committees, through their annual conference, and through personal knowledge. Some of them have direct involvement with pupils in a mentoring role, or in interviewing pupils about option choices. They are strongly committed, and their work is well informed, providing a strong strategic and policy framework for the operation of the school, including the sixth form. There is an open and honest partnership between governors and the headteacher, firmly rooted in a commitment to providing high quality education for all.

106. The arrangements for professional development are of very good quality. There is a thoughtfully constructed and thorough programme of induction for newly qualified teachers and a secure system of performance management. This is used well to enable progress to be made on whole school priorities such as improving attendance. There is very good awareness of training needs, and monitoring, training and support are closely integrated so that the maximum benefit is obtained. The school achieved Investors In People status during the week of the inspection.

107. Monitoring of performance is good, with evaluation being made against the school development plan and departmental priorities. There is good monitoring of the effectiveness of specific initiatives, and there has been recent improvement to the financial management of departments to encourage cost effective expenditure. The identification of the use of data to monitor progress year on year and through key stages is a correct priority. It has been identified as a result of the school's own work on prior attainment data. There is a realisation that more sophisticated methods are needed to assess progress at whole school level, and to monitor by performance by ethnicity, in order to supplement the detailed monitoring of

individual performance already in place through the system of target minimum grades.

108. The strategic use of resources is good. Expenditure from designated funds, such as Standards Funds, is well integrated into school priorities and the effect can be seen on pupils' learning. In January 2002 there was a significant carry forward of budget, amounting to 11 per cent. This has been reduced through wisely targetted expenditure so that it now stands at 7.5 percent. Expenditure was made on items related to the school development plan. This carry forward is still quite considerable, and further planned reductions need to be made.

109. The current carry forward also includes major capital receipts from the sale of land. These are earmarked for improvements to the corridors. As this is a major project, a small-scale pilot has wisely been undertaken to ensure that the expenditure will achieve the desired effect. This has been successful, creating a bright and attractive environment out of a dismal and gloomy place. The school is now ready to complete the rest of this work, which will enhance the learning environment and help in behaviour management. The finance and administrative areas are well managed, and the school's policy of providing administrative support within faculties was devised well ahead of current initiatives.

110. Most staff are well qualified in the subjects they teach. Their enthusiasm and commitment to improvement has made a major contribution to the school's progress. Where difficulties have occurred, these have been related to recruitment. The curriculum is well resourced. There has been significant investment in ICT since the last inspection. Resources for learning are very good in art, physical education, ICT, geography and history. They are unsatisfactory in science, where there is a lack of textbooks. Subject leaders manage their own budgets, which are sufficient to maintain the good provision. There is a good contribution to improvement from the leadership provided by middle management.

111. The head of learning support provides effective leadership and manages the department well. The school pays due regard to the Code of Practice for special educational needs, and records are mostly well kept and up to date. Financial planning is good and the budget for pupils with special educational needs is used effectively to provide support and resources. Due to the long-term absence of a number of learning support assistants, the head of learning support spends a considerable amount of time supporting in mainstream lessons. The tasks involved in the day-to-day running of the department are prioritised and completed well. However, there is insufficient time available for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, thus missing the opportunity to share good practice and to identify areas for improvement. The department does not keep separate data of the examination results of pupils with special educational needs so that it is difficult to compare their examination results with their previous attainment without scrutinising all pupils' records. At present there is insufficient support for the department from the named governor for special educational needs.

112. A replacement to co-ordinate the provision for gifted and able pupils has yet to be appointed. Procedures and criteria for identifying pupils who are gifted and able will be developed further once the vacant post has been filled.

113. The school receives funding for a 0.5 teacher through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant and adds to this a similar amount to provide a full time post. An English as an additional language co-ordinator has very recently been appointed after a period during which the post has been vacant. The new post-holder is an enthusiastic bilingual teaching assistant who has been working in the school as a learning support assistant for a year. She is keen to develop her knowledge and skills and the school is willing to support her and to provide training opportunities, including entry to the graduate training programme. She is being directly supported by the special educational needs co-ordinator and has a base in the

learning support department. Contact has been made with the local education authority advisory teacher for English as an additional language who has also promised support and training, some of which had been arranged prior to the inspection. The senior management team needs to provide monitoring and support in this area to ensure that effective policy and practice is further developed and implemented across the school.

114. Accommodation is good. The two areas shared with the local community, the sports hall and the library, provide very good facilities. The accommodation for art and geography is also of very good quality, as are the outside areas around the school. These areas are currently being further improved with the provision of floodlit football pitches. Accommodation is unsatisfactory for mathematics because rooms have to be shared, and English as an additional language because there is no base. A brand new pupil support centre is about to be brought into use and this will be a valuable resource for supporting the learning and behaviour needs of pupils. There is very good disabled access to virtually all parts of the building, and a number of pupils are wheelchair users.

115. The principles of best value are applied well, with particular strength in consultation. There is wide consultation of governors and staff. Pupils also have voice through the school council. Parents give their views, on the new behaviour policy for example, or through surveys on the response to the introduction of academic review days. There has been significant challenge to established ways of doing things from the headteacher and senior management team over the past year, and staff have shown a commitment to and a capacity for change and improvement. The usual procedures are in place to ensure purchasing is done on competitive terms.

116. The school's costs are below the average for London schools with sixth forms. There is a slight imbalance between the funding of main school and the sixth form, and this needs to be kept under review. The sixth form is, however, cost effective. The quality of education provided, including provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, is good. Resources are efficiently managed, and pupils are achieving well in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form. Overall the school gives good value for money, and this is an improvement since the last inspection.

## **Sixth form**

### ***Leadership and management***

117. Overall, the leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The governing body provides a clear and effective framework within which this area of the school can operate and has a significant interest in its work. Their commitment to sixth form education has enabled the school to make good quality provision for its pupils within the boundaries of cost effectiveness.

118. The operational leadership and management of the senior management team and the head of the sixth form provide a clear educational vision and direction for its work. The recent use of self-review has ensured that clearly defined priorities for improvement have been identified. The head of sixth form is developing a profile of overall performance in examinations as part of the process of monitoring progress against prior attainment and as a contribution to the overall evaluation of sixth form effectiveness. Currently there is a planned approach to providing a broad curriculum, clear expectations of all students, an effective strategy for challenging all learners through the monitoring and tracking of their attainment and progress and for supporting them in their academic progress and personal development.

119. There is good communication between students, with their tutors and subject

teachers as well as with the head of sixth form and his deputy. The high quality of the harmonious relationships between students ensures that the school's aims, values and expectations are very strongly reflected in sixth form life and work.

120. The quality of subject leadership is good. Most areas have a programme for the formal monitoring of teaching within their subject and have good procedures for taking effective action and to share and improve practice. In all subjects, good use is made of assessment information to inform the planning of teaching and of curriculum development.

121. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the sixth form are under review. A range of indicators is currently used including levels of application for places, retention rates, measures of prior attainment, and levels of achievement. A start has been made on looking at the value added to students as a result of completing their courses of study, as well as the destinations of students on leaving school, including the proportion entering higher education.

## **Resources**

122. The school works hard, and plans well, to manage its resources. Although operating within tight financial constraints, good quality provision is made for the sixth form. Currently, there is good take-up of sixth form courses, retention rates are high and group sizes are generally viable. However, while the current arrangements are very well managed, a small proportion of resources from the main school subsidises sixth form costs. The principles of best value are well applied, and there is routine consultation, challenge and comparison in most aspects of financial planning and decision-making. Students' views are taken into account. The cost effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory.

123. There is a good match between the qualifications and experience of teachers and support staff and the curriculum. Teachers are well supported by very good professional development opportunities, many of them provided by external examination boards and, where applicable, the graduate trainee or newly qualified teacher programmes. The level of resources available for the teaching of sixth form courses is good. In art and business education it is very good while in media studies it is unsatisfactory. The provision and availability of ICT is good and computer suites are well used. Accommodation for teaching and social use is generally good and effective use is made of specialist teaching areas in art and geography, although that for psychology is unsatisfactory. All pupils have good access to a range of study rooms, a dedicated computer suite and the library. The available resources in this latter facility provide only satisfactory support for pupils' research and independent learning.

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

124. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education the governors and headteacher should:

- (1) Raise standards of attainment at the end of Year 9. Continue the raising of standards in Year 11 and the sixth form (Paragraphs: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13, 16, 18, 125, 128, 137, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 178, 202, 214, 237, 239, 253, 260, 262, 277, 311, 314, 318)
- (2) Improve the provision for religious education and design technology (Paragraphs 16, 19, 166 and following section, 237 and following section)
- (3) Make better use of the analysis of data, including that relating to ethnicity, to inform the monitoring of progress and achievement (Paragraphs 9, 16, 90)
- (4) Improve the consistency of teaching quality in the main school (Paragraphs 32, 35, 36)

### **Sixth form**

- (1) Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the sixth form (Paragraphs 118, 121)
- (2) Make better use of data, including value-added data, to inform the monitoring of students' progress and achievement (Paragraphs 16, 90, 107)
- (3) Improve the attendance of students in Years 12 and 13 (Paragraph 30)
- (4) Take further steps towards meeting in full the statutory requirement to provide religious education and a daily act of collective worship for all students (Paragraph 73)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	135
	Sixth form	51
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		83

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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#### Years 7 – 11

Number	7	26	43	50	8	1	0
Percentage	5	19	32	37	6	1	0

#### Sixth form

Number	2	13	29	7	0	0	0
Percentage	4	25	57	14	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 the sixth form as each lesson represents nearly two percentage points.*

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1113	155
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	282	-

#### Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	50	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	157	3

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	528

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	62

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	90.6
National comparative data	91.0

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	1.2

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	105	118

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	<b>Boys</b>	45	57	58
	<b>Girls</b>	71	58	64
	<b>Total</b>	116	115	122
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	<b>School</b>	52 (57)	52 (57)	55 (55)
	<b>National</b>	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	<b>School</b>	15 (24)	30 (24)	21 (21)
	<b>National</b>	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	<b>Boys</b>	67	61	58
	<b>Girls</b>	82	76	75
	<b>Total</b>	149	137	133
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	<b>School</b>	67 (63)	63 (60)	61 (55)
	<b>National</b>	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	<b>School</b>	30 (21)	28 (28)	30 (19)
	<b>National</b>	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:	<b>Year</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
	2002	118	98	216

<b>GCSE results</b>		<b>5 or more grades A* to C</b>	<b>5 or more grades A*-G</b>	<b>1 or more grades A*-G</b>
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	<b>Boys</b>	45	104	113
	<b>Girls</b>	42	93	95
	<b>Total</b>	87	197	208
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	<b>School</b>	40 (38)	91 (91)	96 (95)
	<b>National</b>	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

<b>GCSE results</b>		<b>GCSE point score</b>
Average point score per pupil	School	34.1
	National	39.8

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

<b>Vocational qualifications</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% success rate</b>
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	11
	National	N/a

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations	<b>Year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
	2002	15	21	36

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	15	21	36
	Average point score per candidate	15.3 (12.3)	14.3 (9.3)	14.7 (10.1)
National	Average point score per candidate	N/a	N/a	N/a

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	14	18	32	1	5	6

	Average point score per candidate	15.6 (15.1)	13.7 (11.0)	14.5 (11.9)	10 (8.4)	10.8 (4.5)	10.7 (5.8)
National	Average point score per candidate	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	33	87.8
	National		N/a

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

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	499	41	1
White – Irish	10	7	1
White – any other White background	6		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	17	1	
Mixed – White and Black African	5		
Mixed – White and Asian	8		
Mixed – any other mixed background	19		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	321	8	1
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	51	2	
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	12		1
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	8		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	9	1	
Black or Black British – African	69	2	
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	1	
Chinese	1		
Any other ethnic group	56	1	
No ethnic group recorded	175		

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



## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes:

Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	76.35
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7

### Education support staff:

Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	26
Total aggregate hours worked per week	830

### Deployment of teachers:

Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	69.3
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### Average teaching group size:

Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	27.3
Key Stage 4	23.7

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2002
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	£
Total income	4,195,736
Total expenditure	3,214,282
Expenditure per pupil	2534
Balance brought forward from previous year	437,831
Balance carried forward to next year	1,419,285

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	41
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	37

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)	11

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

1268

Number of questionnaires returned

113

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	35	55	8	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	25	63	8	4	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	38	25	5	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	50	15	5	2
The teaching is good.	28	55	10	4	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	48	16	8	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	40	44	5	8	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	37	6	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	19	52	15	13	2
The school is well led and managed.	23	51	8	7	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	27	53	8	6	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	33	14	5	13

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

### ENGLISH

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

#### Strengths

- Good teaching in Years 10 and 11 enables pupils to achieve well
- GCSE examination results have improved steadily over the last three years
- Recent improvements to teaching have paved the way for higher standards of achievement

#### Areas for improvement

- Pupils' standards of achievement by the end of Year 9 are not high enough
- Lack of continuity in teachers and management has held back the drive to raise standards

126. Pupils enter the school with below average levels of attainment in English, and by Year 9 attainment remains below average. This represents satisfactory achievement. In National Curriculum tests for 2002 pupils achieved results that were well below the national average and below those achieved nationally by pupils with similar attainment levels at the start of Year 7. Boys performed less well than girls but the gap was narrower than it is nationally. These results are similar to those achieved in mathematics but less good than those in science. They are lower than those for the previous year. Results in recent years have declined against a national trend of steady improvement.

