

INSPECTION REPORT

THE RAVENSBOURNE SCHOOL

Bromley, Kent

LEA area: Bromley

Unique reference number: 101679

Headteacher: Mr. Paul Murphy

Reporting inspector: Roger Edwardson
1546

Dates of Inspection: 3rd - 7th February 2003

Inspection number: 249723

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school: | Secondary |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 11 to 18 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Unit address: | Ravensbourne School Hayes Lane Bromley Kent |
| Postcode: | BR2 9EH |
| Telephone number: | 0208 4600083 |
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| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of responsible officer | Mrs A Clements |
| Date of previous inspection: | May 1997 |

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|--------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 1546 | Roger Edwardson | Registered inspector | IT | What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further? |
| 8941 | John Fletcher | Lay inspector | | Pupils attitudes, values, and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 1174 | David Clegg | Team inspector | Modern languages | How well is the school led and managed? |
| 24062 | Dot Anderson-Cryer | Team inspector | PE | |
| 10894 | Paul Reynolds | Team inspector | Design & Technology | |
| 23329 | Steven Halsey | Team inspector | Music | |
| 11183 | Gerald Forster | Team inspector | RE | The curriculum |
| 4432 | Alan Heinzman | Team inspector | History | |
| 23578 | Joy Edwards | Team inspector | Mathematics | |
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| 20247 | Roger Parry | Team inspector | Geography | |
| 23544 | Gair Hedley | Team inspector | Art | |
| 21940 | Tim Warin | Team inspector | SEN | |
| 32108 | Gordon Douglas | Team inspector | English | |
| 4451 | Roger Howarth | Team inspector | Citizenship | |
| 18888 | Jan Boulton | Team inspector | Health/Social Care | 6th Form co-ordinator |
| 7661 | Sue Chamberlain | Team inspector | Mathematics | |
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Ravensbourne School is a mixed comprehensive for 1280 students aged 11 to 18 years. There are 197 students in the sixth form. Currently 20% of students are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average (16.1%). The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is 2.2%, which is a bit higher than usual, and the number of pupils who have special educational needs, including statements is broadly in line with national averages. However the number with a statement is well above average at 6.7% compared with 2.4 nationally. The LEA makes provision for students with specific learning difficulties at the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The Ravensbourne School is an effective school that has improved considerably since the last inspection. Students make good progress throughout the school. Teaching and learning are good and with the sustained commitment from the new management team examination results should improve considerably. The overall management of the school is good with very good leadership of the headteacher being a strength of the school. The school now has a clear sense of purpose and a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses with a very good capacity to improve. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching and learning.
- Leadership by the headteacher.
- The attitudes and behaviour of students are very good because of the very positive relationships throughout the school.
- The school is very inclusive and provides well for students with special educational needs (SEN).
- The quality and range of extra curricular activities and out of hours learning
- The Specific Learning Difficulties provision (SpeLD) is very effective both for its students and in promoting inclusive practice throughout the school

What could be improved

- Standards in the majority of subjects and at Post-16
- Improve student attendance and punctuality to lessons.
- The use of assessment to inform curricular planning
- The breadth and balance of the curriculum including the personal development of pupils ensuring opportunity for spiritual development
- The use of ICT to enhance learning

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1997. Improvement since then is good. Standards have risen and students are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. Nevertheless, examination results are still not good enough, especially in the sixth form. Attendance has improved and the number of exclusions has significantly reduced since September 2002. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, although opportunities for independent learning are not yet fully in place especially for gifted and talented students. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and pupils' progress is

becoming well embedded across departments. The curriculum remains unsatisfactory in a number of respects, not least in terms of the national curriculum requirements for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the legal requirement to make provision for the teaching of RE in the sixth form. The LEA provision for pupils with specific learning difficulties (SpELD) continues to be very effective for pupils with SEN and the school has now increased its own provision in line with the requirements of the previous inspection. Ravensbourne is an improving school, which is now returning positive performance data when compared with similar schools, and has considerably closed the gap between the school and national averages in 2002. Under the leadership of the new headteacher there is a willingness to embrace and initiate change.

The capacity of the school to improve is very good.

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 | C | B |
| A-levels/AS-levels | E | E | E | |

| Key | |
|--------------------|---|
| well above average | A |
| above average | B |
| average | C |
| Below average | D |
| well below average | E |

National test results and achievements of Year 9 students

Standards of attainment on entry to the school are generally in line with the national averages overall. In the core subjects, unusually against the national trend, boys achieve higher results than girls and this is reflected by the end of Key Stage 3 but to a lesser extent.

Key Stage 3 standards in 2002 were in line with the national average overall. Attainment in Science was above the national average. Over the past four years, standards have been rising in Years 7, 8 and 9. In relation to their prior attainment on entry to the school, students achieve well in English and mathematics and very well in science. There has been a significant improvement in performance over the last few years well ahead of the national trend.

GCSE results and achievements of Year 11 students

In GCSE examinations in 2002, the proportion of students gaining five or more higher grades is generally in line with the national average. The number gaining five or more grades A*-G range was well below average. Too many pupils left the school without any GCSE qualifications. The results were close to the average for similar schools.

The school performed particularly well in 2002 at GCSE with a 4% improvement in pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades over the 2001 results. In English, business studies, drama and French the percentage of students reaching higher grades was above the national average. In combined science, design and technology, geography and history it was below average. However, there are good signs that the overall progress of students is beginning to accelerate.

Standards of literacy are in line with national averages, the school having adopted a variety of relevant initiatives, including the National Literacy Strategy in Key Stage 3. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory overall. Students benefit from entering school with better-developed skills and confidence in handling problems with number. The school is rightly placing increased emphasis on continued development of numeracy skills, particularly in Key Stage 3.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good. Students are enthusiastic about their studies and keenly participate in a wide range of extra curricular activities. They enjoy school. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good in lessons students behave and maintain concentration well. Around the school students behave in an orderly manner. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. A real strength of the school and ensure that all pupils feel able to seek support if difficulties arise. Students make the most of opportunities to develop their personal and social skills and some are starting to take control of their own learning. |
| Attendance | Satisfactory. Attendance has improved since September and is now close to the national average. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Inspectors make judgments 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 both teaching and learning is good. It was good or better in well over half of the 235 lessons seen. Teaching and learning were unsatisfactory in three lessons and poor on one occasion. No teaching was unsatisfactory after the age of 14. A striking feature of the good provision is the proportion of very good and in some cases excellent teaching, which was spread across several subjects and all years.

In the lessons seen, approximately one fifth of the teaching was very good, a big improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is good in English, Mathematics and Science at Key Stages 3 and 4. The teaching of literacy and numeracy throughout the school is satisfactory.

There has thus been good improvement in the proportion of very good teaching since the last inspection. In such teaching, expectations are invariably high. The students are regularly challenged to think for themselves, to study in greater depth and make links between aspects of their learning, for example in mathematics and science. Consequently, they start to become effective learners. They also make very good progress because the pace is brisk, the challenge high, the enthusiasm infectious and a good range of different activities sustains interest and provides motivation. These were features of the very good teaching in modern foreign languages, art and geography. The challenging priority facing the school as it seeks to improve still further is to increase the proportion of very good teaching and learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Unsatisfactory - ICT provision does not meet the statutory requirements and RE is insufficient in the sixth form. The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good. The curriculum is currently subject to significant change. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good- The school offers an inclusive education, including good teaching that is well matched to students' needs. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Good |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Satisfactory overall, provision for spiritual and moral development is satisfactory and that for their social and cultural development good. Provision for pupils' personal development is good. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Pastoral care is good. Students feel secure, valued and confident. Procedures for monitoring student progress are improving. Assessment practice does not yet fully inform curricular planning. |

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Good - The headteacher's contribution is very good, and a remodelled senior team is providing good support. Subject and Year leadership are already starting to improve and in some areas are good. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Satisfactory - Governors have been very supportive of and committed to the school over time. They are becoming much more effective as their role and their knowledge of the school develop. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Good - Systems have improved, and there is much more coherence to this. Already this is being linked to practical plans for improvement. |
| The strategic use of resources | Satisfactory - Very efficient financial management has not been linked to educational planning. Teaching staff are well qualified and well deployed. The school gives good value for money, accommodation is satisfactory. |

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children generally make good progress• Teaching is good and teachers are supportive of pupils• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems• The school has high expectations of students to achieve their best• The school helps students to become mature and responsible | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some parents would like more information about their children are getting on at school• Some parents feel that their children do not get the right amount of work to do at home. |

144 questionnaires were returned. The majority of parents responded positively to most aspects of the work of the school. The meeting for parents presented a very positive picture of the school. The inspectors strongly agree with the parents' positive comments.

The information provided by the school to tell parents how their children are getting on has improved recently and is now good. However, it is the inspectors' view that homework is not used consistently across all groups to consolidate and extend learning. This is an area for improvement.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

Ravensbourne School has an open access sixth form with 197 students of all abilities. Numbers have fluctuated in previous years but have gradually risen overtime. The school offers a range of post 16 courses to students in Year 11 wishing to continue their studies in the sixth form. Options include one and two year flexible programmes incorporating A and AS level GCE subjects, together with intermediate GNVQ and advanced level vocational courses. All subjects are taught at the school with work experience provided for students on vocational courses. This provision is good for students who wish to take "A" and AS level courses and limited for those wishing to follow a vocational pathway. The sixth form is made up mostly of students who stay on from Year 11. There are 26 students from minority ethnic groups. All speak English fluently. Twenty two students have special educational needs, twelve of whom have statements. More boys than girls are in the sixth form.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

This is a satisfactory and cost effective sixth form. [Attainment on entry to the sixth form is below average and the range of courses offered is limited]. Students benefit from good teaching and build on their attainment at GCSE to reach overall standards that are in line with the national average. Students' progress and achievement are good. Leadership and management of the sixth form are sound.