127. Levels of attainment for pupils in Year 11 are a little below average. In 2002 GCSE examinations pupils achieved below average results in English and just below average results in English literature. Comparing these results with their National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9 shows that most pupils gained at least the grades expected of them. This represents good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve as well as others. Results in English are a little better than those in mathematics but behind those in science. In recent years results have improved steadily and show a marked improvement on those for the previous year. Almost all pupils are entered for both examinations. Boys achieved as well against national figures for their own gender as did girls.

128. Pupils are currently producing work that is below average levels by the time they are in Year 9. Speaking and listening are good but when reading or writing pupils show little evidence of higher skills. Pupils speak confidently in class discussion and express themselves effectively when working together in small groups. Pupils read competently and with good understanding of stories and non-fiction materials. However, all but the highest-attaining pupils are less comfortable with more demanding texts such as poetry. Despite having good knowledge of poetic terms their detailed analysis is below average. Written work is generally accurate and well organised but few pupils write fluently at length with good expression. Higher-attaining pupils write well about Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and there is good writing by Year 7 pupils in response to their reading of First World War poems, as seen in, 'All day the guns had worked their hellish will.' The written work of other pupils is often undeveloped, showing a limited range of expression and lacking in vitality. Pupils with special educational needs plan their work carefully and make good use of drafting and editing

techniques. Pupils make appropriate use of ICT to prepare and present their work.

129. The work of pupils when they are in Year 11 is below average. They adapt their speaking to the demands of different situations and usually listen well to one another, although class discussion is often less effective because a few speakers dominate. When talking and writing about stories and plays pupils show that they have responded well to writers' presentations of character and their handling of narrative. They are less competent when discussing underlying themes or analysing how writers achieve their effects. Work on poetry is often rather mechanical and shows little evidence of thoughtful engagement with the text. Pupils' written work shows good use of planning and re-drafting but the range of writing is rather narrow. Personal narrative is usually well handled as seen in one powerful piece by a Year 11 pupil describing how her father had affected her life, 'He is the rock of our family'. Most pupils organise their work well making good use of paragraphing to structure their work. Lower attaining pupils make effective use of bullet points and tables to present their views and ideas economically. Work on media texts is rather thin and pupils do not make consistent use of ICT for information gathering or for organising and presenting their work.

130. Pupils usually behave well in English lessons but levels of enthusiasm and commitment are variable. Pupils usually have good relationships with teachers but not all are as helpful and co-operative as they might be. They enjoy being involved in lessons, for example when reading aloud, but levels of concentration are not always good. Pupils in some classes appear unaccustomed to working things out for themselves and rely heavily on individual support from teachers.

131. Teaching and learning are currently good overall, although last year's levels of achievement, in particular those for pupils in Years 7 to 9 indicate that this has only recently been the case. Teaching was good or better in about half the lessons seen. Teachers generally have good relationships with pupils and manage classes effectively. In the best lessons teachers ensure that all pupils are fully involved in activities so that they learn quickly. In a very good Year 11 lesson pupils focused on using language to formulate an argument. Pupils were quickly set to vote on whether they thought computer games led to violent behaviour. Pupils then worked in pairs to extract arguments from two passages for and against the proposition. They finally watched a video showing four experts giving their views and then discussed these as a class. The pace throughout was brisk and levels of interest were high thanks to the very good planning and management of the teacher. Where learning is less successful teachers give pupils fewer opportunities to participate. They may do all the reading aloud themselves or give pupils no chance to work in groups and feed back their ideas to the rest of the class. The marking of pupils' work is variable and does not clearly indicate levels of attainment. The best examples include detailed comments to help pupils improve their writing. Procedures for tracking pupils' progress are not well established but good support is available through additional sessions after school.

132. Teachers receive satisfactory support for planning and delivering their lessons. Current standards of pupils' work have risen because of improved leadership and the resultant better teaching. Schemes of work are being revised and take good account of national literacy strategies. However, the temporary structure of management makes long-term planning for the faculty very difficult. At present there is no effective delegation of responsibilities. Overall improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

## **Drama**

133. The overall provision in drama is very good. All pupils take drama in Years 7 to 9 and a substantial number choose GCSE drama in Years 10 and 11.

134. In Years 7 to 9 teaching is rigorous so that pupils achieve well. Class teachers have excellent knowledge of their subject. Pupils make very good progress in lessons and by the time they reach Year 9 their practical work is above average. Much work is based on improvised drama arising from everyday social situations. Pupils learn how to empathise with characters under stress and express their emotional intensity through dramatic performance. The pace of lessons is very brisk. Ongoing evaluation by pupils of their own and others' work helps them to refine their skills and knowledge. In addition pupils become more sensitive to important social issues such as old age and the outsider in society. This helps them to develop responsible attitudes as good citizens. Pupils collaborate very well when working in small groups. They are interested in each other's work and develop great confidence in their own performances. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' achievement are good.

135. In Years 10 and 11 pupils continue to develop their appreciation of dramatic techniques and styles. They have good knowledge of terms and use research to inform their work. Pupils with widely differing levels of attainment in literacy produce thoughtful and carefully drafted written pieces on texts such as the dramatic adaptation of Susan Hill's *The Woman in Black*. Evaluative comments by pupils show their clear grasp of GCSE criteria and good awareness of their own levels of attainment. Practical work is often excellent. Pupils work with an intensity that reflects the fervour of the teaching. Teaching is based on very high expectations of pupils who are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning. Pupils strive for greater range and depth in their performances and many achieve very high standards. For example, Year 11 pupils gave impressive performances of well-structured and dramatically effective non-naturalistic scenes. GCSE results in 2002 were very high compared to the national average and better than those achieved in other subjects. All pupils achieved grades A\*-C and almost half achieved either grade A\* or A. Results have been consistently very good in recent years but these were particularly outstanding.

136. Excellent leadership and very good management help contribute to the consistently high standards of pupils' work in drama.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths

- The leadership and management of the new Head of Faculty are good, focusing on raising standards.
- New planning has prioritised areas for development.
- The standard of teaching in years 7 to 9 is good overall.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment need to be improved.
- The rate of pupils' progress over time needs to increase.
- The immediate revision of schemes of work needs to be completed
- The quality of teaching needs to improve, particularly in Years 10 and 11.

138. Standards of attainment for pupils at the end of Year 9, as revealed by the 2002 test results, are well below the national average and below the national average when compared with similar schools. Standards of attainment for pupils at the end of Year 11 as revealed by the 2002 GCSE results were also below average. However the standard of attainment seen in lessons and in the books of pupils in years 7 to 9 is not as low as these results would suggest, and pupils are currently making satisfactory progress.

139. Pupils show increasing confidence and competence in all areas of mathematics and their work is orderly and well presented. As they proceed through the first three years, pupils become adept at managing fractions, decimals and percentages and at applying this knowledge to solve problems. They do a variety of practical exercises to help them understand geometry and much of this work is proudly displayed. Pupils are introduced to algebra and many of them learn how to solve algebraic equations. However in some classes pupils are not given enough opportunity to practice the skills of manipulating equations or of using algebra to solve problems. While they become competent at plotting graphs using positive and negative numbers they do not have enough experience of interpreting graphs or of drawing the graphs of algebraic equations.

140. The standard of work of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is below average but represents satisfactory achievement. Pupils in Year 10 have made sound progress since they began the GCSE course in September 2002. The current Year 11 pupils are following a special scheme of work designed to ensure that all elements of the GCSE syllabus have been covered and revised prior to the examination and additional revision lessons take place after school. The pupils following the higher and intermediate level courses are developing higher-level numerical skills and have a good understanding of more demanding algebra. They extend their geometrical skills including those of trigonometry and they enjoy problem solving. The pupils studying GCSE at the foundation level gain confidence in all elements of this course and some look forward to beginning work at the intermediate level.

141. The standard of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good overall. In only one lesson was teaching less than satisfactory as a result of unimaginative teaching which failed to motivate the pupils so that the learning objectives were not achieved. Most lessons begin with imaginative starters, which serve to revise previous work or to prime the pupils' minds for new work. As an introduction to further work on probability one class of pupils used strips of card and markers to identify fractions and decimals between '0' and '1'. They moved the markers in response to the teacher's questions and the teacher could see at a glance whether pupils had understood or not. In a lesson on area and perimeter the teacher checked the pupils' understanding of a previous lesson through a 'sketch to answer' matching game. Such lessons are well planned, with clear learning objectives which lead to good or very good learning. Pupils enjoy their lessons and leave with a sense of achievement. A class of lower attaining pupils developed a good understanding of probability through playing games with dice and counters. At the end of the lesson they worked in small groups on an activity which involved them in having to make predictions. They demonstrated their skills of accurately predicting outcomes as well as their ability to work collaboratively.

142. The quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 is variable but satisfactory overall. It was very good in a higher-level Year 11 group when pupils were introduced to quadratic expressions. As a result of the teacher's clear explanation and demonstration, the pupils quickly learned how to expand and factorise quadratic expressions. The teacher allowed some practice time but having assessed the pupils' good progress, changed her lesson plan and introduced the pupils to quadratic equations. She gave the pupils the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning by giving them the option of further practice or progression to more challenging problem solving. Many of the pupils rose to the challenge and were successful. Similarly in other lessons where teaching was good, pupils made good progress through sharing the teacher's enthusiasm and by being challenged. Whilst satisfactory teaching resulted in pupils achieving their lessons' objectives, the rate of pupils' progress was not as great as it might have been.

143. Pupils in all years are taught in sets according to their level of attainment and those who have experienced difficulties with mathematics are taught in smaller groups and some have additional support from teaching assistants. However there are too few occasions when teaching support staff are available in these classes. Pupils who are talented in mathematics and have reached a higher standard are taught together so that they can experience greater challenge and can work at a faster pace. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported well in mathematics lessons because of the department's policy of paying particular attention to literacy development. In their contribution to literacy development teachers help the pupils develop their speaking and listening skills by encouraging them to explain how they solved problems and they focus on the vocabulary used in each lesson, explaining the meaning of key words.

144. The teachers are good role models and the pupils' behaviour is usually good. The teachers' enthusiasm is transmitted to the pupils who show real pleasure in their work. There are as yet no formal plans in place to secure the mathematics department's contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and without planning there are missed opportunities to address these aspects of their personal development. The department has generous access to a good computer suite but it is not yet used to full advantage. However schemes of work are currently being revised to include planning for spiritual, moral, social and cultural and ICT development. The classrooms and corridors are in a poor state of decoration and do not provide an inviting work environment for teachers or pupils.

145. The new leadership and management of the department are good. Teamwork is beginning to be established. The improvement plan focuses on the raising of standards and key priorities such as monitoring have been identified. A time-line will ensure that essential changes take place quickly and that standards of teaching and learning continue to improve. The National Numeracy Strategy has been adopted for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and GCSE courses at three levels for pupils in Years 10 and 11. New schemes of work at three levels for each year group are being prepared and emergency plans are already in place: the new plans will address various cross-curricular elements, as well as assessment. Such changes will help improve the overall quality of teaching so that pupils in all classes have equal opportunity. Assessment procedures have already been introduced. Lesson plenaries are used to assess pupils' progress toward the achievement of each lesson's learning objectives. Marking is of good quality and teachers provide comments containing advice and encouragement. Regular testing begins this term as part of the planned progress- tracking procedures and results will relate to the national curriculum attainment levels.

146. The recent development work, the dedication of the teachers and the determination of the head of department augurs well for the future.

## SCIENCE

147. Overall, the quality of provision in science is **good**.

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is good
- Leadership and management of the department are good
- Relationships between the pupils and their teachers are good
- The monitoring of pupils' progress is good
- The standard of pupils' coursework submitted for the GCSE examinations is good

### Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT to extend pupils' learning
- The consistency of homework setting
- The consistency of marking
- Focused target setting for pupils that stem from the monitoring of their performance
- The provision of text books

148. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 have risen since the last inspection. The main factors contributing to this are the significant improvement in the quality of teaching, the effectiveness of the leadership and management of the department and the commitment of an effective team of teachers, technicians and support staff.

149. Pupils' performance in the 2002 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 was below average. The proportions of pupils who obtained National Curriculum Level 5 and above and Level 6 and above were both below average. Pupils' performance in science was better than that for mathematics and English and boys did slightly better than girls. Pupils' achievement, however, was good, particularly at the higher levels looked at in comparison to similar schools. This achievement was shared by pupils with special educational needs and also by those pupils who are gifted and able. Pupil performance has steadily improved over the last three years in line with the national trend.