Strengths

- Students achieve well
- Teaching is good
- Students' work is assessed well and they are given constructive advice on how to improve
- Students are positive about the sixth form and have very good relationships with their teachers

What could be improved

- Students attainment in the majority of subjects
- Students' attendance and their punctuality to lessons
- Provision for religious education as required by law
- More regular planned provision for PSHE by effective use of enrichment lessons
- Study and social accommodation with more information technology resources

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. Thirty more able students did not transfer into the sixth form in 2002. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

| Curriculum area | Overall judgement about provision, with comment |
|--|--|
| English Literature | Good. Examination results are improving. Present students are attaining above average standards. Students' responses are confident and critical. Teaching is good and expectations high. Relationships are positive. |
| Mathematics | Satisfactory. Overall standards are below average but represent the prior attainment of students. Students' achievements are good. The department is well led and supports good teaching and learning. |
| Art | Very good. A level results in 2001 were well above the national average and 2002 results are similar. Students' current work is above average and they achieve well. This is the result of very good teaching and learning in all aspects of the course. |
| Religious Studies | Satisfactory. Attainment is below the national average but achievement is satisfactory. Students' attitudes are very positive as is the teacher's commitment to improvement. |
| Physics | Satisfactory. Results in 2001 were below the national average. However, several students attained higher grades. Students attain the expected grades based on their prior attainment. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. |
| Geography | Good. Examination results at the end of Year 13 were below average in 2001 but as expected considering students' previous GCSE grades. Teaching and learning are good overall. |
| Health and Social Care | Very good. All students passed the AVCE examination in 2002 and 50 per cent attained A-C grades. Present students are attaining above average standards. Good teaching supports the development of independent learning. Excellent enrichment activities give students first hand experiences that promote much learning. |
| History | Satisfactory. Standards are below average but represent the prior attainment of students. Students' progress is good. The department is well led and teaching and learning are good. |
| | Very good. Examination results are consistently above average. The attainment of present students is above average. Teaching is good and students benefit enormously from the individual support provided by their teacher. |
| Design and Technology | Very good. Standards are above average as the 2002 examination results indicate. Students achieve well as the result of good teaching and work hard to meet the very high expectations of their teachers. |
| Information and Communication Technology | Satisfactory. Standards of Year 12 and 13 students on the AVCE courses are average and their achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good and students respond very positively in lessons. |
| French | Very good. Examination results in 2002 were higher than in 2001 when results were below average. The attainment of students in Years 12 and 13 is slightly above average. Teaching and learning are very good and students are challenged to do well. |
| German | Good. The attainment of students in Years 12 and 13 is average. Teaching and the progress students make are good. Students are hardworking and want to succeed. |
| Physical Education | Satisfactory. 2001 results were very well below average but 2002 results were better. Students make sound progress considering their low attainment on entry to the course. Teachers have implemented very many positive strategies to help students improve their standards. |

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| How well students are guided and supported | Satisfactory. The school's good induction procedures that ensure students select appropriately from the courses offered. The procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress in individual subjects are good and marking is helpful and informative. At present there is insufficient systematic monitoring of individual students' academic progress but personal support is good. Specialist careers advice is readily available. |
| Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form | The joint leadership and management of the sixth form by the Key Stage 5 co-ordinator and the 14-19 curriculum assistant headteacher are satisfactory and based on clear aims and values. There is a strong commitment to growth, improvement of standards and broadening of the curriculum. |

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"> Teachers know them well and are willing to provide individual help. The very good relationships they have with their teachers. The availability of regular guidance for future courses and career options. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information and advice about sixth form courses before entering the sixth form. The lack of a supervised sixth form study area with ICT resources for independent use. The limited regular extra curricular activities. |

All sixth form students were given the opportunity in October 2002 to express their views about the sixth form. 45 per cent submitted questionnaire returns and these were analysed by the school and the results used for this report. Over a third of students were interviewed either formally or in their subject areas during the inspection. Students are positive about the sixth form and their comments show loyalty and support. The inspection team agree with the positive comments made by the majority of students. Individual mentoring for students has very recently begun with the aim of supporting students' academic and personal development. The school has designed a new prospectus and is now discussing future options with all Year 11 students individually. The school has recognised the need to provide more extra curricular and enrichment activities. Rightly, there are plans to refurbish one area of the school to provide dedicated sixth form social and study areas.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Inspectors make judgments 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 judgment "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

Results in tests at the end of Year 9

1. Standards of attainment on entry are generally in line with the national average overall. Based on nationally recognised tests and National Curriculum tests at age 11, students' standards on entry are slightly ahead of the national average in English and mathematics but below in science. In the core subjects, unusually against the national trend, boys achieve higher results than girls on entry and this is reflected at the end of Key Stage 3 but to a lesser extent.
2. At the end of Year 9 attainment in English and mathematics is in line with national averages. It is well above in Science and boys perform significantly better than girls in national tests for mathematics and science. The difference in boys and girls performance at this stage in English is less marked. There has been a significant improvement in performance over the last few years well ahead of the national trend.
3. In foundation subjects, attainment by age 14 is variable. Attainment is in line with national averages in design and technology, history, geography, and religious education. It is above average in Art, modern foreign languages and PE. In ICT, the attainment of students in Years 7 to 9 is well below national averages, although the introduction of discrete ICT in Year 7 is providing opportunities for younger students to improve their levels of attainment.
4. Students' achievement during the first three years is good in most subjects. It is satisfactory in music and is lower in ICT because of the unsatisfactory nature of the current provision after Year 7.

Results in public examinations at the end of Year 11

5. Results in examinations at the end of Year 11 are generally in line with national averages with an improving average point score over the last few years. The school performed particularly well in 2002 at GCSE with a 4% improvement in pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades over the 2001 results.
6. In English, business studies, drama and French the percentage of students reaching higher grades was above the national average. In combined science, design and technology, geography and history it was below average. However, there are good signs that the overall progress of students is beginning to accelerate.
7. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good overall. It is good in Drama, history, art and music. It is sound in geography, design and technology MFL, and PE. Achievement is good in English and mathematics and is sound in science. The standards of work seen in lessons generally mirror this improvement, but they are still below average in ICT.
8. Standards of literacy are in line with national averages, the school having adopted a variety of relevant initiatives, including the National Literacy Strategy in Key Stage 3. Students' speaking and listening skills are good. They are able to develop and sustain argument orally and in writing. Some departments have made particularly good progress in ensuring students are given many opportunities to develop these skills. The drama department, working closely with English staff colleagues places great emphasis on high standards of speaking and listening and on the technical use of language. In science and

design and technology the departments have striven to devise strategies which promote literacy within their domain, specifically focused on developing the technical language acquisition for students. Nevertheless, literacy provision and its management across the curriculum require further work because literacy is not fully embedded in the work of all departments and, therefore, the rise in standards is not as apparent as it might be.

9. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory overall. Students benefit from entering school with better-developed skills and confidence in handling problems with number. The school is rightly placing increased emphasis on continued development of numeracy skills, particularly in Key Stage 3. Mathematics lessons, for example, frequently involve starter activities, which comprise mental arithmetic exercises and number games. Good use of numeracy was seen in the support of students with special educational needs and also in design and technology, geography and science lessons. Use in most subjects is satisfactory. However, there is little inspection evidence of students calculating mentally in subjects other than mathematics.

10. The numbers studying GCE A Level courses are below the national average as well as the numbers studying AS Level courses in 2002. Standards reached in the sixth form overall are well below average, with very few students achieving the higher grades. However, in relation to the low prior attainment of students entering the sixth form AS results are more encouraging. GNVQ courses demonstrate a good pass rate, with a number of students gaining the distinction level. Attainment in individual subjects is variable. It is good in English, design and technology, art and music. It is good in GNVQ health and social care. Satisfactory in geography, ICT, MFL and science. However, it continues to remain unsatisfactory in history, RE, mathematics, business studies and PE.

Gifted and Talented Provision

11. Provision for gifted and talented students is generally good although there is no whole school policy to guide departmental practice. The majority of departments have some form of pupil identification but it could not be said that this is an agreed policy and there is no consistency in the approach. Some departments have specific time allocated during meetings to discuss the needs of the more able and provide extension materials as a result. There is evidence of some higher level questioning strategies and the development of independent learning skills but examples are limited.

12. Additional support for gifted and talented students through enrichment is wide and varied. In English a range of creative writing, poetry and essay competitions are organised. This has led to a number of pupils having their work published in a regional magazine. Students also write articles for the school magazine. They also have a debating society and Easter as well as after school booster classes. Music has a full programme of activities including concerts, musicals and other events. Art has a challenging life class for post-16 students and an excellent programme of gallery visits for all key stages. Students are entered for the national Maths Challenge as well as having a Gifted and Talented club for Year 7. Physical Education has a host of extra-curricular programmes as well as teams at a range of levels. There is also good contact with local clubs. In MFL students in Year 10 were accelerated to GCSE in 2002 although the practice has not continued this year.

Sixth Form

13. Students attain standards which are below the national average in their examination courses overall. The number of students has risen from those reported at the time of the last inspection and there has been a rising trend in attainment over time. However, there are very small numbers of students on several courses thus making comparisons with national averages, both past and present, difficult to discern.

14. In 2000, 3 students entered for less than two GCE Advanced levels or AS equivalent and averaged 3.7 points each compared with a national average of 2.7. In 2000, 52 students entered for two or more GCE Advanced levels or AS equivalent and averaged 11.5 points in comparison with a national average of 18. Female students attained higher results than their male counterparts in these courses.

15. In 2001 standards attained in media studies, chemistry, and design and technology were in line with the national average and standards were above in art and design. Standards in business studies, English literature, French, geography, history, mathematics, physics, physical education, and information technology were below average. Overall the number of higher grades attained was low. The differences in results between subjects and the number of higher grades attained were due mainly to the below average attainment of students entering particular courses.

16. The standard of work of present students is in line with the national average overall. Attainment is well above in art. It is above in English literature, health and social care, music, design and technology and French. Students' attainment is average in ICT and German. The overall attainment of students on entry to the sixth form is below the national average based on their GCSE points score. At least half of the top thirty students in Year 11 do not continue into the sixth form at Ravensbourne school. There is open access to the sixth form, so not all students attained highly in their GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11. The majority of students, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in their time in the sixth form. In 2001, most students attained above their predicted scores based on GCSE points score compared to national averages.

17. In 2002, almost all students who started the year have remained in the sixth form after the first two to three weeks. However, absence levels are high and students are frequently late to lessons. Both these factors have a negative effect on standards. In 2002, 34 per cent of students continued their studies to higher education. Currently there are 77 students in Year 13 and 43 per cent have applied to higher education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Attitudes, values and personal development

18. Students' attitudes to the school and to their work are very good and make a significant contribution to the progress they make. The majority of parents say that their children like school, and discussions with students confirm they are enthusiastic about their studies and keenly participate in a wide range of extra curricular activities. In many lessons students show an enthusiasm for their learning, an eagerness to contribute and often become engrossed in their activities. They show pride in their achievements.