150. The proportion of pupils who obtained A\* - C grades in the 2002 GCSE examinations was below average. Pupils' performance in science was similar to that for mathematics but below that for English and boys did slightly better than girls in line with the national picture. Once again, pupils' achievement was good and they did better than expected based upon their Year 9 national test results. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and able progressed equally well. Although the proportion of pupils gaining A\* - C grades has remained fairly constant over the last three years the proportion of pupils obtaining higher grades has increased.

151. The standard of work seen in all years is in line with the average and progress in lessons is good. For example, higher attaining pupils in Year 9 know how sound waves travel in air and cause the ear drum to vibrate, but they cannot see the link between the model of longitudinal waves in terms of particles and the wave they see on the cathode ray oscilloscope screen. Lower attaining pupils are able to observe, measure and record experimental results but are not always able to evaluate their experiments scientifically. In Year 11, higher attaining pupils know the reactivity series for metals and provide outline symbolic chemical equations for the reactions involved. However several pupils have difficulty in balancing the equations correctly using valency rules. Lower attaining pupils in Year 11 can work out the numbers of protons, neutrons and electrons in an atom but struggle to understand the meanings of terms like atomic number and mass number. By the end of Year

11 the majority of pupils have developed a range of investigative skills to enable them to carry out scientific enquiry effectively. Overall, the investigative skills that pupils demonstrate are at least in line with those expected nationally if not better. Pupils' practical skills have improved since the last inspection. Standards of coursework are high.

152. The quality of teaching seen was good. Teaching in over half the lessons seen was good or better and in a third of the lessons it was very good or better. There was no unsatisfactory teaching and an example of excellent teaching was seen. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The proportions of satisfactory, good and very good teaching were approximately the same for both key stages. Good or better teaching was characterised by effective planning that included clear objectives that pupils could understand, and an outline of the strategies to be used to ensure that pupils met these objectives. The progress of pupils was evaluated both during and at the end of the lessons allowing teachers to ascertain what pupils had achieved. In addition, the very good or better teaching included very high expectations of pupil achievement and involvement, and an enthusiastic delivery that inspired pupils to do well. For example, excellent teaching was demonstrated in a Year 10 lesson on adaptation, in which pupils were made to feel that they were using their own knowledge and understanding to contribute to the whole lesson from which everyone learned. The teacher's skill in drawing out from pupils what they already knew and using this to develop understanding in an enthusiastic way resulted in all pupils making excellent progress. Less successful lessons often lacked clear focus and pace.

153. All pupils make good progress in lessons including those with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and the gifted and able. Literacy is taught well and pupils are supported with key word lists and writing frames. Numeracy provision is satisfactory but there are occasions when opportunities are missed to reinforce numerical concepts. The use of information technology is not exploited in lessons, especially to obtain and analyse experimental data. The relationship between teachers and pupils is good. Pupils enjoy science, respect their teachers and behave well.

154. Teachers monitor progress well. Pupil attainment profiles are thorough and extend throughout the entire age range. Pupils' current performance is matched against target grades to ascertain progress. However, a sharply focused target setting procedure for individual pupils is not yet fully developed. There are many excellent examples of marking and homework setting but consistency in quality is lacking across the department. The standards of safety both in the teaching environment and in the preparation areas are high.

155. The science curriculum meets statutory requirements and schemes of work are in place. The curriculum is enriched in a variety of ways including the provision of extra support for pupils prior to examinations, weekly booster classes and science club meetings. A basic skills topic forms part of the Year 7 science programme with the emphasis on numeracy.

156. The leadership and management of the department are good and contribute well to the on-going improvement of pupil performance. The subject's performance and the teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated well. There is a shared commitment from all staff in the department to provide the most effective science education they can for all pupils. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is now good although shortfalls in staffing over the last five years has had a significant effect on standards in physics and chemistry. Accommodation is satisfactory with all science being taught in laboratories, although some are rather cramped for carrying out practical work with large groups. Although resources are generally satisfactory in respect of equipment and apparatus far too many pupils are sharing science text books.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

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

Strengths

- Very high quality teaching and learning
- An outstanding approach to curriculum initiatives, incorporating them successfully to improve the practice
- Excellent, consistent and well monitored assessment strategies that raise attainment.
- Inspiring and creative examination work at Year 11

Areas for improvement

- Limited links with primary schools to build on past experience.
- Further development of ICT.

158. At the start of Year 7 there is no primary link to pupils' previous experience in art, but below average attainment is taken into account in planning. At the end of the first unit pupils are assessed and the analysis leads to a well-planned art experience over the remaining Years 7 to 9. At the end of Year 9 attainment is above national expectations, and boys perform better than girls. The very good quality scheme of work and excellent assessment, recording and monitoring of pupils' attainment helps all pupils to be successful in developing art techniques, knowledge and understanding.

159. In Years 10 and 11 pupils have a choice of examination: art and design at GCSE and GNVQ textiles art. In 2002 the results were well above national averages at A\*-C although they were below at A\*-G. In the Year 11 examination results boys perform better than girls and their performance in art is better than that in other subjects.

160. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is very good. Between Years 7 and 9 an excellent series of units ensures a wide range of techniques are experienced and achievement is very good. The emphasis is on experimentation to encourage pupils to stretch their creativity to its maximum. Year 8 explored crafts and techniques from other cultures. Pupils were challenged through the homework, which was the impetus for their research. Very well planned access to a magnificent range of text, images and artefacts exploded into a buzz of excited discussion as pupils explored the beliefs, values and techniques identified as part of the heritage of specific cultures. A particular strength was the chance for pupils to contribute and explain artefacts from their own cultures. Developing individual sketch books make a very good contribution to pupil's records, their evaluation of natural forms, observational drawings and mark making, although they are not yet using electronic sketch books.

161. In Year 10 pupils build rapidly on the successes of Years 7 to 9 and achievement is very good, resulting in well above average attainment. Year 11 textiles students undertake a series of units, some providing great challenge to their creativity. Their research is outstanding and a unit investigating human cells as a design prompt produced a range of thought provoking designs using techniques of marbling, tie and dye embellishment with machine embroidery, and beadwork. Male students work very well in this environment, which demonstrates the strength of equality of opportunity in the department.

162. The art course work is demanding and some pupils have difficulties with their time management. Many cope with this by attending 'FLEXI' sessions, which were put in place after school, originally to raise boys' standards. Pupils make very good use of contemporary artists to extend their critical analysis. The works of Warhol and Goldsworthy have been an inspiration to the work in Pop Art and Earth Art.

163. Pupils with special educational needs match the performance of their peers. Those pupils with English as an additional language are identified by the school's systems. The art department refer to this when planning, so that pupils with limited language and comprehension of English are supported. Peer support is a feature of their learning as well as the celebration of their own culture, where units permit.

164. Attitudes and behaviour in art are very good and in many cases excellent. The department has a consistent approach to both work ethic and behaviour. Very effective support from the head of department ensures teachers new to the school are quickly helped to understand the systems. Pupils learn to work in groups in Years 7 to 9 so the concepts of collaboration and negotiation are well established as pupils mature; a Year 10 pupil runs a flourishing art club for Year 7.

165. The leadership of the department has challenged and inspired pupils and teachers. Management and educational direction are excellent. Planning has fully embraced school and national initiatives. Accommodation is very good. Pupils' work is celebrated in up-to-date stimulating display that is used to add flair to teaching and learning. However art is not highlighted across the school through display cabinets and notice boards, which misses an opportunity to demonstrate the high quality of art to all users of the school. Resources are very good. The rich range of text in the school/community library is used effectively to extend learning. The department has also developed a bank of materials that match pupils' needs, explore cultural differences and extend techniques. The department's response to the previous report is outstanding, covering all areas raised and taking planning further to meet new curriculum demands. Teaching and learning in art make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Teaching of food technology is very effective.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning.
- Day to day management is good.

### Areas for improvement

- The curriculum for Year 7 to 9 pupils restricts the levels at which they work, as there are insufficient opportunities to develop design skills related to the items they make.
- Planning for Year 7 to 9 pupils does not take account of their range of previous attainment.
- Pupils have insufficient access to information and communication technology facilities.
- Standards of Year 10 and 11 pupils' work in resistant materials and graphic products are too low.

167. At the end of Year 9 the standards of pupils' work seen on inspection are well below expectations. The teacher assessments for 2002 show a similar picture, but with some improvement over the last three years.

168. GCSE results overall for 2002 are significantly below the national average, but do show a rising trend over the past three years. Pupils' results are below those for their other subjects. Girls' results are better than boys, but this difference follows the national trend. In

food technology and electronic products results are above average, but in resistant materials and graphic products they are well below.

169. By the end of Year 9 pupils can assemble, with care, materials provided for them. Pupils seldom have the opportunity to select the materials or methods of construction they are to use, as these decisions have been made for them. This also restricts their development of making skills and the basic skills of measurement. Practical work is of a satisfactory standard, within these constraints. Work in design is not pitched at appropriate levels and where it exists it has a focus on applied decoration rather than the fundamentals of product design. In some cases pupils are asked to produce what should be preliminary design elements after they have started to make an item. When 13-year-old pupils produce items based on electronics they have little understanding of the function of the components they are using and have no input into the circuit designs. The situation is different in food technology. In this area pupils' work shows appropriate links between the different stages of designing and making, and standards are in line with expectations.

170. The standard of current work of pupils in Year 11 is below average. In food technology it is above, with pupils having a good understanding of all the required elements of designing and making. Work here also shows very good application of written English. Practical work in electronic products is average, although too many pupils have an unsatisfactory knowledge and understanding of the components they are using. Work in resistant materials is below average. Pupils do not take account of all aspects of the function of items they are designing and their knowledge of the range and working characteristics of materials with which they should work is unsatisfactory. Practical work is of a satisfactory standard. Work in graphic products is well below average.

171. Teaching and learning in the lessons observed were unsatisfactory overall, with one poor and a number of unsatisfactory lessons. In other lessons the quality of teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to excellent. Where teaching was effective pupils were offered well-designed challenging tasks, leading to high motivation and taking account of all the necessary elements of learning. For example, in a food technology lesson pupils were asked to prepare a presentation, which led to good levels of subject research. Pupils were able to build well on their prior learning where the teacher's evaluation of a previous lesson was used as a basis for planning. A teacher's good knowledge of examination requirements and good provision of resources enabled pupils to prepare well for the examination in electronic products.

172. A number of lessons did not lead to satisfactory learning because their content did not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, particularly in relation to pupils producing their own designs from which to work. Where pupils are all expected to carry out the same task no account is taken of the range of their prior attainment. Pupils make insufficient progress where teachers' subject knowledge, understanding of the curriculum and lesson preparation are inadequate. Where there is a lack of effective, behaviour management strategies some pupils make insufficient progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language make similar progress to that of their peers. However, work is not always modified to the needs of some of these pupils.

173. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good and they work well together. Teachers show good levels of concern for the pupils in their charge and good relationships were a feature of most lessons. Pupils generally take good care of their work. The project booklets help them to structure their work, but are not modified to meet pupils' different needs.

174. Day to day management is good and staff make sound contributions to the running of the faculty. Leadership is unsatisfactory because major issues, including some raised at the

previous inspection, have not been fully resolved. For example, changes made to the curriculum for Years 7 to 9 have not been sufficiently effective, particularly in relation to the integration of designing and making tasks at appropriate levels. Pupils' retention and recall of subject knowledge is still unsatisfactory.

175. Although there is some good use of ICT pupils have insufficient access to ICT, particularly to develop skills in the use of computer aided manufacture. However, the faculty has firm plans in place for the development of this area of the curriculum. The raising of pupils' attainment in resistant materials and graphic products has not been effectively addressed, although difficulties in recruitment of staff have had a negative influence here. Staffing is satisfactory and there is a good level of technical support. Accommodation is good and is accessible to pupils with physical disabilities.

176. The curriculum overall is inclusive, as all pupils follow a design and technology course. The curriculum for Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory, with a range of options offered to examination level, but no vocational courses. There are significant weaknesses in the Year 10 resistant materials course where pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop design skills.

177. Improvements have been made to the assessment system for Years 7 to 9, and this is satisfactory. These pupils know the levels at which they are working, but do not know how to improve their work. Insufficient use is made of assessment information to plan future work. Assessment systems for pupils following food technology examination courses are very good and are well used to help pupils to improve their work. However, this practice is not consistent across the faculty. There has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

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

### **Strengths**

- Pupils have good levels of achievement in Years 7 to 11
- Teaching and learning are of good quality
- Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and enjoy very good relationships with each other and their teachers
- There are good strategies for assessing and monitoring pupils' work
- Very good leadership and management are provided for the subject

### **Areas for improvement**

- Raise standards even further, especially results at the end of Years 9 and 11
- Further improve the application of ICT to support pupils' learning
- Improvement of provision for the subject in the school library

179. When they enter the school pupils' attainment is well below that for those of a similar age nationally. At the end of Year 9 their attainment is still below that of pupils at a similar age nationally. Standards achieved in examinations at the end of Year 11 are now close to the national average.