19. Students' behaviour in lessons is good overall and contributes to a positive learning environment. In all but a handful of lessons seen behaviour was at least satisfactory and in a significant number it was either very good or excellent. Around the school at breaks and lunchtimes behaviour is generally good. Records show there are occasional incidents of bullying and pupils confirm these are rare and that they are quickly dealt with. The sheer number of pupils moving around the school between lessons means there are areas of heavy congestion. There is some boisterous behaviour on stairs and in crowded corridors but overall pupils behave well. The dining area is remarkably civilised given the very large numbers of pupils being served and the very long queues that develop. In the last school year there were over a hundred occasions when fixed term exclusion was used as a sanction but since September 2002 there have only been four occasions when the sanction has been necessary.

20. Relationships between students and staff are very good, a strength of the school and make a strong contribution to student learning and development. Relationships between students are generally good. Students show a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and good respect for the feelings and views of peers.

21. Students' levels of personal development are good. Many take advantage of a good range of outings and residential visits to improve their understanding of the wider world and many enhance their personal and social skills through extra curricular activities and representing others on school and year councils. Since the start of the year students are being more actively encouraged to use their initiative and take more responsibility for planning and organising their own work and learning. Attendance in the last school year was unsatisfactory but has improved significantly since the start of the current year and is now in line with the national average for similar schools. Attendance levels in all year groups are now consistently above 90%. Punctuality to school is satisfactory overall but a significant number of students do arrive during the first 10 minutes of the tutor period and the approach to punctuality is casual in some tutor groups. Punctuality to lessons during the day is good. The satisfactory attendance and punctuality have a positive impact on the standards pupils achieve.

Sixth form

22. The majority of students who are attending regularly show very positive attitudes to the sixth form and high levels of interest in their work and learning. Given the high absence levels attitudes overall are good. In discussion, most students indicate they are enjoying their chosen courses and are starting to appreciate the enrichment activities that are now available. The majority say they would not hesitate to recommend the sixth form to others. In lessons students engage enthusiastically in the tasks required and show a genuine desire to advance their understanding and knowledge. The students attending regularly have adapted well to the different demands of the sixth form. They balance coursework requirements well with the opportunities for social interaction in free time.

23. A survey of students' views undertaken in the autumn term has resulted in there being significant changes to sixth form routines and expectations. Students are very complimentary about the regular mentoring sessions they now have with tutors who are seen as a great help with both academic and personal development problems. Students approve the action taken to improve the quality of advice and information available on sixth form courses and show a high level of appreciation for the guidance now being provided on careers and higher education opportunities.

24. Attendance in the sixth form, both at the start of the day and in many lessons, is unsatisfactory. There clearly are some students who have either little interest in their chosen courses or who are experiencing problems with adapting to sixth form studies. Whichever, the unsatisfactory attendance is having a negative effect on overall standards.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

Strengths

- The commendable proportion of excellent and very good teaching.
- Teachers' very good subject knowledge results in good planning, giving students confidence in their learning.
- The very good teaching of students with special educational needs improves their reading and gives them confidence to succeed.
- The very good management of students' behaviour.
- The good pace of learning in many lessons requires and supports good concentration.
- The very good learning of the small minority of students who speak English as an additional language.

Areas for Improvement

- The proportion of very good teaching.
- The variety and range of teaching methods to further stimulate students' active participation and initiative.
- The teaching of numeracy and literacy skills in different subjects.
- More opportunities for discussion to consolidate and extend understanding.
- Using assessment in lessons to let students know how well they are doing.

25. The quality of both teaching and learning is good. It was good or better in well over half of the 235 lessons seen. Teaching and learning were unsatisfactory in three lessons and poor on one occasion. No teaching was unsatisfactory after the age of 14.

26. Overall, both teaching and learning get better as the students get older. It was good in lessons for students up to the age of 14, slightly better in lessons for students the ages of 14 and 16 and better again in the sixth form. Improvement has been very good since the last inspection.

27. A striking feature of the good provision is the proportion of very good and in some cases excellent teaching, which were spread across several subjects and all years. The proportion of excellent teaching and learning was broadly similar before and after the age of 14 and close to that usually found when the overall quality of teaching is very good.

28. In the lessons seen, approximately one fifth of the teaching was very good, a big improvement since the last inspection. The challenging priority facing the school as it seeks to improve still further is to increase the proportion of very good teaching and learning.

29. There has been good improvement in the proportion of very good teaching since the last inspection. In such teaching, expectations are invariably high. The students are regularly challenged to think for themselves, to study in greater depth and make links between aspects

of their learning, for example in mathematics and science. They also make very good progress because the pace is brisk; the challenge high, the enthusiasm infectious and a good range of different activities sustains interest and provides motivation. These were features of the very good teaching in modern foreign languages, art and history.

30. The inspection contract did not provide for a report on business studies. There are many very strong features in the good provision for this subject.

31. There were some indications in many subjects that safe rather than exciting methods were chosen. This was one reason why teaching was satisfactory rather than good in English. By way of contrast, a much greater variety of methods in art and design and technology lessons resulted in more exciting learning.

32. Students were taught as a whole class in many of the lessons for students up to the age of 16. Consequently, there were relatively fewer opportunities for students to show initiative, make decisions, discuss their work with each other or develop the skills of leadership and teamwork. These are often the features of very good and excellent learning.

33. Much of the teaching and learning is good because the teachers' very good subject knowledge and understanding enable them to explain things clearly in lessons and to plan very well the development of students' knowledge over time.

34. Where teaching is good and very good, the learning objectives are well defined at the start of the lesson. In the best teaching, they are used to check the gains made at the end of the lesson. In the best teaching, for example in art and design technology, the subject matter is presented so that the students progress to explore their own interpretations. In modern foreign languages, very good teaching stems from very good planning that builds carefully on previous learning.

35. The use of questions to check that knowledge has been grasped is generally good. In the good lessons, questions promote greater understanding, but only rarely do they result in the students posing questions of the teacher.

36. The management of students' learning is a very good feature in many subjects. A small proportion of students can present challenging behaviour. It is one of the strengths of the teaching that teachers have developed effective strategies to manage students effectively when they are boisterous. Expectations are high and unambiguous. Mutual respect and very good relationships result. Consequently, lessons are nearly always conducted without significant interruption because most students generally work hard, concentrate well and the level of inclusion is very high.

37. Behaviour and learning attitudes were very good or better in just over a third of lessons seen. In very few lessons seen during the inspection were they unsatisfactory.

38. The provision for students of different levels of ability is equitable. For the larger than usual number of students with special educational needs, it is very good overall and occasionally excellent. In the best teaching, planning for SEN is exemplary and based on a precise identification and thorough understanding of students' needs. Behaviour management is frequently outstanding. Consequently, many make the best possible progress.

39. The relatively small number of students who speak English as an additional language learn very well because their particular needs are managed very effectively. Consequently, they make very good gains in spoken language.

40. The setting of students according to levels of ability supports good, whole-class teaching, for example in modern foreign languages and in science. Good teaching is evident where the recent introduction of a GNVQ courses provides a very good match of subject content to students' needs and interests.

41. There are some weak features in teaching and learning. Provision for the teaching of basic skills is satisfactory overall but inconsistent. Consequently, students' progress is sometimes slowed because they lack the language to express and explore ideas.

42. The teaching of numeracy skills is only satisfactory. There are some good opportunities in science and design and technology but, overall, there is no consequent compensation for this in the planned provision of other subjects. Key objectives for numeracy do not figure in the schemes of work for other subjects.

43. ICT is used well in mathematics, science and design and technology to improve the quality and range of learning. However, in other subjects, opportunities are more rare and need to be in place to meet the full requirements of the National Curriculum.

44. The use of ongoing assessment is inconsistent but the school has sophisticated plans to provide "on-line" support to students and teachers to help track progress. However, currently students are not always clear about how well they are doing in terms of the nationally expected standards or what they need to do to improve. This is an area for improvement in most subjects. Some aspects of marking are unsatisfactory and assessment procedures for students between the ages of 11 and 14 are weak in ICT because the standards described in the National Curriculum are not used for assessment and target setting.

Sixth Form

45. Teaching is predominantly good with very good features in many lessons. Thirty one percent of lessons seen in the sixth form were very good or excellent. Out of 58 lessons observed no lessons were deemed to be less than satisfactory.

46. Teaching was good or better in all subjects except physics, physical education and religious studies where teaching was satisfactory. Art had particularly high proportions of very good teaching. Teaching was better than at the time of the previous inspection, especially in the amount of very good teaching.

47. Teachers have very good subject expertise that is shared very effectively with students, enabling wide gains in subject knowledge. Skilful questioning and group discussion in many subjects especially in physics and physical education promotes deeper understanding and takes students onto the next level. Teachers plan very well and use the available resources effectively. Good records of students' progress are kept by their teachers and in vocational subjects very good constructive feedback is given to help students improve their assignments. Good assessment procedures, in ICT, include precise marking that informs students well about the quality of their work. In most subjects opportunities are planned to develop students' independent learning and research but in English, physics and geography there is a need to develop this process still further. The lack of easy availability and access to computers and the internet has an adverse impact on the development of students' independent learning skills in a few subjects, for example in physical education and health and social care. The very positive relationship between staff and students adds to the effectiveness of lessons. In religious studies students' attitudes are excellent and in several subjects students really benefit from the individual help and guidance provided by their teachers.

48. In the vast majority of lessons, students work productively and respond well to skilful teaching. In most subjects they achieve well and make good progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding.

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

Strengths

- The inclusive nature of the school's curriculum
- The provision and support for a wide range of students with special educational needs
- The modified National Curriculum for appropriate students at Key Stage 4 plans to modernise the curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Extra-curricular provision and opportunities including ICT for study support

Areas for development

- Action to ensure the school meets all statutory National Curriculum requirements
- Implementation of Key Stages 3 and 4 curriculum plans to better meet the needs of all students
- Continue to extend opportunities for gifted and talented pupils
- A whole school policy and approach to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to secure an entitlement to provision for all.

49. The quality and range of learning opportunities for students in Key Stages 3 and 4 are satisfactory. The school takes pride in being an inclusive school and is changing radically its present curriculum to better meet the needs of students of all abilities. During this period of transition, breadth and balance of the curriculum are being maintained. However, at the present time, the school does not meet statutory National Curriculum requirements for Information and Communications and Technology (ICT), at either key stage, or for technology at Key Stage 3. Curriculum plans for the academic year 2003/04 show a clear intention to address non-compliance and change the emphasis of the whole curriculum to reflect the school's new vision and direction. The planning and teaching of the curriculum reflect the school's strong inclusive ethos and secures equality of opportunity for all students.

50. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 offers students an appropriate range of subjects, covering most requirements of the National Curriculum and of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school has good relations with local primary schools and receives appropriate information, though use of prior attainment data in particular is variable and requires development. Students in Year 7 are taught in mixed ability groups then setting across the curriculum ensures a good match of teaching to students' learning requirements. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are being implemented and 'Thinking Skills' is being introduced as part of the Key Stage 3 Strategy. These initiatives are leading to positive changes in classroom practice but their impact on standards cannot yet be evaluated. Current curriculum plans to develop the Key Stage 3 curriculum include provision of drama, technology and discrete ICT for all students, the last leading to the applied GCSE in ICT. The provision of ICT resources through the school's involvement in the South-East England Virtual Education Action Zone (SEEVEAZ), and an increased emphasis on teaching key skills have resulted in improvements to the Key Stage 3 curriculum.

51. All students at Key Stage 4 follow a core curriculum and an appropriate range of option subjects is offered. The school rightly recognises the need to modernise the Key Stage 4 curriculum by providing pathways with different emphases on academic, practical and work related studies.

52. The contribution of the SpeLD provision in supporting students with SEN both in lessons and through withdrawal is very good and a testimony to the school's equal opportunities policy and practice. Funding through Excellence Challenge and SEEVEAZ have been allocated to extra-curricular activities for gifted and talented students and some have participated in summer schools.

53. Extra-curricular provision is fully inclusive and a strength of the school. A broad range of high quality activities is offered and accessed by students at all levels of talents and abilities. The school has an extensive range of sport, drama is very popular and a strong feature of school life; and Music offers an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. Funding for Out of Hours Learning has been well used to offer a broad range of activities to a wide audience, particularly the disadvantaged, which reflects the school's inclusion strategy.

54. Careers education is mainly delivered through PSHE and citizenship and the quality of provision and guidance is good. Parents have the opportunity to be involved in the new mentoring arrangements for year 11 students to ensure that everyone is aware of progress and of the advice being given on career opportunities. Work experience, the introduction of vocational education and the school's 'Flexin' provision, which includes off-site learning, are all contributing well to meeting the varied needs of students and to raising the standards they achieve. The school's relationship with the Connexions service is very well developed and their staff make an extremely positive contribution to the work of the school.

55. The Personal, Social and health education (PSHE) programme is generally good. All students follow a joint course in personal, social and health education, citizenship and life skills. The course, in its present form, is not yet sufficiently clear about the differing contributions made by the PSHE and the Citizenship programmes to meet the new Citizenship requirements which apply from September 2002.

56. The school's links with partner institutions are have been considerably expanded through its involvement in SEEVEAZ, which has promoted a good deal of staff and curriculum development. The school is keen to make the concept of a community school more of a reality and to this end is rightly planning to develop the Bromley Park Business Partnership and offer accommodation and facilities to the local MENCAP group.

57. The school's promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall and that of their social and cultural development is good. Students develop and make progress as they move through the school but the lack of a planned whole school approach to the cultivation of students' personal development in these areas results in an imbalance of experience.

58. Provision for students' spiritual development is satisfactory. Teachers value students, their work and contributions to the school and wider community. Some departments support students' spiritual development well, for example art encourages exploration of feelings and meaning through study of abstract work on 'the stations of the cross'. Religious education makes an important contribution through reflection on religious values and attitudes and their relationship to students' own beliefs. In drama creativity is cultivated through role-play and improvisation and in English by encouraging students to express thoughts and insights imaginatively in poems and stories. In science enthusiastic teachers inspire students to explore issues related to genetic testing. However, opportunities for spiritual development are essentially random and rely on the awareness and sensitivity of individual teachers. Assemblies do not include an act of collective worship and an appropriate atmosphere for reflection is not created. Thus opportunities for spiritual development are missed.

59. Provision for students' moral development is satisfactory. As they move through the school their awareness right and wrong and of the principles upon which morality is based increases. The school's strong inclusive ethos and emphasis on equality implicitly fosters

values such as honesty, trust, respect and justice. Teachers are good role models and students learn to respect those who are, think and behave differently from themselves socially, culturally and religiously. However, the lack of a coherent approach results in inconsistency and opportunities are missed in the use of an unsatisfactory form period at the start of each school day.

60. Provision to promote students' social development is good, and as a result they relate well to one another, teachers and visiting adults and have very positive attitudes towards school life. School productions and concerts provide very good opportunities for students of different ages to work together. Students are given responsibility, for example as monitors and prefects as well as through the school council whose elected members effectively represent students' views and effect change.

61. Provision to develop students' cultural development is good. Within the curriculum, for example in history through study of the British Empire, science and the work of Isaac Newton, religious education in studying Christian traditions and work with artists in residence, students gain an understanding of Britain's cultural heritage. They also learn of other cultures, for example through 'Black History Month' in English, tracing the origins of different pastries to their cultural roots in food technology and studying an artistic aspect of another culture each term. However in several subjects, for example science, technology and mathematics, reference to non-western contributions to humankind's development is limited.

Sixth Form

62. The sixth form curriculum supports the needs of present students reasonably well. All students including those identified as having special educational needs and those with English as an additional language have access to the entire curriculum. The curriculum offers a wide range of AS and A level courses including three languages, psychology, physical education, media and graphics. It also offers AVCE and intermediate GNVQ courses in health and social care and ICT. These vocational courses are rather limited in range and number and do not necessarily match students needs or allow them to follow to their aptitudes and aspirations. New vocational courses are planned for the future as a result of feedback from students and there are plans to link with the local student apprenticeship scheme. The school accepts there is a need to monitor more carefully students' subject choice and their entry to courses. At present all courses are studied on the school site.

63. Careers education is good overall. The school has invested in a national careers programme for students in Year 12. The careers advisor is regularly available for individual appointments and all Year 13 students have had individual interviews.

64. As at the time of the last inspection, the school does not meet statutory requirements with regard to the provision of religious education for all students in the sixth form. For those students needing to improve their standards in English and mathematics, classes are available for those who wish to retake GCSE examinations.

65. Opportunities for students to take examinations in the three areas of key skills are optional and are delivered in enrichment lessons. There is no supervised private study and students are allowed to come into school for their first lesson. This limits their personal and social education at both subject and whole sixth form levels. The school sees enrichment as an area for development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

66. The procedures for ensuring students' welfare are effective and consistently applied and have a positive impact on students' achievement and personal development. Teaching staff and tutors know pupils very well and have their best interests and well being in mind at

all times. The tutor and year group system effectively ensures that any students with worries have someone to approach. Students themselves say they feel able to approach staff freely and recognise this as a main strength of the school. The updated procedures for dealing with child protection issues are good and fully meet statutory requirements. The school is vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities. The collaboration with a number of external agencies supports effectively the individual care packages developed for some pupils. The school meets well the statutory requirements of provision for those pupils with a statement of special educational need.

67. Health and safety procedures are good and all staff conscientiously ensure that pupils know and adhere to safe practice. Good systems are in place to ensure that identified hazards or safety concerns around the site are quickly reported. Health and safety concerns over the state of the gymnasium were registered during the inspection and the school along with the LEA have agreed a remedial work programme to be carried out over the summer. There are regular evacuation practices and records show that electrical, alarm and fire prevention equipment is frequently inspected. First aiders hold up to date accreditation and there are appropriate first aid supplies at a number of locations around the site. There are clear procedures relating to medicines on site. Comprehensive records of incidents and accidents are maintained and there are good procedures to ensure parents are quickly informed of any illness or injury. In all lessons observed during the inspection care was taken to ensure that pupils followed safe procedures and practices.

68. The procedures in place to monitor attendance are unsatisfactory, because, although the electronic registration system provides very good and immediately available data on absence and patterns of attendance, the school is not using this information effectively to improve the overall attendance. There is no system for following up absence on the same day and the school is unable to compare patterns of attendance for different groups of students. A number of initiatives to encourage attendance introduced last September have succeeded in raising overall attendance. The practice of taking holidays during term time is now discouraged. Awards to students with high and improving attendance are a positive incentive for most students. Flexible approaches to encourage disaffected students and those experiencing difficulties to develop a greater interest in their learning and hence to improve attendance are starting to have a positive impact.

69. The school's good procedures for monitoring behaviour and personal development are being well used to contribute to the level of care and support provided for all students. The rewards systems effectively promote good behaviour, are particularly popular throughout the school and provide good data to monitor effort and achievement. Similarly sanctions system records provide the information necessary to identify any pupils experiencing problems. Since last September the school has been monitoring the use of sanctions very closely and pastoral staff have intervened effectively at an early stage with individual students to understand their problems and implement recovery programmes. This new approach to sanctions coupled with new mentoring schemes ensures that tutors are in a strong position to help students cope with the academic demands and are also alerted to any personal and social difficulties which are inhibiting progress. The huge reduction in the use of exclusion and the orderly nature of the school are testament to the effectiveness of behaviour monitoring and promotion systems and the high quality and caring responses of the pastoral teams.

70. The schools' procedures for assessing students' academic progress and attainment are currently subject to significant change following the arrival of the new headteacher. Currently assessment is unsatisfactory since it is not at present used in a focussed way in all subjects to raise standards.

71. The use of assessment data to guide planning is variable. In the core subjects and in modern foreign languages curriculum planning is good. However, in ICT and history and geography such information is not yet consistently used to the best effect.

72. Arrangements for monitoring the academic and personal needs of students with special educational needs are good. Students with statements of special educational needs are given clear objectives related to their individual needs. SpELD use the objectives well to set overall targets for learning and personal and social development, including behaviour, in each student's individual education plan (IEP)

Sixth Form

73. Assessment of students' work in the sixth form is generally effective. The use of this information to plan lessons and the curriculum contributes to students' good achievement especially in AVCE aspects. Judgements are based on a large survey of students' written work and on lesson observations carried out during the inspection.

74. The support and advice provided for students in the sixth form is good. Following a review of sixth form support procedures, effective new systems have been introduced to monitor students' progress and personal development. Regular mentoring interviews are now used effectively to identify students in danger of underachieving and any who are experiencing personal difficulties. The very good relationships that exist with tutors ensure that any concerns or worries are quickly discussed.

75. Like the main school the procedures for monitoring attendance are unsatisfactory. Effective use of the available data is not being made to encourage attendance and to alert staff to students with difficulties. The monitoring of attendance at lessons is equally undeveloped.

76. Earlier in the year, a significant proportion of students indicated in an internal survey that they were unhappy with the quality of careers advice and guidance. The improved level of information on career paths and guidance on further and higher education opportunities that is now available is good and is beginning to be appreciated by the students.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

77. Ravensbourne enjoys good support from parents and carers, which reflects the hard work that the school puts in to developing the partnership. The links which exist with parents contribute positively to pupils' learning and development. Over the last year the school has launched a number of good initiatives to improve the levels of communication with parents and to involve them further in their children's education. At the consultation evening parents expressed their pleasure at receiving these positive messages. The new mentoring programmes, which are gradually being introduced, are also popular with parents who say they feel much more involved in the learning and development process through attending review meetings.