180. However, inspection evidence shows that standards are improving. In their work pupils show significant progress in Years 7 to 9 in the development and application of basic geographical knowledge, understanding and skills. They quickly improve their map skills and their understanding of climate, settlement and of life in less and more economically

developed countries. In Year 9 pupils are able to analyse and account for physical processes that result in earthquakes and volcanic activity. By the end of Year 9 standards are now above the results achieved last year.

181. In Years 10 and 11 standards are also rising above those achieved in external examinations. Pupils further develop their understanding of physical processes, such as coastal erosion and, in Year 11, can account for different types of farming within the European Union and identify the climatic and economic factors affecting the production and marketing of a range of crops. As a result, standards in pupils' work seen on the inspection by the end of Year 11 are above average.

182. Recent below average attainment had resulted from unstable staffing and, particularly, difficulties in the recruitment of subject specialist teachers. The current improvement in standards is supported by well-constructed schemes of work; teaching that provides challenge and learning that meets the needs of all pupils; and the detailed marking of work against learning objectives that recognises achievement and helps pupils set targets for improvement.

183. Pupils make good progress in developing the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. By the end of Year 9 pupils' literacy skills are about average, but are better in oral than written work. Number is used with accuracy and understanding and, although statutory requirements for ICT are met pupils' learning would be better served by the use of a wider range of computer applications. Pupils make good progress in basic skills so that by the end of Year 11 they are just above average.

184. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They concentrate well in class and work productively in mixed ethnic and gender groups. The organisation of the class into learning partners is highly effective and results in the sharing of considered ideas and interesting solutions to demanding problems. The majority of pupils relish their active participation in the learning and all, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language as well as those who are gifted and able, enjoy very good relationships with both their peers and their teachers.

185. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching ranged from excellent to satisfactory and there was none that was unsatisfactory. Where teaching was good, very good or excellent, lesson planning was underpinned by good subject knowledge and supported by effective schemes of work. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, provide very focused and challenging teaching that encourages all to participate in learning and achieve good standards in their work. The use of the three-part lesson structure ensured a clear focus on learning right from the beginning of each lesson, and also ensured that teachers checked at the end, as well as during the learning, what pupils knew, understood and could not do as a result of the teaching focus. Tasks were always designed to fully explore the learning, make significant intellectual demands on pupils and enable them to extend their knowledge, understanding and skills.

186. In one Year 8 lesson where teaching was excellent, pupils made significant gains in their understanding of life in a south American shanty town through the prioritising and costing of major projects needed to improve matters for all the inhabitants over a four year period. Productive small group discussions resulted in reasoned decisions as well as a clear understanding of the different priorities needed in a less economically developed society than their own. In all lessons pupils were very active participants in the learning through the good use of question and answer, paired and group work as well as problem-solving activities. Resources were always well selected to support learning and a range of methods and media used to explore concepts and develop understanding. Pupils were always well managed and

behaviour never less than good.

187. Homework is well used to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. A variety of tasks is used to enable pupils to consolidate and extend their knowledge, understanding and skills, engage in research and prepare revision notes. Marking is positively used to comment on both the strengths and weaknesses of the work and help pupils set their own targets for improvement.

188. The department is very well led and managed. The teaching team work well together and, during their regular meetings, share good practice. The drive to raise standards is well supported by the good use of improvement planning and self-review. Pupils' attainment and progress are systematically monitored against target minimum grades. As a result, good progress has been made since the last inspection. The structured programme of mutual lesson observation, and the implementation of performance management, has had a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching, with the priorities in the department's improvement plan providing the focus for very good quality professional development. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is enriched by regular fieldwork opportunities. An increase in the range of ICT applications used would further support pupils' learning. The subject is well resourced but extended projects and GCSE assignments are not well supported by the current library provision.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good
- Leadership by the teacher in charge is very good
- The contribution made by the subject to pupils' personal development is good
- Good procedures to assess pupils' progress, and a strong commitment to implementing the Key Stage 3 Action Plan

### Areas for improvement

- Increase the proportion of pupils gaining higher GCSE and GCE Advanced level grades
- Further development of the use of ICT to support pupils' learning

190. In 2002 results in National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were in line with the national expectation in history, with two-thirds of the pupils gaining levels 5 and 6. Girls' achievement was better than boys.

191. In 2002 GCSE results for those gaining grades A\*-C were below the national average. The proportion gaining grades A\*-G was very close to the national average. Analysis of GCSE grades for the last three years indicates a trend of steady improvement in numbers of pupils gaining grades A\*-C.

192. On entry to the school most pupils' historical knowledge, understanding and skills are below average. The standard of work achieved by the end of Year 9 represents good progress and achievement and provides a sound foundation for work in Years 10 and 11, and in the Sixth Form. Pupils receive a sound grounding in historical skills. They gain in understanding of how the past is investigated and judgements arrived at, and how to analyse evidence using a variety of sources that include textbooks, written sources, photographs and

pictures, video and the internet.

193. For example, Year 7 pupils successfully investigated written sources to enable them to make a judgement as to whether King John was a good or bad monarch, and used their own judgement to determine the qualities needed for efficient leadership. Year 8 pupils used written and pictorial sources to help them understand how doctors treated plague in 1665, and what, in their opinion, constituted sensible methods of treatment. Year 9 pupils analysed photographs, statistical and written sources to evaluate the contribution made by black and Asian peoples to Britain's war effort in the First World War. Attainment at the end of Year 9 is in line with the average, and similar to the results achieved last year.

194. Year 10 pupils began their study of modern Irish history by reflecting on, and sharing, what they already know about the situation in Ulster today. Year 11 pupils combined investigation of U.S. government policies towards the Plains Indians and their contribution to the erosion of traditional ways of life, with use of a writing frame, which guided them in structuring a GCSE examination essay. Current work indicates that again pupils are working at standards close to the national average.

195. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers plan lessons carefully to ensure they are fully involved in lessons and supported in learning by appropriate tasks and resources. Pupils who have English as an additional language are also well supported by teachers and are making satisfactory progress.

196. Pupils' attitudes to learning in are very positive and many display real interest and enthusiasm for the subject. They are keen to learn and relationships with teachers are constructive. Boys and girls work well together in pairs and groups, and participate well in oral work. Behaviour is very good. Girls achieve higher standards than boys. However teachers do have high expectations of boys and are employing strategies to raise their attainment. Boys now show a keen interest in history in all key stages and are making better progress. They contribute successfully to discussions in lessons.

197. Overall the quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 11. Teaching in the majority of lessons observed was good or better. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Subject specialist teachers communicate their subject knowledge well, using their knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm to create positive learning atmospheres. Management of lessons is of a high standard. Lessons are well planned and structured, offering a variety of learning activities that encourage discussion. Good use is made of time and the pace of lessons is brisk, keeping pupils' attention and motivating them to apply themselves and succeed. Work matches capabilities and challenges pupils of all abilities. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is regularly monitored in lessons, homework and by formal testing. Results are recorded for each pupil and the outcomes used to set individual learning targets for pupils.

198. History makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development, for example encouraging sensitivity when exploring persecution of minorities, the Holocaust, resistance by black people to slavery, pacifism and bombing in the Second World War. Multicultural awareness is developed by study of African cultures, exploration of the values and lifestyles of native American peoples, and study of Irish history. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively in lessons and to respect one another's opinions and ideas. They are also taken on visits, for example in Year 9 to the Imperial War Museum. GCSE pupils go on fieldwork in Wales to investigate castles for coursework studies.

199. History makes a good contribution to developing literacy. Pupils are encouraged to speak, listen, write and extend their knowledge of key words and their vocabulary. This

particularly supports the progress of pupils with English as an additional language. Pupils use different forms of writing such as essays, notes, diaries, personal accounts and posters. They use percentages and interpret statistics and graphs. Progress has been made in the use of ICT with an appropriate emphasis being placed on use of the Internet as a research tool. However, still more use needs to be made of ICT to support pupils' learning. The Humanities Faculty has priority access to a suite of computers. Many pupils use home computers to word process work.

200. The trend of rising standards and achievement is a direct result of very good leadership within the department and faculty. There is a shared commitment to the improvement of teaching, learning and assessment. Review of schemes of work and assessment strategies, target-setting, consistent marking, prediction of GCSE and 'A' level grades, is continuous. Flexitime revision sessions have been introduced and are held twice a week. National Curriculum levels, assessment data, and school standardised testing are all used when planning learning objectives and setting pupil targets.

201. Money has been well used to purchase new textbooks for all key stages, with an emphasis on ensuring that all pupils have equal access to learning. Displays celebrate pupil achievement and contribute to awareness of the aims and purposes of the subject at all levels.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Strengths**

- The commitment to further training of staff in ICT skills and teaching methods
- The recent use and development of high quality teaching materials
- The committed and enthusiastic leadership of the Head of Faculty
- The improved provision of ICT equipment and software in specialist rooms

### **Areas for improvement**

- The integration of ICT into all curriculum areas in Years 7 to 9
- Development of pupils' ICT capability in Years 10 and 11

203. In 2002, teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 show that the attainment of the majority of pupils was below national expectations. These results show a significant improvement over the previous two years. In Years 7 to 9 overall attainment in both lessons observed and work seen is average. In Years 10 and 11, where no taught courses are offered, attainment overall is average.

204. Achievement in ICT in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Pupils come to the school with a mixed experience of ICT, and standards on entry are below average. All pupils receive weekly lessons in which they are taught ICT as a separate subject. They are given opportunities to gain knowledge and develop skills in using a variety of software applications. An after-school session is also available. Lessons observed during the inspection showed pupils in each year group achieving appropriate standards in their use of spreadsheets. Work examined in Year 7 showed evidence of pupils using desk top publishing at an appropriate level to refine the style of a publication to suit a particular audience and demonstrating good understanding in applying these skills.

205. Although all pupils have good access to using computers through the lesson programmes for ICT, the opportunities to use computers in support of their work for other subjects are variable. Some subjects, for example music and art, include more significant amounts of computer-based work, but for other subjects, there is variation in the ICT work currently planned into schemes of work. Consequently, although the curriculum at Key Stage 3 is broadly meeting national requirements, the use of ICT needs to be developed further across subjects.

206. In Years 10 and 11 no taught courses are offered to pupils, and use of ICT in other subjects is again variable. Consequently the development of pupils' ICT capability needs to be further addressed in these year groups.

207. Overall, attitudes to the subject, behaviour, and personal development are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy working with computers and show satisfactory levels of concentration and commitment to their work. However, when teachers' expectations are not sufficiently clear and the management of pupils insufficiently firm, some pupils can be inattentive and achieve little. Pupils are beginning to take responsibility for their own learning and work collaboratively. The quality of relationships between teachers and pupils is generally good. Equipment is treated well and routines to log on, save and retrieve work are generally carried out smoothly and efficiently.

208. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The quality of teaching in the majority of lessons observed was satisfactory, although in one lesson the learning was unsatisfactory. Even though some staff are at a relatively early stage in their own familiarity with the requirements of the ICT curriculum they communicate with confidence and set appropriate expectations for pupils. Lessons are generally well prepared, have clear structure, employ a range of teaching methods, and plan for effective differentiation and support. As a result higher-attaining pupils work independently and complete tasks quickly, showing depth of knowledge in their understanding of the work they do. Lower-attaining pupils cover a good range of basic skills and are generally well supported on a one-to-one basis in lessons either by the teachers or by support staff.

209. Management of ICT by the new Head of Faculty is good. The introduction of national framework teaching materials in Years 7 to 9 has been well planned, as has the use of local education authority advisory staff in helping to raise standards of lesson planning and delivery. Monitoring and evaluation of learning is being developed and the information gained is helping teaching to improve further. However a clear framework for the teaching and assessment of ICT in all subjects has not yet been formalised. There has been considerable investment to upgrade the computer network, and technician support is very good.

210. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Significant investment in modern equipment and software has been made. The introduction of a taught lesson in ICT for each of Years 7 to 9 has improved pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. Teaching and learning in specialist ICT lessons are now satisfactory. The course cannot teach every aspect of the subject, however, and further contributions are required from other subjects in order to raise standards further.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

211. Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **satisfactory**. Only French is currently taught.

### Strengths

- Teaching is supported by good resources including a foreign language assistant and much authentic material.
- Leadership and management of the department through a period of great change and uncertainty are leading to steady progress.
- Forward planning of strategies and methodologies is helping to maintain pace and challenge.
- Good integration of pupils who have English as an additional language or special educational needs means that they can make the most of their lessons

### Areas for improvement

- More effective use of homework would support and reinforce pupil efforts.
- Grammar and vocabulary are not sufficiently formally reinforced to assist good learning.
- Coverage of ICT for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is insufficient.
- Further opportunities to experience the culture of the target language country would enrich pupils' learning

212. Standards of work seen during the inspection are average overall. At the end of Year 9 attainment at level 5 and above has been below average for the past three years and was well below average in 2000. On the basis of work seen, attainment is at present showing signs of some improvement, as with a promising class in Year 7 where pupils were constantly pushed by the teacher to participate and extend their range of responses. Attainment is still below national averages but moving upwards. A high staffing turnover has contributed to a lack of continuity in preparation for the assessments. Further preparatory and moderation work for teacher assessment levels at the end of Year 9 aims to raise standards further this year and prevent the fluctuations which have occurred previously. Setting from Year 8 onwards is contributing to good work in lessons.

213. At the end of Year 11, attainment at GCSE at grades A\* - C is below national averages and significantly so in 2002. Some very promising attainment was seen in the exercise books of Year 10 and 11 pupils, incorporating a range of tenses and work across all four skills, and leading to comprehensive coverage of the syllabus via the detailed schemes of work. However, in many other books, it is clear that attainment is hampered by a lack of consolidation of grammar and vocabulary through written reinforcement and regular noting and testing. Performance is below that for other subjects but is improving due to the policies now in place.

214. Achievement at the end of Year 9 is just satisfactory with some evidence of inadequate expectations but is now improving due to the efforts put in by the Head of Faculty to regularise staffing and delivery of the curriculum. In Years 10 and 11 achievement is satisfactory, with some that is only just satisfactory. Pupils are able to cope with all four key skills, sometimes pleasingly, but progress is hampered by not revisiting grammar and vocabulary regularly through formalised testing.

215. The achievement of boys is now on a par with that of girls. Pupils with English as an additional language are successfully integrated into classes and generally make progress parallel to that of other pupils. Their knowledge of another language is seen as a strength. The achievement of all pupils would be improved by access to a sheet telling pupils what is

required for further improvement and implementation of the programme of self-assessment in the *cahier d'activités*. All pupils would also benefit from the chance to experience the target language and French culture at first hand. More use could be made of ICT to support learning.

216. Attitudes to the subject are satisfactory. They could be improved in some classes in Years 7 to 9, if planning incorporated a balance of cloze and open exercises which allow lower attaining pupils to feel that progress was occurring over time. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are sometimes demoralised by the low target grades pasted to the front of exercise books which remind pupils of the possibility of low attainment.

217. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 11 are satisfactory. The percentage of unsatisfactory teaching has been substantially reduced since the last inspection. Teaching and learning are improving due to the programme of support put in by the Head of Faculty and the clear direction provided. In the majority of lessons seen, teaching and learning were satisfactory and better than satisfactory in a good number. Teaching was only unsatisfactory in one lesson where the teacher had promising skills which could be developed by further training in behaviour management. Provided that enough time is available for teachers to concentrate on their work and that continuity in the department through fixed staffing is established, further improvement may be expected. Where learning is occasionally lagging, progress would follow regular recall sessions through written revision.

218. Leadership of the department is good. There are clear ideas of where the department is going and of what needs to be done. As a result of good leadership and management, the department has been held together and moved on over a period of staffing uncertainty. Teachers are well-supported. The Head of Faculty knows the strengths of the team and is seeking to use those strengths to move teaching on.

219. Management is good. Regular focused weekly team meetings with a clear agenda help teachers to work as a team towards effective delivery of the schemes of work and common goals. A programme of lesson observation and teacher support is in place; this support has helped to develop the range of skills in the department. Colleagues are made aware of best practice in behaviour management, teaching and learning strategies.

220. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The Head of Faculty expects attainment levels at the end of Year 9 to rise due to regular staffing. The department is committed to raising achievement and now has the potential to do so. Plans are underway to reintroduce a second language to GCSE.

## MUSIC

221. Overall, the quality of provision in music is **good**.

### Strengths

- Attainment in Years 10 and 11 is above average.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching are very good.
- Work is well matched to the individual needs of the students.
- The use of ICT in Years 10 and 11 is good.

### Areas for improvement

- The pace of learning in some lessons in Years 7 to 9 is slow.
- The number of students taking GCSE in music is low.
- Performance skills such as the use of fingering systems and notation are insufficiently developed.

222. Standards of work in Year 9 are average and students achieve well in relation to their starting point in Year 7. Similarly in Year 11 students do well in achieving above average standards. These standards are achieved because the leadership and management in the subject are very good, resulting in consistently good teaching and learning. Eighty three percent of students entered for GCSE music in 2002 gained grades A\*-C. The number entered was too small for any valid comparisons to be made with national figures; however the pupils generally performed better in music than most other subjects and this maintains the improving trend of recent years.

223. In Years 7 to 9, students control keyboards well and use them effectively, when composing, to record different parts. However, when performing, fingering systems are insufficiently used, resulting in a lack of fluency. Students show good familiarity with staff and graphic notation and can identify notes on the staff but when performing and composing still only use letter names. Higher attaining students compose well-structured melodies when setting words to music; average attainers select rhythms and compose short phrases. When playing in groups the students can hold independent parts well, but often there is a lack of rhythmic cohesion. The students listen well to music, including their own performances and compositions and evaluate them showing understanding of the elements of music. Students with special needs and students for whom English is an additional language achieve well. Gifted and able students use extension work effectively to make good progress.

224. In Years 10 and 11 the examination groups are small and students' skills are varied; overall standards are above average. Students perform confidently and play well together, holding independent parts with a good sense of rhythm. They understand chord structures and can use them effectively in their compositions. Gifted and talented performers produce some outstanding performances and compositions. Students exploit their own instrumental skills effectively when composing. They listen well to music and evaluate performances and compositions well. In all years, from Years 7 to 11, there are no significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls or of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.

225. Learning and teaching are good, often very good; no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. A strength of the teaching is the way that the work is planned to take account of the individual needs of the students. This, with a good level of individual attention, particularly helps the students with special needs and English as an additional language to make good

progress. The teachers have very good musical skills and these are well used to demonstrate and illustrate during lessons. Students are well managed and behaviour in lessons is good as a result. The students show a good attitude to the subject and enjoy the activities, collaborating harmoniously during group work. They work well independently when required, particularly in Years 10 and 11. There is also good use of ICT in Years 10 and 11 with students using sophisticated software to compose and present their pieces. Assessment is well used to monitor progress and, with the very good use of self-evaluation by the students, keeps them well informed as to how well they are doing. There is good use of corporate music making to develop performance skills but the pace of lessons is sometimes slow in parts and this limits progress in those lessons.

226. Leadership and management are very good, as is the monitoring and evaluation of teaching. This results in a clear sense of priorities, which are reflected in the development plan and the effective action taken. As a result there has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Standards of attainment in Years 7 to 9 have been raised; there has been a significant improvement in the GCSE results. Teaching and learning have improved. The time allocated to music has been increased and an AS level course started. The number of pupils taking instrumental lessons has increased significantly.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- Strong leadership of the department
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities which are well supported by large and enthusiastic groups of pupils
- Good quality teaching
- Pupils have a positive and lively attitude towards physical education and feel valued for both effort and achievement

### Areas for improvement

- Ensure that all pupils are given the opportunity to be involved in the evaluation and planning of their work
- Explore the possibility of offering the Junior Sports Leader award to Years 10 and 11

228. The number of pupils gaining A\*-G grades in the GCSE examination in July 2002 was in line with the national average, but those gaining the higher A\*-C grades in this examination was below the national average. In spite of much effort by departmental staff there are still many more boys than girls taking the examination, but there was no significant difference in attainment levels.

229. Pupils arrive from their primary schools bringing with them a range of physical education skills, a significant number of them with levels below that expected. They make good progress and by the end of Year 9 most of them are achieving levels that are in line with national expectations and a few are doing even better. In games activities pupils have a good knowledge of the rules of a number of games, and are developing the skills to enable them to compete successfully, although some find it difficult to apply these skills when the element of competition is introduced. In gymnastics pupils are able to demonstrate a range of movements both on the floor and on apparatus, with an increasingly competent ability to link them together into complex sequences. In dance most pupils have only a very limited experience of this activity when they arrive at the school. They quickly become involved in the subject, and by the end of Year 9 they are able to take responsibility for choreographing

and developing a story-line. Some pupils are able to evaluate their own and others' performance and to make perceptive comments on how improvements can be made, but others are given too little opportunity to develop this aspect.

230. This good progress is continued during Years 10 and 11, and by the time they reach the end of Year 11, pupils are attaining levels that are in line with national expectations, with some, especially those in the examination groups, doing even better. Good levels of skills are clearly evident in a range of activities. Many have a good understanding of tactics and strategies, and are able to apply the skills they have practised when they are playing in full games. In health related education pupils demonstrate a good understanding of fitness issues and practices, and are able to create their own fitness programmes. They undertake a range of tasks including refereeing and acting as coaches. Pupils in the examination groups are developing understanding and expertise in both theoretical and practical aspects of the subject. Higher attaining pupils present work that is well structured, with some using their ICT skills to produce good quality course work folders. However, some have limited subject knowledge and their course work folders are sometimes incomplete. Some pupils find success in the theoretical aspects of the course hard to achieve. Dance is not a compulsory subject for Years 10 and 11 pupils, but enthusiastic groups of them have opted to take a GCSE in the subject. Their attainment is in line with the national average. They compose and perform accurately and expressively, and successfully communicate their intentions through dance.

231. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated, and given much support by teachers and peers and most reach a very satisfactory level of attainment. Teaching is sensitive and there is no evidence of pupils with special education needs being disadvantaged by the curriculum that is on offer. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. Talented pupils are identified and are encouraged to extend their skills both in school lessons, and with out of school clubs. School teams take part in many inter-school competitions and gain much success, especially in soccer, hockey and netball. A number of the pupils have represented Hillingdon in a variety of sports, and a few have represented Middlesex. A pupil in Year 11 is a member of the junior Great Britain Judo squad.

232. In spite of the large turnover of staff the good standard of teaching reported at the last inspection has been maintained. Teaching in all lessons observed was judged to be at least satisfactory, and the majority was judged to be good or very good. Lessons are well planned, and objectives are shared with pupils. The good choice of activities offers appropriate challenges to pupils of all abilities. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject and pass on their enthusiasm to their class. Most pupils respond very positively to the good quality teaching. The vast majority are well motivated, work hard and respect each other and their teachers. The pupils' enjoyment of their lessons is very evident.

233. The curriculum allows pupils to take part in a wide range of activities and it is meeting the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. A new and comprehensive system of recording pupils' attainment has recently been introduced. All pupils now know at what National Curriculum level they are working and what they need to do to improve. The school should explore the possibility of offering pupils in Years 10 and 11 the opportunity of taking the Junior Sports Leaders Award. This is a national award that is for young people who wish to develop their sports organisation skills.

234. Staff give very freely of their time to provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities which are very well supported by large and enthusiastic groups of pupils. There is the opportunity to take part in many inter-school matches and competitions, to join ski-ing holidays in Austria, and to take part in residential outdoor pursuits courses held at the local

authority's centre in North Wales.

235. The recently appointed head of department has made a very good start in his new post. Good quality documentation now covers all aspects of the department's work and helps the delivery of the subject. The excellent facilities for the subject have a positive effect on the attainment of the students, and of their enjoyment of the subject. High quality displays of the department's work are around the school and stimulate interest. Hardworking teachers work well together as a team sharing a commitment to the improvement of the department and being very supportive of each other.

236. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. New and effective assessment procedures are now in place, and schemes of work have been up-dated. Examination results have improved and the number of students taking the course has increased.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

237. Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

### Strengths

- The subject's contribution to spiritual, moral and social development
- Commitment of the subject teaching staff

### Areas for improvement

- Provision of a curriculum that meets the statutory requirements of the Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education
- Pupil achievement and raising of standards
- Assessment procedures and practice
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs
- Use of ICT

238. No lessons of religious education were scheduled at the time of the inspection due to the medium term planning of the combined PSHE, Citizenship, sex and drugs education, careers and religious education course, jointly referred to as RS plus. Judgements on pupil attainment in religious education, therefore, is based on a limited scrutiny of work that included projects undertaken and written tasks in exercise books.

239. At both the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11 pupils' attainment is below the expectations of the Hillingdon agreed syllabus. Pupils have a basic knowledge of aspects of some religions. For example, Year 10 pupils write accurately about the Christian concept of God; Year 9 pupils know about Buddha's Precepts; Year 8 pupils demonstrate knowledge of the life of Muhammad and Year 7 pupils are familiar with the story of Moses and the Ten Commandments. Pupils in both key stages record information accurately about the religious beliefs and practices they study. However, the development of skills such as analysis, reasoning, judgement, interpretation and evaluation, specific to the religious education topic being studied, were not always evident, or developed sufficiently, in the work seen. No sixth form work was available and no lessons were observed.

240. Scrutiny of work shows that, when pupils are taught specific religious education topics in lessons, the teaching and learning are at least satisfactory for the majority of pupils, and teachers' subject knowledge is secure. The faculty's current methods for teaching a combined course of religious education, PSHE, Citizenship, sex, drugs and Careers

education within a one hour a week time slot does not allow the statutory religious education programme to be taught in full. Pupils' achieve below what should be expected of them because the content covered is less than is required and the full range of religious education learning objectives are not always met. Pupils do not achieve the required levels at the end of each key stage expected by the Agreed Syllabus. The scrutiny of work suggests pupil attitudes to, and their interest in, the subject are satisfactory.