78. Responses to the parental questionnaire and comments at the consultation revealed positive views of the school and confirmed parents' pleasure at the progress that their children were making. Parents' responses indicate they are particularly pleased with the high expectations of teachers and the fact that the school helps their children to mature and become responsible. The main area of concern for parents is homework. Inspectors agree that homework is not set consistently across subjects or sets and that it is not always appropriate to reinforce classroom learning or encourage independent study. Students are sometimes just asked to finish off class work at home and some students regularly use the tutor period at the start of the day to complete homework.

79. The concerns expressed by a few parents about not being kept well informed and about the school not working closely with homes are not supported by inspectors. A variety of means are used to keep parents informed effectively about school life and organisation. Prospectus documents contain all the statutory information whilst newsletters and press coverage ensure that achievements and events are well publicised. Recent initiatives are effectively enhancing the close working with parents and increasing the level of involvement of parents in students' learning and development. Doors are always open to parents who want more information or who have particular concerns. Equally the school is quick to identify pupils experiencing difficulties and does not hesitate to involve parents in the determination of improvement targets and plans. Attendance at parent's evenings, mentoring sessions and reviews is high. Whilst most parents take a keen interest in all matters concerning their own children only a minority get involved with the work of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

80. The fact there is a new headteacher provides very good leadership in the school can be seen in a new clarity and a new focus on raising standards of achievement and a meaningful emphasis on teaching and learning. He has set his stall out to be visible around the school, accessible and inclusive, and staff and governor perceptions confirm that this is having a positive impact, giving a re-invigorated sense of unity of purpose.

81. The leadership team has been subject to substantial change, and in most areas the rationale for this has been clearly understood and new roles have been implemented effectively. There remains some lack of clarity around the management of ICT and the 6th Form. Some reports bringing together the outcomes of new school-wide monitoring activities have not been produced with the urgency that these deserve. Active line-management roles for members of the leadership team working with middle managers, including heads of year and heads of subjects, have been introduced and are already improving communication and providing the potential for greater consistency, for example in marking and assessment. Job descriptions are being revised appropriately.

82. Overall, the leadership and management of subjects is satisfactory and often good. In some subjects, for example English and art, there has already been a strong focus on planning or performance monitoring. The school has appropriate plans for developing subject and pastoral managers, and the effectiveness of this will be crucial to the rate of improvement the school will achieve. Many heads of subject recognise the need for training and development, for example in the analysis and uses of data. In some subjects, history and RE in particular, younger heads of subject are keen to take advantage of a wider range of development opportunities to support their ambitions to raise standards in their subjects.

83. The governing body has shown a high level of commitment to the school over many years. They now quite rightly acknowledge that their efforts will be channelled into an appropriate strategic and monitoring role given the new systems and structures in place in the school. Governors share with the headteacher high expectations for the school's performance in coming years.

84. Governors are acquiring a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are further developing their critical friend role and holding the school to account for student progress. Governors bring a good range of expertise to their work on behalf of the school.

85. Good procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching in departments have been implemented since the last inspection. However, the outcomes of the regular lesson observations have not yet fed into school improvement planning, although some conclusions have been drawn from them in relation to individual staff development needs within the

school's performance management processes. In spite of this, the management of staff development has been sound and the school has benefited from being a member of SEEVEAZ.

86. Performance management has been introduced effectively in the school, with recent good work on the introduction of a professional development portfolio for teaching staff. The next phase in the development of performance management must secure a direct link to the school improvement planning process, to become part of a cohesive and comprehensive planning process that the school has hitherto not been able to achieve.

87. The school procedures and programme for the induction of NQTs are good, and experienced teachers new to the school have been able to participate in some early elements of the programme. Given the school's ambition to retain a more stable staff over time, current induction arrangements for experienced teachers are only adequate.

88. The school's self-evaluation and monitoring programme, although only introduced in the previous term, is a strong feature of the school's new practices. Members of the leadership team have undertaken an intensive series of classroom observations and two school-wide book audits. The school has set itself a challenging but entirely appropriate schedule for these monitoring and evaluation activities, with the intention of covering teaching and learning in all departments by the end of the school year 2003.

89. Using commercial ICT support, the school has adopted a web-based pupil performance data package that gives all staff access to individual pupils' assessment data and targets, including also very useful predictive data (CAT scores). This constitutes a good basis for the analysis of pupil performance to inform planning at departmental and class levels, and the school has appropriate plans for staff training to support this process. There is an ambitious plan to engage parents' and carers' support for stretching pupils' academic achievements.

90. The school's finances are well managed. Auditors' recent reports have indicated no weaknesses in financial procedures. The school maximises the use of available annual funding to serve the interests of current pupils, storing little in unused contingency. The system of allocating funds to departments does not have a clear rationale and is not linked to explicit school priorities or, in many cases, planned and agreed departmental priorities. Staff costs are high and although there is a good match of qualifications to need, the teacher contact ratio is very low at 68%, signifying a currently high allocation of resource to non-contact management activities.

91. Resources and accommodation for learning are good in most areas across the school. In music, for example, they are very good. There are accommodation issues particularly in PE that the school has plans to address, and these are well overdue. Resources for ICT are very good, but their use in extending pupils' skills and learning is poor. ICT applications for charting pupils' progress, as described above, are good. Electronic registration has been introduced, and the school is working towards full use of this for managing attendance. Through the SEEVEAZ initiative, all teaching staff have laptop computers. The school's potential for harnessing ICT to achieve improved levels of pupil performance is very high.

Sixth Form

92. The leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. The leadership is shared by two teachers and provides a clear visionary educational direction for the future of the sixth form. Much planning is in its early stages and two progression questionnaires, one for Year 11 students and a second for Years 12 and 13 students have formed the basis for planned future developments.

93. The monitoring and evaluation of the sixth form has taken place since the appointment of the assistant head for ages 14 to 19 and as a result there are several new initiatives that are at very early stages of development. The sixth form is part of the schools' appraisal system and good strategies are in place to monitor teaching.

94. Students have responsibilities on the school council and a few students support less able students in the main school. However, the involvement of the sixth form with the main school and the local community is recognised by the school as a priority for further development. The sixth form is cost effective and gives satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

This is an improving school under strong leadership. In order to secure further improvements the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Continue to raise standards of attainment in most subjects, and in particular DT and ICT.
- (2) Improve student attendance and punctuality to lessons by continuing with the already strenuous efforts, and emphasising to parents the importance of making sure their children attend school regularly.
- (3) Further develop formal systems to guide middle managers in monitoring and evaluating to ensure that assessment information is used consistently in all subjects to inform planning and set precise targets for what students are to learn.
- (4) Meet the statutory curriculum requirements in Key Stages 3 and 4 and continue to develop the new curriculum model to ensure breadth and balance and effective personal development of all students.
- (5) Ensure that there is planned use of information and communication technology across all subjects in Years 7 to 11.

Other issues to address

Further develop provision for gifted and talented students.

Ensure that a daily act of collective worship is provided.

Sixth form

- (1) Raise standards of attainment in most subjects through the identification and sharing of best teaching practice.
- (2) Improve student attendance and punctuality to lessons.
- (3) Enhance students' appreciation and use of basic skills by ensuring all students have a continuing education in literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- (4) Ensure the statutory requirement to teach religious education to Sixth Form students is met.

Other Specified Features – The Specific Learning Difficulties (SpeLD) provision

95. Overall this is very good provision. The school uses the Specific Learning Difficulties (SpeLD) provision very effectively to maximise opportunities for the SpeLD students and to promote inclusive practice in the school.

Strengths

- Students make very good progress with impressive achievements in relation to their needs.
- Committed, dedicated high quality staff fully support students' success in the mainstream curriculum.
- The provision makes a very positive contribution to promoting inclusive practice in the school.
- The provision makes a very significant impact on whole school practice through quality training, guidance, support and advice.
- There are good constructive links with parents who are provided with very high quality information to support their children's learning.

Areas for further development

- Promotion as a centre for excellence in developing inclusive practice.
- Continue to develop more active links at a departmental level
- Investigate post 16 funding to ensure access and successful progression for SpeLD students to the school's 6th form.

96. The SpeLD provision was established in 1993 to provide specialist provision for students in the Borough of Bromley who have statements relating to their Specific Learning Difficulties. There are eight places available in each year group and the provision is currently full with 40 students in the school. They are supported by 7.5 qualified specialist teachers, who work specifically with the SpeLD students.

97. Students make very good progress with impressive achievements in relation to their needs. Detailed records of prior attainment demonstrate students' progress. A significant number of pupils who attain below national averages in English at Key Stage 2 achieve 'C' grade in English Language at GCSE. This is the subject area which reflects their main area of difficulty in accessing the mainstream curriculum. In addition students are very well supported in other subject areas – for example one student obtained, in addition to a 'C' in English Language, 8 A grades and 1 A* in last year's results. A very thorough process of IEPs and annual reviews supports pupils' progress in key areas of learning and personal development. Parents are fully involved as partners in this process and are provided with very good information to support their children's learning.

98. The provision makes a very positive contribution to promoting inclusive practice in the school. This is not segregated provision. Committed, dedicated and knowledgeable staff are clearly determined that students will succeed in the mainstream curriculum. Specific support lessons for example in literacy or numeracy, are very planned, structured and focussed. Individual tutorial support allows an appropriate focus on specific skills and knowledge for example the completion of coursework and reinforcement of key knowledge prior to a geography assessment in Year 10 and similarly prior to a Mathematics GCSE assessment in Year 13. Staff have an impressive knowledge and understanding of the mainstream curriculum. Skilful, unobtrusive and focussed support in mainstream lessons is now very well established. Teachers' knowledge of pupils ensures that they know when support is needed and when to promote independent working. Importantly SpeLD staff and students are fully included in mainstream lessons. There is no stigma attached to support in mainstream lessons. On the contrary there are clearly significant benefits which SpeLD staff and students bring to mainstream lessons. There are currently concerns when students move

from a high level of support, through SpeLD, in Years 7 – 11 to post 16. Post 16 funding currently allows for more limited support in line with other statemented students.

99. SpeLD staff provide training to Newly Qualified Teachers from across the borough. In addition, the SpeLD staff provide very detailed and thorough information to mainstream with learning targets ('Focus Aims') clearly identified. This is an example of very good practice, which clearly supports and empowers the work of mainstream teachers and this contributes to students' good achievement.

100. The following are identified as ways in which this very good provision can develop further.

- The promotion of SpeLD as a 'Centre of excellence' both in the way it works with mainstream and in the very high quality of information and guidance it provides to staff, parents and pupils.
- Work with partner agencies to further investigate the levels of funding for SpeLD students at post 16.
- Develop more active links at a departmental level.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | | |
|--|--------------|-----|
| Number of lessons observed | Years 7 - 11 | 176 |
| | Sixth form | 58 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | | 56 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Years 7 - 11 | | | | | | | |
| Number | 11 | 55 | 60 | 47 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Percentage | 6.21 | 31.07 | 33.89 | 26.55 | 1.69 | 0.56 | 0 |
| Sixth form | | | | | | | |
| Number | 5 | 13 | 30 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 8.62 | 22.41 | 51.72 | 17.24 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Y7 – Y11 | Sixth form |
|---|----------|------------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll | 1,123 | 203 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 227 | 19 |

| Special educational needs | Y12 – Y13 | Sixth form |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 70 | 12 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 280 | 22 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 2 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 34 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 33 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 9.2 |
| National comparative data | 7.5 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 1.5 |
| National comparative data | 1.1 |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 7 | 119 | 108 | 227 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 92 | 93 | 102 |
| | Girls | 87 | 79 | 76 |
| | Total | 179 | 172 | 178 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 79 (72) | 76 (70) | 78 (86) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 75 (71) | 87 (87) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 87 | 97 | 105 |
| | Girls | 74 | 74 | 88 |
| | Total | 161 | 171 | 193 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 71 (60) | 75 (68) | 85 (77) |
| | National | 73 (N/A) | 74 (N/A) | 82 (N/A) |

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest 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 |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 9 | 133 | 100 | 233 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above | Boys | 98 | 101 | 97 |
| | Girls | 81 | 68 | 60 |
| | Total | 179 | 169 | 157 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above | School | 67 (58) | 70 (61) | 74 (57) |
| | National | 66 (64) | 67 (66) | 66 (66) |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above | School | 28 (31) | 44 (31) | 37 (26) |
| | National | 32 (31) | 45 (43) | 33 (34) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above | Boys | 79 | 97 | 101 |
| | Girls | 78 | 67 | 72 |
| | Total | 157 | 164 | 173 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above | School | 77 (58) | 73 (61) | 67 (57) |
| | National | 67 (64) | 70 (66) | 67 (66) |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above | School | 42 (19) | 49 (29) | 27 (13) |
| | National | 32 (31) | 44 (42) | 34 (33) |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 11 | 118 | 94 | 212 |

| GCSE results | | 5 or more grades A* to C | 5 or more grades A*-G | 1 or more grades A*-G |
|---|----------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified | Boys | 50 | 105 | 110 |
| | Girls | 43 | 86 | 88 |
| | Total | 93 | 191 | 198 |
| Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified | School | 43.4 (39.1) | 89.6 (89.8) | 93 (95) |
| | National | 49.9 (48.4) | 90.9 (90.9) | 94.6 (94.5) |

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

| GCSE results | | GCSE point score |
|-------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Average point score per pupil | School | 36.8 (35.6) |
| | National | 39.8 (39.0) |

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

| Vocational qualifications | | Number | % success rate |
|--|----------|--------|----------------|
| Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied | School | 34 | 91 |
| | National | | |

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

| | | For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|--|-------------|-------------|
| | | Boys | Girls | All |
| School | Number of candidates | 25 | 30 | 55 |
| | Average point score per candidate | 137.6 (9) | 186.7 (9.3) | 164.4 (9.1) |
| 2001 National | Average point score per candidate | N/A (16.9) | N/A (18.0) | N/A (17.5) |

| | | For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations | | | For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------|--|-------|------|---|-------|------|
| | | Boys | Girls | All | Boys | Girls | All |
| School | Number of candidates | 19 | 25 | 44 | 10 | 7 | 17 |
| | Average point score per candidate | 148.4 | 195.2 | 175 | 62 | 102.9 | 78.8 |
| National | Average point score per candidate | 16.9 | 17.9 | 17.4 | 9.8 | 11.4 | 10.6 |

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

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

PLEASE NOTE: Change of scoring from 2001 to 2002

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 | 1,111 | 123 | 3 |
| White – Irish | 4 | | |
| White – any other White background | 32 | | |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | 19 | 1 | |
| Mixed – White and Black African | 2 | | |
| Mixed – White and Asian | 3 | | |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | 8 | | |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian | 9 | | |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani | 3 | | |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi | 6 | | |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 5 | | |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | 30 | 6 | |
| Black or Black British – African | 21 | 1 | |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 19 | 1 | |
| Chinese | 6 | | |
| Any other ethnic group | 11 | 3 | |
| No ethnic group recorded | 37 | | |

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y[7] – Y[13]

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 86.2 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 15.4 |

Education support staff: Y[7] – Y[13]

| | |
|---|---------|
| Total number of education support staff | 39 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 1,057.8 |

Deployment of teachers: Y[7] – Y[13]

| | |
|---|-----|
| Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes | 69% |
|---|-----|

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

| | |
|-------------|------|
| Key Stage 2 | N/A |
| Key Stage 3 | 27.8 |
| Key Stage 4 | 22.1 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| Financial year | 2002-03 |
|----------------|---------|

| | £ |
|--|-----------|
| Total income | 4,569,524 |
| Total expenditure | 4,566,032 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 3,564 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 18,575 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 22,067 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 36 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 50 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 3 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 2 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 1326 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 150 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 83 | 60 | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 72 | 63 | 12 | 1 | 1 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 35 | 89 | 9 | 6 | 11 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 43 | 71 | 21 | 10 | 4 |
| The teaching is good. | 54 | 82 | 7 | 1 | 4 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 71 | 58 | 17 | 3 | 1 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 90 | 49 | 8 | 0 | 3 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 98 | 38 | 9 | 3 | 1 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 57 | 72 | 16 | 3 | 2 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 71 | 58 | 7 | 1 | 12 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 77 | 60 | 6 | 3 | 4 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 66 | 65 | 6 | 4 | 9 |

Other issues raised by parents

The majority of parents responded positively to most aspects of the work of the school. The meeting for parents presented a very positive picture of the school. The inspectors strongly agree with the parents positive comments. The information provided by the school to tell parents how their children are getting on has improved recently and is now good. However, it is the inspectors' view that homework is not used consistently across all groups to consolidate and extend learning. This is an area for improvement.

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

ENGLISH

101. The quality of provision in English is **good**.

Strengths

- Teachers' interest and enthusiasm for the subject and their good knowledge of students.
- The good progress students make in Years 7, 8, and 9.
- Relationships are very good and students enjoy English.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.

Areas for Improvement

- The use of ICT
- Inconsistencies in the quality of marking

102. Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were in line with the national average and above average in comparison with similar schools. In the GCSE examinations in 2002, 65 per cent of students gained grades A*-C in English and 67 per cent in English literature. The national averages for these are 57 and 62 per cent respectively. Given that standards on entry are below average, this means that students make good progress by the end of Year 9, and, the end of Year 11.

103. The last inspection found that the use of ICT within the subject was unsatisfactory because of insufficient access to appropriate resources. This remains the case, although English teachers do their best to tackle the problem indirectly.

104. Standards in speaking and listening are good throughout the school. Pupils listen carefully and many answer questions readily and often eagerly, making relevant and intelligent responses. Lower attaining students do not have a wide range of vocabulary, which prevents them from developing their responses.

105. The overall standard of reading is above average. Reading is generally accurate and fluent, scrutiny of library records show that large numbers of students read, independently, for pleasure. Reading aloud, is encouraged in every class. In writing, attainment is above average throughout the school. Pupils build rapidly on skills that are below average generally when they enter Year 7. By Year 9, pupils are producing controlled pieces of original writing. In most cases it is lively and fluent, with the highest attainers putting together extended work. Presentation is good throughout the school. Handwriting is generally good and students often take trouble to improve the presentation of their work, indicating their pride in it.

106. Pupils make good progress in English at the school. This good value added is due to their good behaviour and to the very good attitudes, interest and enthusiasm which they show. The other very strong influence upon students' rates of progress is the teaching which they receive, which is usually satisfactory, often good and very good, sometimes it is excellent. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. Teachers know their students very well and provide well for their differing needs. As a result, students with special educational needs make good progress. The best lessons feature good planning, good pace, good structure and good class control: in fact, a Year 7 focusing on using punctuation appropriately, proceeds with such clarity and at such a good rate that students do not have a chance to lose interest.

107. The leadership and management of the department are good and the head of department has a clear understanding of the strengths in the subject's provision and what needs to be done to improve. She is well supported by an able and committed team who work collaboratively in an open, supportive way. Improvements since the last inspection have been good.

MATHEMATICS

108. The quality of provision in Mathematics is **good**.

Strengths

- Very good leadership and management.
- Specialist teachers of mathematics
- Quality of teaching is good.
- Very good relationships between teachers and students
- Teachers' planning based on a well structured scheme of work
- Use of appropriate resources including ICT to enhance the teaching and learning
- Support for pupils with special educational needs
- Extra curricular provision which supports and extends learning opportunities for students of differing abilities, including the 'gifted and talented' students

Areas for Improvement

- Ensure greater consistency in the marking of students' work to provide feedback on how they can improve.
- Further develop the use of assessment data to ensure that work set is appropriately matched to ability and to inform the setting of individual student targets
- Continue to develop strategies to raise the attainment of girls.
- Provide more opportunities for students to develop investigative skills in mathematics.
- Continue to explore opportunities to further develop students' numeracy skills in context across the curriculum.

109. Standards on entry are in line with the national average, with the attainment of girls being lower than that of boys. In the 2002 national tests, at the end of year 9, the proportion of students achieving Level 5 or higher, was just above the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 6 or above was broadly the same as the national average. These results are a significant improvement on the previous year's standards. Boys continue to outperform girls, a feature that is atypical of the results recorded nationally. This gender difference in attainment is however consistent with the pattern of attainment on intake. The average points score for mathematics is similar to that for English but below that for Science.

110. In the 2002 GCSE mathematics examinations at the end of year 11, the proportion of students attaining Grades A*-C was just below the national average and just above it for the percentage of students achieving A*- G. These results indicate that the improvement recorded in the previous year has been maintained.