241. The head of faculty, head of sixth form and staff show a commitment to improve the provision for religious education. The expectation placed upon them, however, to teach so many subjects properly within a limited time allocation is not effective in achieving improvement or raising standards in religious education. The current faculty syllabus and scheme of work is not ensuring the agreed syllabus programme of study is fully taught at all key stages. The selection of topics in Years 7 to 11 does not easily allow for continuity and progression in pupil learning or provide the opportunity for pupils to build on previous knowledge and skills acquired. Assessment practice is not based on the agreed syllabus levels of achievement and is not used to inform planning of lessons to match the needs of differing pupils. Provision for pupils with special education needs is limited and dependent, mainly, upon teacher support. In the scrutiny of work there was little evidence of differing activities being used to meet the differing requirements of pupils with special educational needs, the gifted and able or those who have English as an additional language.

242. The range of book and video resources available are appropriate to teach the breadth of the agreed syllabus, but there is currently little use made of ICT in lessons to extend pupils' learning. Accommodation is appropriate for teaching religious education and is suitable for a wide range of teaching and learning methods. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is a strength. Many opportunities are provided to relate the wider ideals of religious and philosophical thought to human experience and living, especially to aspects of citizenship and issues of personal and social living.

243. Since the last inspection the school has improved the range of teaching resources and has also begun to teach religious education in the sixth form. There has, however, been no improvement in pupil attainment against the expectations of the Hillingdon agreed syllabus, or in assessment practice and procedures. The previous inspection also reported that the curriculum did not meet the statutory requirement because of the poor time allocation to the subject. This has not changed. The current agreed syllabus recommendation to cover the programmes of study in Years 7 to 11 is five per cent of curriculum time which is one hour per week. The expectation that religious education can be covered alongside the subject content of four other disciplines, all within one hour per week, is detrimentally affecting the raising of standards, pupil achievement and entitlement to religious education in accordance with the Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus. Progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

## **CITIZENSHIP**

244. Overall, the quality of provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

### **Strengths**

- Good use of outside agencies to deliver part of course
- Planned events enhance the taught programme
- Citizenship is recognised as a cross curricular theme
- Strong contribution from PHSE and careers teaching

### **Areas for improvement**

- Mapping and co-ordination of provision in Years 10 and 11
- Teacher assessment against the citizenship objectives



245. The subject is taught as part of the integrated PHSE, religious education, careers, sex and drugs education course. Modules for Years 8 and 9 are delivered through tutor time. During the inspection teaching was taking place to Year 7 pupils. This teaching is undertaken by teachers from the RS plus department.

246. Schemes of work have been developed for Years 7 to 9. These draw on and complement work already done within PSHE. Good use is made of links with outside agencies to deliver parts of the course. For example, police officers gave the first two lessons of the course covering "What is citizenship?" There is also good use of local community projects to extend pupils' understanding of community and citizenship, by taking part in clearing a local park for example. An events day is planned for Years 7 to 9 which also makes good use of external organisations. This part of the planning is a significant strength.

247. In Years 10 and 11 citizenship is seen as a cross-curricular theme. Links are made to other initiatives within school, such as the peer listening project. Mapping where the provision actually occurs has started, but at present it consists of isolated instances in some subjects rather than a coherent programme of teaching and learning. The co-ordinator is currently working on this area, and it needs to be an urgent priority for development. During the inspection Year 10 were undertaking work in tutor time on the role of local councils. Some of these sessions were well led by form tutors with good question and answer sessions and discussion which increased pupils' knowledge and understanding. In other sessions heavy reliance was placed on the written booklet, which pupils read passively with little discussion or active engagement with the learning.

248. There is a strong contribution from PSHE, as seen in a Year 11 lesson which was an open forum in which pupils could question a police officer. They increased their understanding of a range of issues, including drugs, stop and search, arrest, corruption within the police force, violence and theft and police treatment of young offenders. Pupils' response was enthusiastic because of the mature way in which the discussion was run, allowing them to question, seek clarification and learn. Teaching and learning in this lesson was very good, and pupils' knowledge and understanding was in line with the average. Careers lessons and Skillpower also contribute to pupils' understanding of how to function effectively within the world of work and the wider economic system.

249. During the inspection teaching in citizenship was observed in Year 7. In one lesson, pupils were learning about the respective responsibilities of central and local government. Their knowledge was modest at the start of the lesson, and they made satisfactory progress in understanding the difference between the two. In another lesson pupils were working on understanding government, and the idea of making policy for the common good. A written task ensured that pupils presented ideas and expressed opinions. Overall in these lessons teaching and learning was satisfactory, and attainment in line with the average. Pupils made satisfactory progress against the citizenship objectives.

250. Assessment is based on a portfolio model with a good degree of pupil self-evaluation. Teacher assessment against the citizenship objectives needs to be further developed, and integrated within the portfolio work. A good range of resources has been developed including well-designed booklets to support form tutors in the delivery of citizenship modules.

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

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002. National comparisons for 2002 are not yet available.

***GCE AS level courses***

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	1	100		0		2	
Biology	1	100		0		2	
Chemistry	1	100		0		6	
Physics	2	50		0		2	
ICT	2	100		0		6	
Business studies	3	100		0		5	
Psychology	1	100		0		6	
English Language	4	100		25		5.5	

*These are "cached in" results*

### ***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	4	100		50		7.5	
Biology	3	33		0		1.3	
Chemistry	2	100		50		8	
Physics	4	75		25		6.4	
Psychology	3	66		0		2	
ICT	14	100		14		4.5	
Business studies	22	90		13.6		6.5	
Art and design	5	80		80		7.2	
Geography	11	100		18		5.3	
History	3	100		33		5.3	
English Language	3	100		0		4.7	
English Literature	2	100		100		9	
Media Studies	10	100		30		6.4	
French	5	100		80		8	

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

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business studies	10	100		60			
Art and design	9	77.7		44			
Leisure and tourism	7	72		28.5			

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

### **MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES**

252. The detailed inspection focus was on mathematics and physics. Lessons were also sampled in chemistry and biology. In biology results were well below average for the 2001 GCE Advanced level examinations but students generally did as expected considering their GCSE results. The results for 2002 were similar. In the one lesson seen the teaching and students' achievement were good. Students demonstrated excellent organisation and presentation of work in their files. The numbers of students who sat the 2001 chemistry GCE

Advanced level examination were too low to be compared with national data. However, they did well with several high grades being obtained. Students generally did as expected considering their GCSE results. The results for 2002 were similar. The teaching seen in the one lesson observed was good as was students' achievement. Students' files were well presented and contained several good examples of independent learning that included student based research and note taking.

## Mathematics

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

### Strengths

- Leadership and management are good
- Teaching is good in both year groups
- Teacher/student relationships are strong

### Areas for improvement

- Greater use of computers to support learning
- Continued improvement in standards

254. In 2001 GCE Advanced level results were well below average. In 2002 results were better with two of the four students gaining A grades and the others gaining a B or C grade. In 2002, 10 students followed the GCE AS level course and 9 have continued their study of mathematics to GCE Advanced level: only one pupil's grade was recorded at GCE AS level. However, had all the students' results been considered, standards would have been above the average. It is encouraging that a greater number of students are choosing to study the subject at this higher level.

255. The students' work in lessons and in their books shows that standards of attainment are average and achievement is good. They study pure mathematics, statistics, and mechanics simultaneously, each unit being taught by different teachers. There are two Year 12 classes. One class, studying mechanics, had already mastered using the equations of motion, their work revealing that their teacher had given them ample opportunity to practice. In discussion the students demonstrated understanding of Newton's Laws of motion and, following the teacher's clear explanation, were applying these competently to solve problems. They still need to do work on vectors and momentum but are on course to complete the mechanics unit in time for the examination. In pure mathematics, the work in their books shows that the students have revised and taken further their work on algebra, differentiation, integration and trigonometry and are currently working on the final topic of series.

256. The Year 12 class studying statistics were equally competent during a lesson on the use of scatter-graphs to calculate the rate of growth of wheat grown in various conditions. The marking of work in their books showed that their teacher had conscientiously ensured that the students had sufficiently understood and practised earlier work on descriptive statistics and probability. The statistics unit lends itself to the use of computers but there was little evidence of the application of ICT to the students' work in any mathematics unit. The students have currently completed little more than half of the statistics course as a result of them having half the time allocated to it. However it is planned that on completion of the pure mathematics unit, more time will be allocated to statistics.

257. In the single Year 13 class, two students worked independently on a special further mathematics programme, while the other students concluded their study of pure mathematics. They discussed with their teacher the approach to solving complex problems on volumes of revolution and integration. Some students had experienced difficulties, as

revealed by their homework, but their teacher's structured explanation enabled them to discover the errors they had made. Their dialogue illustrated their increasing familiarity with the language of mathematics and their higher level thinking skills.

258. The quality of teaching is good overall. The teachers are skilled in eliciting the students' logical thought processes, resulting in the students' good progress. The mature relationship between teachers and students is a motivating factor. The teachers are very knowledgeable and clearly enjoy sharing their love of mathematics with the students. Students are aware of their present standard of attainment and have set themselves target grades. The students were all in agreement that the standard of teaching was good, they were given help whenever they needed it and they enjoyed their lessons and their private study. Most students had found statistics the easier unit although some found it tedious. Pure mathematics was most enjoyable because it was more challenging.

259. The leadership and management of the subject is good and the three teachers work well together to plan the best possible programmes of study for the students. Some of the current Year 12 students had planned to study mathematics only to AS level but more than half will continue to GCE Advanced level. All the Year 13 Advanced level students are expected to gain university places and about a half will study mathematics or engineering. The number of students studying GCE Advanced level this year is twice that of last year and next year the number will be even greater. This reflects the increasing popularity of the subject, which is the result of focused subject development planning. To develop the subject further, teachers should plan increased use of computers to enrich learning and to give students the opportunity to apply their ICT skills to mathematics.

## Physics

260. Overall, the quality of provision in physics is **good**

### Strengths

- The subject is well led and managed
- The teaching is good
- The relationships between the teacher and the students is good
- Students achieve well in lessons

### Areas for improvement

- Students achievement in written examinations
- The exploitation of opportunities for developing students' independent learning

261. Only one student took the 2001 GCE Advanced level physics examination and therefore comparison with national data is unreliable. However a high grade was obtained and achievement was as expected, given the prior examination performance for the GCSE. In 2002 students achieved the GCE Advanced level grades that were predicted from their GCSE examination performance. Students generally do not choose to convert their module scores into GCE AS level certification at the end of Year 12.

262. The standard of work seen overall is average. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. In Year 13 the work seen in files and lessons is slightly above average but last year's modular results indicate that Year 13 students have not been achieving the levels expected of them based upon prior GCSE performance. Their written examination work does not always match the levels achieved in class. Students can carry out calculation work effectively in the topics of circular motion, nuclear reactions and can determine acceleration by graphical methods. However, they experience difficulty with complex specific heat

capacity questions and some have incomplete work on simple harmonic motion. Students in Year 12 are achieving better. They learn well in lessons and are reaching the levels expected of them based upon their prior attainment in the GCSE examinations. In both Year 12 and 13 files are well organised and contain good coverage of the specification. There is some evidence of independent learning in the form of student note-taking, internet research and some self-assessment.

263. Physics students both in Year 12 and 13 are very positive about their chosen subject. The majority chose the subject initially for career reasons. They find the subject challenging and they enjoy finding out explanations for the way things work on Earth and in space. They are encouraged by the high level of support they receive from their teacher and know that this is available outside normal lesson time. In return they spend a reasonable time on private study. They work well in class particularly with experimental work and they are well focused and obtain meaningful experimental results. Their commitment to the subject is reflected in the positive contributions to discussion in lessons and in the high levels of presentation of their written work. They know what grade they are expected to achieve in the final examination and whether or not their current performance is matching this.

264. The teaching overall is good and students learn well as a result. In three quarters of the lessons seen the teaching was good or better and in half of the lessons seen the teaching was very good. Where teaching was good or better, lessons were well-planned and clear objectives identified. Explanations were clear and principles were well demonstrated practically. Very good teacher student relationships were a strong feature and subject knowledge was very good. Lessons are well structured and are taught at a good pace. Students took some responsibility for their own learning and worked well.

265. The very good teaching included the above features but also featured a stronger focus on independent learning. For example in a Year 12 lesson on particle physics and particle accelerators, the teacher arranged for students to deliver their own presentations in pairs. Topics had been researched, planned and resourced well beforehand by the students. As a result the students demonstrated high levels of knowledge and understanding of nuclear particles and particle accelerators and were confident and clear in their presentations. The teacher evaluated students' knowledge and understanding of the topic by asking appropriate and challenging questions of the presenters. For the majority of students English is an additional language but this had no detrimental effect on their skills of oral communication. In a less successful lesson independent learning skills were not so well emphasised and the learning of students was less effective.

266. Students' assignment work is generally marked to a satisfactory standard but students' practice examination question answers are not scrutinised as well as they could be, especially in terms of the linguistic demands sometimes posed by the complexity of the question. Several of the GCE Advanced and AS level practice questions are unfinished.