111. The standard of work seen across the ability range in Key Stage 3 is above average. Students are challenged through skilful, probing questioning to explain their approaches to solving problems. More able students in year 7 are confident in describing, calculating and applying the different types of averages. In year 8 as a result of very effective teaching students calculate mentally with both positive and negative numbers. Students' progress in years 7 -9 is good.

112. Standards in Key Stage 4 are in line with national expectations. Attainment is above average in the higher ability sets in both Years 10 and 11. In these lessons, students make

very good gains in their learning as a direct result of the excellent and very good teaching they received.

113. Students in the lower sets make good progress where the teacher uses modelling strategies effectively to reinforce their previous understanding.

114. In both key stages there are more boys than girls. Teachers ensure that girls participate in oral work and are given opportunities to ask questions and to offer answers.

115. Pupils with SEN are well supported in lessons by their teachers, by the learning support staff and by their peers. Teachers are aware of their individual abilities, and employ a range of strategies to ensure that these students make gains in their knowledge and skills.

116. Students' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good. They listen attentively to teachers and to each other and are confident and keen to demonstrate and explain their solutions. The presentation and accuracy of the students' written work is variable.

117. Teaching and learning are good in both key stages. Teachers' expertise and good subject knowledge ensures that they are able to explain concepts clearly. Lessons are well planned with the learning objectives shared at the beginning of each lesson. Questioning is used very effectively to establish the extent of students' prior understanding, to identify any misconceptions and to evaluate what they have learnt in the lesson.

118. Students' work is marked regularly. There are however inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' marking, particularly in terms of the written comments, which inform students as to how well they are achieving and indicates to them what they need to do to further improve.

119. Very good schemes of work have recently been written which reflect the National Curriculum programmes of study and incorporate the key objectives of the Key Stage 3 Mathematics project and the syllabuses for GCSE. These are graduated and differentiated to match the needs of students of different abilities and to ensure equality of opportunity for students of similar abilities in the parallel sets.

120. Insufficient time is allocated throughout years 7 - 11 to developing the skills for investigative work.

121. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department has a detailed action plan for the future development of the subject. All aspects of provision in mathematics have been carefully monitored and evaluated. There is a strong emphasis on continuity and coherence in curriculum planning and on further developing effective procedures for monitoring teaching and learning. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Relationships within the department are very good. Teachers work very well, sharing good practice and are committed to raising standards.

122. All the weaknesses at the time of the last inspection have been addressed effectively.

SCIENCE

123. Overall the quality of provision in science is **good**.

Strengths

- Leadership and management of the department are good
- The quality of teaching and learning is good
- The caring for pupils is good
- Personal relationships are good
- The mentoring of newly qualified teachers is good
- Teachers use of information communication technology as a media for presentation is good

Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment by the age of 16
- The teaching of numeracy
- Consistency in the setting of homework
- The use of information technology for experimental data capture and analysis.

124. At age 14, pupils' performance in the 2002 National Curriculum tests was above the national average. The proportions of students who obtained National Curriculum Level 5 and above and Level 6 and above was above the national average. Students' performance in science exceeded that in mathematics and English. When compared with similar schools the results were well above average. These results represent very good achievement based upon students' prior attainment on entry to the school. Students with special educational needs and the gifted and talented shared in this achievement and progressed equally well. The attainment of boys was generally higher than that for girls and this was a reflection of the entry profile of attainment for both sexes. Students' performance at age 14 has improved over the last three years at a much greater rate than the national trend of improvement.

125. At age 16, the proportion of students who obtained A*-C grades and A*-G in the 2002 GCSE examinations was below average. Students did less well than in mathematics and English. These results represent satisfactory achievement for all pupils including those with special educational needs and those with gifts and talents. Students generally obtained the grades expected of them based upon their attainment at age 14. Boys did better than girls as expected based upon their prior attainment profile. The proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades has steadily increased over the last three years.

126. The standard of work seen during the inspection confirms the upward trend in the improvement of attainment for all age groups up to and including those at age 16. The standard of work seen in years 7, 8 and 9 was good. In year 7 most students know the difference between solute, solvent and solution although some struggle to give scientific reasons for their predictions. In year 8, most students have a good understanding of the process of digestion. In Year 9, high attainers know the processes of electrolysis and polymerisation but find the concept of air resistance difficult to apply in some situations that relate to balanced forces. The level of literacy seen was good and literacy is emphasised by the teachers. Numeracy skill levels seen were satisfactory but numeracy did not receive the same attention as literacy. Computers are not generally used for the capture and processing of data in the laboratory although the use of computers for research purposes indicates that students' skills in information and communication technology are at a satisfactory standard.

127. The standard of work seen in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Students demonstrate satisfactory standards in science, literacy and numeracy. They carry out scientific investigation work well, are able to give scientific reasons for their predictions and are able to evaluate their findings effectively. They often use information communication technology well

to enhance their presentations. In Year 10 students generally know the key features of nuclear radiation. In Year 11 high attaining students can calculate the cost of electricity used but often have difficulty with balancing chemical equations.

128. The quality of teaching seen was good overall. The teaching seen in Years 7, 8 and 9 was very good and in Years 10 and 11 it was good. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Many aspects contributed to the quality of teaching but the strong characteristics were, the detailed planning of a variety of challenging activities that encouraged pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and the on-going evaluation of student progress towards the stated objectives.

129. These, together with good relationships and the skilful management of students, resulted in the establishment of purposeful productive learning situations in which all students made good progress. Satisfactory teaching sometimes lacked pace and challenge, resulting in lower levels of student productivity and progress. Very good teaching included strategies that were designed to capture students' interest from the very start of the lesson and to motivate them by using a high degree of student interaction. For example in a skilfully managed Year 8 lesson on how micro-organisms can be harmful, students were given separate tasks and worked in specific groups to research allocated aspects of the topic. All students needed to carry out their own specific task to ensure that the whole class task could be completed. Students' knowledge of the importance of completing their task to the achievement of the class goal was a strong motivator and they learned very well through this activity. Examination marks and test results are used well in all Years to monitor the progress of students. Exercise books are marked well and include informative comments on what students need to do to improve. Homework is used to consolidate and extend what is learned in class but the frequency with which it is set lacks consistency across the department. Literacy is taught particularly well using a wide variety of techniques such as ensuring full understanding and spelling of key words and using well structured writing frames. As a result students' understanding of written information for all attainment levels is good for all Years.

130. The leadership and management of the department are good. A hardworking head of department is supported by a committed team of well-qualified teachers technicians and support staff who share his vision of enabling all pupils to reach their full potential in science. Schemes of work are in place for key stages 3 and 4 and ensure that the statutory requirements for the national curriculum in science are fully met. The teaching and learning are monitored well and the induction of newly qualified teachers is particularly strong, contributing well to their effectiveness. Resources overall are just adequate. The sharing of textbooks, often seen in lessons, is compensated for by the level of expertise of the teachers and so does not adversely affect learning. Accommodation is adequate but two laboratories are rather cramped for large groups. Laboratories and corridors are enlivened by good displays of students' work. All hazardous materials including radioactive materials are stored in accordance with health and safety regulations and appropriate documentation is in place.

131. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. Standards have been raised by the end of Year 9 and teaching has improved. There were no examples of unsatisfactory teaching seen and many examples of very good teaching. Pupil progress is now satisfactory or better and equality of access extends to all pupils. Pupil behaviour is now good.

ART & DESIGN

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching throughout all key stages is good to excellent
- The quality and range of extra curricular provision and enrichment activities for all Key Stages is very good.
- The leadership and management of the department is very good.
- The curriculum structure is firmly rooted in the framework of the National Curriculum and provides a solid foundation for students to develop visual literacy and, in the sixth form, progression into higher education.
- Through a conscious effort to be inclusive, teaching covers many aspects of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions of the curriculum as well as providing good differentiation.
- The quality of display produced by the department is good. It celebrates the achievements of its students as well as supporting learning through the teaching displays.

Areas for Improvement

- Some student management is weak.
- Practical demonstrations of techniques are limited
- Appropriate consumable materials are not always available, particularly in the sixth form
- Facilities for processing and firing ceramics are poor.

133. Standards of attainment in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are above average. GCSE results are very good with 67.7% of students entered achieving grades A* - C which is above the national average by more than 2 percentage points. This level of performance has been maintained for a good number of years with the exception of a dip in GCSE results in 2001.

134. The work seen during the inspection confirms that achievement is very good. Students with special educational needs make good progress overall as do the more able. The very good levels of achievement in the design work are matched by the story telling that cannot fail to engage the reader. In Key Stage 3 students use watercolour washes to paint a Japanese landscape. These pupils are completely engaged in the task and work to appropriate levels and beyond.

135. Teaching and learning in Key Stage 3 is good overall and excellent in Key Stage 4. Lessons are characterised by controlled and focused introductions, well-established routines and purposeful activities that match the ability range of the students.

136. In Key Stage 3 lessons are resourced with a very good range of coloured images and artefacts all mounted on movable display boards. The marking of work is used to inform student of what they can do to improve. In one Key Stage 4 lesson students were required to combine photographs of the school grounds with the work of Hiroshige, a Japanese painter, a plan that both engaged students as well as ensuring a creative and personal outcome. The nature of the task provides a good starting point for their work.

137. The level of contact and support that teachers have with students sustains motivation. Almost all are fully engaged throughout. In a number of lessons, this is further enhanced by what the department refer to as a focus session lasting three or four minutes.

138. Attitudes and behaviour in Key stage 3 is good overall although in lessons observed they ranged from excellent to poor. Of the six lessons observed three were excellent to very good, one was good and two were poor. In Key Stage 4 attitudes and behaviour is very good. Three lessons were observed: two were excellent and one was very good.

139. The department does very well with the range of courses provided. Students with average to low baselines at the start of a course achieve excellent results by the end of their programme. There is a good mix of two and three-dimensional work and some interesting projects are undertaken in both information technology and video. Displays in the department and around the school are used to celebrate achievement as well as acting as an effective teaching aid. The extra-curricular and enrichment provision is excellent. Lunchtime clubs are held on a weekly basis.

140. Leadership and Management are very good with effective support for the relatively new members of the department. Departmental documentation is very sound ensuring all requirements are met. Key skills are integrated with each unit of work and there are three themes each year.

141. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained. Results continue to be above the national averages and the quality of the teaching is the significant factor that contributes to this. The department make a significant contribution to the quality of the whole school provision.