267. Students enjoy physics, find the subject challenging and are supported well by their teacher. The subject has increased in popularity in recent years and the latest Year 12 group has increased in size significantly with both male and females being well represented. Once students embark on either the GCE AS level or the GCE Advanced level course most of them complete it.

268. The subject is well led and managed and there is a commitment to build on what has already been achieved to improve standards. This commitment is translated into practice, not only during lessons but also in the extra time spent in supporting students during half term and full term breaks. The subject is well resourced both with practical materials for experimental physics and with appropriate texts and practice examination materials.

## ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

269. There was no inspection focus or sampling of lessons, as the school does not make any provision in this area.

## BUSINESS

270. The inspection focus of this area was on the GCE AS and Advanced level and AVCE business studies courses.

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

### Strengths

- Standards are improving, as staffing is now stable.
- Good teaching and learning results in good achievement.
- Very good relationships between students and teachers result in productive learning.
- Overall leadership is very good and teaching resources are excellent.

### Areas for improvement

- Enhancing the curriculum with integrated links with local business and industry.
- The establishment of a business studies specialist area within the school.
- Developing more variety in teaching and learning methods in lessons.

272. In 2001, the last year with comparative data, there were no courses in business studies. In 2002, of fourteen students on the GCE Advanced level course twelve passed with about a third achieving the higher A and B grades. Nineteen students studied and completed the GCE AS level course in 2002 but only the three students, who took the subject in Year 13, recorded their grades. Results in 2002 on both the GCE AS and Advanced level courses were below expectation due mainly to serious staffing problems, with many units of the course taught by a series of supply teachers. Eight students took the double award AVCE (Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education) course: all passed but the retention rate was well below that nationally. The retention rate on the GCE AS and Advanced level courses was above the national average.

273. Standards on courses in Year 13 are broadly in line with the national average with a few students working above this. Standards are relatively higher in Year 12 where students' continuity and progression has not been hindered by staffing problems as was the case with Year 13 students last year. Achievement in relation to previous learning is good. Students' work develops well over Year 12 and shows good knowledge and understanding of business theory but case studies, although frequently used, are not integrated sufficiently into the application of theory. Case studies are mainly used as exemplars rather than as a means of drawing on theory as an explanation of identified criteria. With the more advanced work in Year 13 most students progress steadily but the understanding of theoretical concepts by some is less secure. Work covered is usually detailed and thorough but at times not sufficiently refined by students to gain greatest value. Course units would benefit from a summary review at the end of each unit. Critical analysis is being progressively and well developed throughout Years 12 and 13 but only higher attaining students make use of reading outside the course. Students' work on the AVCE course shows good planning and sound judgments but few make links between topics studied. These students work with confidence on their own, collect data, and form well considered judgements drawing on a range of sources including the internet. The key skills of communication and application of number on all courses is at least satisfactory. ICT skills are good with some very good standards evident

in some of the course work.

274. Students have good attitudes, are attentive in class and concentrate well on tasks set. Some students with limited background in the subject persevere well to understand quite challenging concepts at the beginning of the Year 12 course. Relationships between students and teachers are positive and this underlies the commitment of students to their work. At times, students do however, rely too heavily on their teachers and do not take sufficient responsibility for their own work. However, independent based learning is a strong feature of the AVCE course. Some students find deadlines difficult to meet punctually. Students expressed a very high level of satisfaction with their courses, found them interesting and appreciated the commitment given by their tutors.

275. Overall the quality of teaching is good with some very good teaching in Year 13. In lessons, the teachers' good subject knowledge underpins presentation and discussion and lends clarity to the explanations provided. Work is very well planned so that students of different attainment levels, and with English as an additional language, make good progress in lessons. However, lessons would benefit from a greater variety of activities involving students more in their own learning in the GCE AS and Advanced level courses. Teachers have realistic expectations and students work productively and at good pace. Students do well on the AVCE course as they receive a good framework for learning and helpful support and advice when undertaking independent work. In some lessons there is very effective assessment by detailed questioning of individual students to check the understanding of work undertaken at home and in class. Best project work is of a high standard with almost all students achieving levels of work at or above the attainment level expected of them.

276. The overall leadership of the faculty is very good and management of the course good. Over the last year there have been numerous improvements in the provision and experience of students on the course. There is need to enrich the curriculum further with more links with local business and the inclusion of an element of work related learning. The faculty has already started to do this and arranged with the support of the Education-Business Link London West a very useful and successful two-day conference on business awareness that was held during the week of the inspection. Staffing is stable and the problems of lack of continuity and progression have been addressed. Resources generally are very good with ample opportunities available for students to use ICT on the course to support independent study. The power point presentation facilities are excellent and greatly enhanced teaching and learning. Accommodation is widely dispersed and this makes professional dialogue difficult. There is need to rationalise resources to form a suite of rooms for the business department as the present arrangements are unsatisfactory.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching which enables all students to make significant gains in knowledge, skills, and understanding
- The very positive attitudes of students to their courses which produces good depth of analysis and discussion
- The availability of high quality hardware and software resources to support teaching and learning

### Areas for improvement

- The continued raising of standards of attainment

278. In 2002 GCE Advanced level ICT results for the 14 candidates entered were below the 2001 national average: there is currently no comparator available for 2002. Results, however, have shown steady improvement over the past 3 years. In 2002 all gained a pass grade with just under one-fifth of students attaining A or B grades, whereas in 2000 the pass rate was a little lower, one-twelfth of students attaining the higher grades. The retention rate is high.

279. Discussion with students, and observation of their work in lessons and their folders, shows that achievement is good. Students start the course from Year 11 with limited previous experience, having had no taught course in this subject at GCSE within the school. They make very effective use of ICT applications to independently research and present information. In one Year 13 GCE Advanced level lesson, for example, students made confident use of the internet to find information on the legal implications of software misuse which they were able to use to extend the depth of subsequent class discussion well beyond that available in their text book. In a Year 12 lesson covering the characteristics of applications software, students demonstrated a very good level of knowledge of the features of spreadsheets, databases, and web browsers. They communicated this to a high standard using presentation software, elaborating succinctly on important points.

280. Students in ICT show a strong interest and enthusiasm for the subject. They have mature attitudes towards study and are very keen to work to a high standard. In both year groups the majority of students are able to contribute confidently and effectively in class discussion and in presenting knowledge and arguments to their peers.

281. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Within the GCE course, all teaching observed was either good or very good. Teachers have enthusiasm, very good subject knowledge and up-to-date insight into the business world. Lessons are very well planned and managed. Skilful questioning is employed to challenge students of all abilities to think in depth about issues, and explanation is clear and precise. Students demonstrate high levels of concentration and effort in lessons, and they work at a good pace. They are well organised in their approach to the subject, take care in their studies, and are developing in their capacity to work independently. As a result they make significant gains in their development of knowledge, skills and understanding.

282. Leadership and management are good. Since the new head of department took up post, courses, schemes of work, assessment procedures and teaching resources have all been improved. Assessment procedures are well developed: students know the standards they are achieving and what they need to do to improve. High quality hardware and software resources are made available to students over the school network.

283. In addition to providing GCE AS and Advanced level courses the school is a CISCO Regional Academy working in partnership with a multinational computer company to deliver a CCNA (Cisco Certified Network Associates) course. There are at present 15 students in three groups following either a one year or two year course to gain this industry qualification. Current retention rates vary between courses, being lower in the second year of the two-year course as students either find employment or decide to concentrate upon their academic studies having achieved a basic technical grounding. On the CISCO course standards and achievement are good. Students in Year 12 were observed working independently using self-study materials provided over the school network. They work with confidence and find this method of study motivating. Assessment results demonstrate that they gain a very good understanding of the technical concepts involved.

284. There were no sixth form ICT results to report at the time of the previous inspection. There is still some way to go before standards match national averages but the courses are becoming firmly established and standards are rising on a consistent basis. The introduction

and development of GCE Advanced level and CISCO courses represents very successful improvement since the previous inspection.

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

285. The inspection focus in this area was on leisure and tourism. Both the foundation and intermediate GNVQ courses in leisure and tourism were inspected.

286. Overall, the quality in provision for leisure and tourism is **good**.

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good
- Well-motivated and enthusiastic students

### Areas for improvement

- Make use of a wider range of tourist facilities
- Providing progression from Year 11 into the post-16 course

287. A small number of students began the intermediate GNVQ course in September 2001. Two of the students failed to complete the course, and all the other candidates gained either merit or pass grade awards. There was no entry in July 2002

288. A group of students began the intermediate course in September 2002, and at the same time a small number students began the foundation stage course. At the time of the inspection the course had been running for just over half a year. Most of the students possess low grade GCSEs gained in July 2002. From this base achievement is good. Students are enthusiastic about the course, and readily join in class discussions, with most of them able to make informed and perceptive comment regarding the tourist industry. They are beginning to develop research skills, and the higher attaining students are able to demonstrate critical analysis of information. Students are able to articulate their views with clarity and conviction, but their written work is often spoilt by weaknesses in spelling, presentation and grammar. Inspection evidence indicates that all students taking the two courses are in line to gain either merit or pass grades which suggests that good progress is being made. Only a very small number of students have dropped out of the course, and those who have remained have attended very regularly.

289. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The course teachers are enthusiastic about their subject and have created a positive environment for students in which they can feel comfortable and which supports learning. Lessons are well planned and make good use of variety of activities including question and answer sessions, group work and role-play. This is supportive of students who have English as an additional language. The teachers are constantly challenging the understanding of the students. In oral work they draw answers out through careful questioning. Students benefit greatly from the support they get from their teachers both in and outside lessons. Visits to local leisure and tourist locations including visits to local restaurants, cinemas, leisure centres make important contributions to the students' learning. There is now a need to extend the students' experience of the leisure and tourist industry beyond the immediate locality. The teachers plan and sequence their lessons well, with many having a practical focus that enables students sustain interest and motivation. Students are treated with a high degree of sensitivity resulting in them reaching levels of attainment that are commendable, given their prior attainment.

290. The leadership and management are good. The documentation, including schemes of work, is comprehensive, up-to-date and supports the planning of teaching and learning. Good records of students' attainment and achievement are kept, and students are aware of the

level at which they are working and what they need to do to make improvements. The accommodation for the subject is good and there is good access to computer equipment which students use very competently. There is no progression in learning from Years 10 and 11 into this post-16 GNVQ course.

291. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. The number of students taking the course has increased, and the level of pass grades that students have obtained in the examination has improved.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

292. There was no inspection focus or sampling of lessons, as the school does not make any provision in this area.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

293. The detailed focus of the inspection was on media studies within the GCE AS and Advanced level courses. Work in art and design and drama were also sampled. In art and design the sample included GCE AS level and GNVQ Intermediate (textiles). In 2001 GCE results in art and design were well above national averages, with students gaining A and B grades, while GNVQ results were also very good, although in both cases numbers were small. Retention rates are good. In the lessons seen teaching and learning were always good, and sometimes excellent. Achievement is very good: students mature rapidly and demonstrate high order research skills and knowledge of artists' work that has a significant impact on the high quality of their final pieces.

294. Lessons in drama were also sampled. Levels of attainment are above average. Good teaching and learning enable students to achieve very well. Leadership and management are good

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

### Strengths

- Standards of work are close to or above the national average and improving.
- Students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
- The quality of teaching is good with good integration of theory and practice.
- Relationships are very good and students very well motivated.

### Areas for improvement

- Resources are unsatisfactory and there is a serious shortfall in provision.
- Specialist accommodation needs improving.
- Sustained focus on lesson aims throughout lessons and emphasis on re-enforcement of learning.

296. The GCE AS and Advanced level courses were inspected. Recent GCE Advanced level results show the trend of improvement to be much greater than that nationally. A similar significant rise is evident in the proportion of students that achieve the higher A and B grades. In the past, the subject was significantly more popular with girls than boys but the reverse is now the case in both Year 12 and Year 13. The subject is popular and teaching groups are large. In Year 12 there are 27 students taking the subject, which is too large for a practical subject. Retention rates are high on both courses. Most students enter the course with below average grades at GCSE but over Years 12 and 13 achieve standards of work that are above that expected given their earlier attainment. There is no significant variation in standards by

gender or ethnic groupings and those students that have English as an additional language progress as well as others.

297. Standards of work in Year 13 are close to the national average. Standards of work seen in Year 12 are somewhat higher. Analysis of work and lesson observations show good and consistent achievement by most students over Years 12 and 13. By the end of Year 13, higher attaining students, including those that are gifted and talented, demonstrate a very good understanding of the relationship between media theory and practice. It informs planning and research in Year 13 units in advanced production and critical research study. These students undertake detailed research and develop a wide-ranging knowledge of media products and institutions. Production work shows a good grasp of critical theory. Average attaining students recognise that planning and research are important processes in media productions. They show a clear understanding of genre in their work. The practical skills of lower attaining students are often more advanced than their written and analytical skills. They make good contributions to collaborative work and most work hard on tasks.

298. Written course work on the GCE AS and Advanced level courses is generally of good quality and well presented. Students show good communication and ICT skills but application of number is underdeveloped. The best project work is of very high quality and reflects the needs and tastes of target audiences. While the level of evaluation varies within courses it shows progression over time. Critical analysis is generally well developed in Year 13 but synthesis needs developing further.

299. Students have a very good attitude to their learning and many show real interest and enjoyment in their work. They are very well motivated and contribute well to paired and group discussion. Relationships are relaxed and provide a basis for positive learning. Students find the course very interesting and stimulating. They speak highly of the support they receive but feel that they could benefit from a strengthening of the existing study skill induction course at the beginning of Year 12.

300. Teaching overall is good. Lessons are usually well planned and presentation is structured and focused so that students clearly understand what they are doing. Learning is consequently good with students fully involved. Strengths of the teaching are the teachers' very secure subject knowledge and lessons that aim to develop students' self-knowledge through discussion and group work. Relationships between teachers and students are excellent with a suitable blend of good humour and academic rigour. There are very skilful and effective interventions by the teacher to extend students' knowledge and understanding of the topic taught. Expectations are high and work appropriately demanding. At times the teacher allows discussion to depart from the main focus of the lesson and this hinders continuity and progression. On occasions opportunities are missed to re-enforce, visually on the board the main points of discussion, to ensure whole class learning is consolidated. Emphasis in lessons is suitably placed on independent learning aided with helpful teacher guidance and support.

301. The head of subject, who is an enthusiastic and very dedicated teacher on the graduate training programme, is new to the post. Courses are soundly managed and priorities established will further improve the provision to students. Curriculum planning is thorough and imaginative and covers a broad range of teaching approaches. It ensures that students gain experience of an appropriate if restricted range of media. Accommodation needs improving with the setting up of a fully equipped specialist media room and a larger editing suite. Resources are unsatisfactory. There is a serious shortfall in provision of up-to-date specialist equipment. The minimum additional requirements, to meet current student needs, are two digital camcorders, three editing computers with DVD burner, two digital still cameras, two DVD players, a digital scanner for photographic work and blackout facilities.

The lack of appropriate resources has a negative effect on standards. There is no media studies journal available to students to extend their general reading and interest.

## HUMANITIES

302. The detailed focus of the inspection was on psychology. However work was also sampled in geography and history. Standards in GCE Advanced level in geography were above average in 2001, although results were less good in 2002. However, work seen during the inspection shows that standards are above that achieved in 2001. Teaching is very good and promotes the very good levels of achievement that students reach in their work. Retention rates are very high. In history standards at GCE Advanced level are above average and work seen during the inspection shows that current students' achievement is good. The quality of teaching is very good and retention rates are high.

303. Overall, the quality of provision in psychology is **good**.

### Strengths

- Outstanding relationships between students and with teachers
- The very good attitudes students have to the subject
- The good levels of achievement students reach in their work
- Good teaching and learning, supported by very good subject knowledge
- Very good leadership and management

### Areas for development

- The further involvement of Year 13 students in their learning
- The provision made to support students' learning through the library
- The accommodation within which the subject is taught

304. This is an increasingly popular subject for students in both Year 12 and 13 and retention rates are high. Standards at the end of the GCE Advanced level course were above the national course average in 2001, although in 2002 results were not quite as high. The current students in both Year 12 and 13 are reaching standards in their end of module assessments that are well above their target minimum grades, with some reaching the highest A-B grades.

305. Standards in students' work show that they are operating above the level of the external examination results that were gained at the end of 2001. The difference is accounted for by good teaching, the systematic approach to learning adopted in both Years 12 and 13 and the very good subject knowledge of the teacher. On entry to Year 12, students quickly make significant gains in knowledge and understanding and effectively grasp the significant conceptual differences and applications adopted within the theoretical perspectives identified in the GCE AS level examination specification. In Year 13, because of a disrupted beginning to their course, current learning involves revisiting areas of the syllabus that have not been covered in sufficient depth. Students quickly gain a clear understanding of the approaches to humanistic and behavioural psychology in their study of the contrasting work of Freud and Rogers. The rapid progress made in both knowledge and understanding indicates good achievement.

306. Standards of key skills are generally above average. Students write well for a range of purposes and audience. They can apply number with increasing skill, analyse and interpret data intelligently and understand the use of tests of validity. Most students use ICT confidently for research, data logging and analysis and to produce assignment and coursework of good quality.

307. Students have a high commitment to, and interest in, the subject, good organisational skills and a mature approach to learning. They work well in small groups, provide each other with both challenge and support and enjoy highly productive relationships with each other and their teacher. All have a sense of curiosity, ask and answer questions, sometimes with great confidence, but also work intelligently on their own. Year 12 respond positively to the teacher's monitoring of their note making: Year 13 would value a similar experience.

308. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching quality is never less than satisfactory but is consistently good in Year 12. Good teaching is characterised by good planning that contains challenge and is underpinned by very good subject knowledge and high expectations of students. On most occasions students are encouraged to be active partners in the learning process. However, in Year 13, because of the need to revise areas of the specification content, significant time was spent in teacher exposition with few opportunities for students to take responsibility for their learning. On such occasions, while progress was made, it was at a slower rate than in other lessons. Tasks enable all students to formulate and share their ideas, explore both theory and practice and consolidate knowledge and understanding. For instance, in a Year 12 lesson small groups produced mind-maps comparing behaviourist and humanistic perspectives. These were shared with others who added to and clarified the contributions of the authorship group. Such an approach helped all students to define areas for further improvement, or gaps in their knowledge and understanding. The identification of key words and concepts on the whiteboard provide many students with a useful structure for the review of the learning and the preparation of good and accurate notes. Homework is purposeful and tasks are well conceived. When marking is detailed it provides clear evaluative comment and guidance on areas for improvement. Most of the work is well formulated and Year 12 students are quickly developing the use of higher order writing skills.

309. The area is very well led and managed. The subject is well resourced but currently lacks suitable teaching accommodation - and an identity within the school - where students can have access to reference and other materials and ICT. Students' research for assignments and coursework is not well supported by the current library stock. Good systems are used to consistently monitor and track students' attainment and progress: the outcomes are regularly reviewed with each pupil against their target minimum grade. There are good systems in place for the monitoring and tracking of students' attainment and progress against target minimum grades. This important process provides significant support for students' confidence and in reassuring them about how well they are doing. This subject was not in the curriculum at the time of the last inspection.

## **ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION**

310. The detailed inspection focus was on English and French.

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

### **Strengths**

- Teaching that is often good enables students to learn well
- GCE Advanced level results have improved over the last three years
- Students have very positive attitudes and enjoy their study of literature

### **Areas for improvement**

- Students do not always make expected gains in attainment by the end of Year 13
- Lower-attaining students are not always well supported in lessons

312. GCE Advanced level English literature results have been well below national averages in recent years. However, results have improved over the last three years. In 2002 only two students took the examination but they achieved well above 2001 average grades.

313. Work seen during the inspection is below average. When talking in pairs or small groups students show that they are effective communicators. However in whole class discussion a few students tend to do most of the speaking. In a Year 12 lesson on the poetry of Wordsworth most students lacked sufficient confidence in their reading of texts to contribute to class debate. Lower attaining students remain largely uninvolved in class discussions and struggle with demanding texts. In their notes students show good grasp of literary terms. Their knowledge of the books they study is generally sound and they have some understanding of the literary background. Their own language skills, however, are often below average, which affects the quality of their essays. Higher attaining students write fewer essays than is usual. When work on texts is fragmentary, students may not appreciate the full qualities of the poet's work. Work on James Joyce's *The Dubliners* is more personal and considered, though lower-attaining students appear to rely heavily on their teachers' notes.

314. Set against their below average levels of attainment on entry to the sixth form students' achievement is satisfactory in English literature. However, school data indicate that students do not always achieve examination results in Year 13 that are as high as expected.

315. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have sound knowledge of their subject and as a result students have confidence in their teaching. Relationships between teachers and students are friendly so that good learning takes place in a cordial and positive atmosphere. In a Year 13 lesson on the poetry of Emily Dickenson students made good progress because the teacher ensured that they were all fully involved in the reading and interpretation of the poem. Working in small groups they answered questions posed by the teacher that helped them to unravel the complexities of meaning. When they fed back to the class her gentle interventions and probing enabled them to deepen their understanding. Teachers mark work conscientiously and provide very good supporting materials to extend students' learning. They ensure that students are fully aware of course requirements and can plan ahead effectively.

316. After a year in which numbers fell substantially English literature is now a popular choice amongst students. Students are very positive about the course. They appreciate the good advance information they received in Year 11. They feel that they are kept well informed about their progress through detailed marking and one to one sessions with their teachers. Few students drop out of the course before completion.

317. The leadership and management of sixth form English are satisfactory. Thoughtful planning of the course ensures that students are well prepared for the examination. Satisfactory improvement has taken place since the previous inspection.

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

**Strengths**

- The extensive use of the target language for teaching and classroom activities, supported by a wide range of authentic resource material to facilitate comprehension.
- Improvement in students' spoken French and comprehension through the strategic use of foreign language assistants
- The clear expectations of pupils and strategies for teaching that maximise learning opportunities

**Areas for improvement**

- Further practice in extended writing and earlier preparation of the oral modules to familiarise students with exam requirements
- Improvement in verb accuracy and testing on points of grammar to improve achievement
- Standardisation of marking with close reference to syllabus guidelines and objectives to provide good indications of progress to students

319. During the last few years few students have chosen to follow the GCE Advanced level course. Results have varied but in general, they have been below the national average for those gaining grades A to E and, with the exception of 2002, the higher A-B grades. The average points score has also been below national averages. This pattern of results may have been partially influenced by changes and uncertainty in staffing recently but also by the fact that students may begin the course with a C grade at GCSE. Work on value added to each pupil's level of achievement is in progress.

320. The evidence from work seen in lessons and in student files during the inspection shows that standards are variable at both GCE AS and Advanced level. The most capable students in Year 13 are producing work of good quality and depth, consistently seeking vocabulary and ways to expand expression. They are covering the range of topics required by the subject specification, for example, from cloning to youth problems. Teachers are providing authentic resource material in the target language at an appropriate level of challenge to enhance work on the components of the specification. Standards in French in Year 13 are improving. Students speak French confidently and converse readily with their teachers and the foreign language assistant in the target language. They readily convey views and opinions. They understand what is said to them and can read for gist and detail. However, expression is occasionally limited by inaccuracy in grammar. Although students have excellent self-study materials at their disposal, insecure recall of grammar and vocabulary has arisen from a lack of formalised testing.

321. Attainment in Year 12, where students have had one teacher new to GCE AS level since January of this year, is below average. Year 12 students have opinions and contribute in class, some very well, but others are reticent and struggle with the delivery of verbs in correct forms and tenses. The teachers work at a good pace and again use a wide range of authentic resources; they seek to extend students understanding by probing for reasons and opinions and linking areas of work but homework is sometimes insufficient to maintain output, as when students are asked to write one sentence to sum up each section of a text. The subjunctive has not yet been covered nor have oral module topics been finalised. In work folders, it is not clear whether students have corrected previous mistakes to avoid repeating them in future; the December assessment highlighted these weaknesses in grammar. There is evidence that tardiness in making correct and speedy responses may hinder attainment at GCE AS and Advanced level under examination conditions. Some students have never been to France to experience the culture at first-hand that would add to their understanding of French thinking and attitudes.

322. Overall, the quality of teaching is good: some of it is very good. This has ensured that satisfactory achievement has been maintained despite staffing difficulties. Where teaching is very good, for example, in a Year 13 lesson that looked at attitudes to driving and causes of accidents, the lesson is conducted at a very good pace and results in pupil achievement over a range of linked activities. Careful planning has gone into the assembling of resources for these lessons and constant use of the target language by teachers and students encourages students to aim for high production rates. All lessons begin with a review of previous work and finish with a summary of what has been accomplished. Students are encouraged to think laterally. In one lesson, students were working on alternate ways of saying what was printed in the text. This encouraged attainment of a good range of synonyms for the topic vocabulary under discussion.

323. Students of French are mature and attentive. They respond to the belief the teacher has in them, citing this as one of the reasons for choosing to study French beyond GCSE. They are interested in the subject, many hoping to carry on with it at university and express an interest in visiting France to extend their understanding. Teachers have helped them to develop good skills and confidence in handling extended passages of listening and reading. Students make good use of their private study time to access the extensive range of self-study materials in grammar and on topics but they are not consistently following this up with work on reinforcement through learning what they have accessed so that they sometimes have only limited and short term recall. Higher attaining students in Year 13 have an outstanding grammar file with thorough notes and good knowledge of the points covered but this is at present the exception rather than the rule.

324. Leadership and management are good. Teachers, who are either native speakers or highly skilled specialists, work well together. A clear focus of their work has been on resources and comprehensive delivery of topic areas: this has meant that students are acquiring good subject knowledge. Resources are up-to-date and closely related to the interests and approaches of the age group with which they are used. Further time spent in France and, if possible, in a family setting would add to confidence in speaking and give an understanding of how French young people feel about issues in their own country.

325. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. There is an excellent resources base and students are able to easily access their teachers for additional help. Teaching has a clear focus and tries to maximise opportunities in the target language.