CITIZENSHIP

142. Provision overall for Citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching at Key Stage 4
- Provision for students to take GCSE short course from Year 9

Areas for Improvement

- Mapping & auditing of Citizenship provision across the school
- Assessment, recording and reporting
- Pupil portfolios
- Teacher knowledge & expertise in the Citizenship curriculum

143. Students in years 9 and 10, following the new GCSE Short course in Citizenship, are on target to reach average and above standards by the time they take the examination. Year 10 students, for example, engaged in a useful discussion about a court case and could give a wide variety of examples of how an individual's behaviour can impact on the rest of society. At Key Stage 3 no specific Citizenship lessons were observed. However, in Personal & Social Education lessons students worked on topics which contribute to the three strands of the Citizenship curriculum. In particular there was an emphasis on students developing their ability to participate and act as responsible citizens. In this respect students demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of ways to behave and respond as responsible members of a community.

144. Teaching at Key Stage 4 was good in the small number of lessons observed. Teacher and student relationships are effective in ensuring that there is appropriate interaction with the subject matter. Planning against the objectives of the GCSE Citizenship examination course is secure. Mainly teachers in middle management positions teach the subject, which strengthens its status. However, subject knowledge and teaching expertise specific to the new Citizenship curriculum is not secured at Key Stage 3. Student learning is good and they increase their learning in lessons. Students in Years 9, 10 & 11 made gains in their

knowledge and understanding of what it means to know one's rights and yet also be responsible citizens.

145. The school has been teaching a joint PSHE, Citizenship and Lifeskill's course since 2001. However, since the introduction of the new national curriculum subject of Citizenship in September 2002 the scheme of work is no longer adequate in identifying the specific citizenship learning objectives at Key Stage 3. It does not provide a clear plan of what should be taught in order to ensure judgement can be made about student attainment at the end of the key stage. There is no overall indication of what contribution other aspects of school life make to students' Citizenship education. Assessment, recording and reporting arrangements are not yet sufficiently related to the Citizenship curriculum at Key Stage 3 and students do not have portfolios of evidence that will support or record their individual achievements. The school has been innovative in providing the opportunity for some year 9 classes to begin the GCSE short course a year early and gain the qualification. This should help to raise the profile of Citizenship and establish a sound curriculum base providing that in all years the programme takes account of students' previous learning.

146. The school is looking to develop and improve the overall provision for Citizenship through the appointment of a subject leader.

147. The PSHE programme is good. In the majority of lessons observed teaching was satisfactory or better. All students follow a joint course in personal, social and health education, citizenship and Lifeskills. This includes sex education and careers education. The PSHE elements of the course are well planned and effective in promoting the personal and social development of students.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

148. The quality of provision for design and technology is **good**.

Strengths

- The quality of leadership and management
- Teaching is very good
- The standards achieved in sixth form lessons
- Teamwork is good. All staff are enthusiastic about the subject and committed to high standards
- The provision for Special Educational Needs students
- Pupils have positive attitudes in lessons and try hard in their work
- Staff work hard to ensure the learning environment is stimulating

Areas for Improvement

- Improve resources to meet the demands of the modern design and technology curriculum. Especially CAD/CAM equipment
- The match of teachers' expertise needed to deliver the full range of design and technology activities to students in all year groups.

149. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 show that standards are in line with expectations and this was confirmed by the work seen during the inspection. The work of students in Year 8 seen shows that, as a result of improvements that are being led by the head of department, standards are rising. Students develop a range of design skills and can apply these to working in a range of materials including wood, plastic, fabrics and food. They make good progress, take care to work accurately and are very enthusiastic about their work

150. Overall, GCSE results in 2002 were below national averages. The poorest results occurred in food technology. The best results were seen in Systems and Control, Graphics

and Textiles, where results were close to the national average. Over the last three years results in design and technology have shown a slight trend downward. The small numbers of students taking design and technology in the sixth form in 2002 all gained grades A to C.

151. Students of all ages enjoy their lessons and show enthusiasm and a commitment to work hard and achieve high standards. They behave well and the very good relationships between students and with their teachers contribute to the achievement and progress in practical lessons.

152. The high quality of the teaching is a major strength. It is at least satisfactory, usually good and frequently very good or excellent. Teachers use their excellent knowledge of, and interest in the subject in lessons that are planned very well. They manage the pupils very well and ensure the pace of lessons is brisk with a good range of activities to hold the interest and imagination of students of all abilities. They teach design well, valuing the students' ideas which they help them to develop without unduly influencing the outcomes.

153. The programme of work in design and technology meets statutory requirements. Recent changes in Key Stage 3 give students the opportunity to study food technology and this has enriched and broadened their experience of the subject. Currently students in Year 7 are not able to study design and technology. This is a temporary arrangement due to the shortage of specialist teachers and is likely to be remedied in September 2003. The range of design and technology options for GCSE includes food technology, graphics, resistant materials and textiles. The procedures for recording and reporting the assessment of students' work are very good. They include a very good system for students to make self-assessments in which they can also make judgements about how their literacy is improving. Students on GCSE courses use an excellent system of recording their marks on an interactive spreadsheet which gives them an opportunity to calculate the effects of higher marks on the grades they will achieve. This system demonstrates how teachers use their very high levels of ICT skills in all aspects of the design and technology department's work.

154. Students with Special Educational Needs are provided for very well and they have a very good experience of the subject. Teachers are aware of their needs and prepare for them in their planning. During lessons they give appropriate support. When personal tutors accompany students, design and technology teachers brief them well and provide guidance about how they might best help. The personal tutors are experienced and provide very good support in practical lessons. Special Educational Needs students enjoy and look forward to design and technology lessons. They make good progress.

155. The leadership and management of design and technology are very good. Much has been achieved in a short time. A strong new team has been established and all staff feel valued and are committed to and enthusiastic about future plans. There is a clear emphasis on quality in all aspects of the department's philosophy, programmes for learning and general operation. What has been put in place is already having a positive impact on raising achievement and attainment. The department's work is supported by a technician who gives good service. His contribution to learning through the care of resources and through his work in lessons is very good. All staff have good access to training in order to improve their practice.

156. Recent measures have ensured that the issues identified in the last inspection have now been addressed. Progress is satisfactory.

The department should now: -

- Continue to raise standards of attainment at Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Raise standards of attainment for the most able students.
- Extend the design and technology curriculum to students in Year 7.
- Implement the very good design and technology development plan.

GEOGRAPHY

157. Provision is **good** overall.

Strengths

- Good teaching motivates students to improve their achievement.
- Students find the subject interesting because teachers plan their lessons thoughtfully.
- Students behave well because teachers have high expectations and manage classes effectively so all are included.

Areas for Improvement

- More use of assessment information to inform curriculum planning and raise attainment.
- Improve the accuracy of assessment in Years 7 to 9 when using National Curriculum levels.
- Plan for the use in lessons of information and communication technology (ICT), and the promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

158. In 2002 the proportion of Year 11 students gaining GCSE grades A*-C was at the national average, but below average for grades A*-G. Students performed significantly less well in geography compared with other school subjects. Progress in Years 10 – 11 was as seen in similar schools. A larger proportion of students attained grade C than in previous years. The number of students choosing geography in Year 10 has increased and the gender balance is better.

159. Standards in work seen at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are close to national expectations. By the time students are aged 13 they understand that changes in the physical world are due to inter related factors. For example, the increase in global warming. Students in Year 11 interpret statistics to understand patterns in physical and human geography.

160. Students make good progress in Years 7 to 9. For example, they increase their understanding of why settlements grow and rivers shape landscapes. Students make progress as expected in Years 10 and 11. They assemble much knowledge from case studies but are less successful in using this in answers. Students with special educational needs make progress as well as other students.

161. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge that is used well to increase students' understanding. For example, a teacher questioned Year 9 higher attaining students about their knowledge of earthquakes and their effects in different countries. Consequently they understood how a country's economic standing affects its handling of disasters. Lower attaining students and those with special needs also respond productively to challenging tasks and high expectations. In a Year 8 lesson on changes in manufacturing industry the teacher focussed very skilfully on improving literacy and numeracy. This supported students' ability to use geographical evidence in their answers. The use of ICT and the promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are insufficiently planned. Teachers manage classes with skill so all are included and behaviour is rarely an issue. They mark work regularly but this could be more

helpful in giving targets for improvement, and making students more aware of National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9.

162. Geography has made good improvement since the previous inspection. The relatively new head of department gives a clear lead to raising the quality of teaching and learning. Consequently students' achievement is improving, but has yet to be fully realised in raising attainment, especially for average and lower attaining students. The attainment of higher attaining students is not yet high enough. While management is good, assessment data is not used enough to raise achievement further.

HISTORY

163. The quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good
- Good strategies to actively involve all students of different abilities
- Students are making good progress in acquiring historical skills
- Lesson planning is good with clear objectives that are understood by the students
- The department is well led
- Relationships between students and staff is good
- There is a good range of history enrichment activities including visits

Areas for Improvement

- GCSE results are below average
- Assessment to support student achievement
- Insufficient use of information and communication technology (ICT)

164. Students arrive at the school with attainment levels below average and by the end of Year 9 achieve standards in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress in understanding how historians work because the teaching is both challenging and supportive for all abilities. This good progress is now continuing in Years 10 and 11 with students able to make reasoned comments on the reliability and usefulness of a range of historical source material. They are systematically developing new skills and have good background knowledge of the topics that they are studying. Teachers know their students well and make sure that they all benefit from what is offered. Consequently those students who sometimes find the work difficult also make good progress. In all year groups students respond well to the subject which they obviously enjoy.

165. Since September 2002 the department has been well led by two enthusiastic teachers who are very well supported by the rest of the department. This dedicated team of young staff has transformed this department. It is now well focussed on raising standards through activities that are systematically developing confidence and historical skills for students that match the national expectations for all year groups.

166. These improvements are not yet reflected in the results at GCSE level. In 2002, GCSE results at the higher grades were below average for both boys and girls. The proportion of students attaining results across the full range of grades was also below the national average. This represents no improvement since the last inspection. Students do less well in history compared to other subjects in the school.

167. Standards observed in lessons do not reflect these examination results. In Year 9 and 11 standards are in line with national expectations with more able students above this and reflect the improvements that have been put into place since September. Progress is always satisfactory and often good. By Year 9 students can investigate a range of sources

about King Harold and discuss their reliability. They can confidently access a range of source materials about the transportation of slaves and use this information to accurately draw conclusions. They have a satisfactory understanding of chronology and are developing good source interpretation skills. These are further developed by Year 11 as they investigate the impact and results of the New Deal on the economy of the USA. They can confidently discuss a range of sources about the Yalta Conference and use their prior understanding to help them make appropriate conclusions

168. Teaching is often good or very good. There is now a strong emphasis on matching teaching to meet the different learning needs of the students so that they can be successful in their learning. There is a good balance between developing knowledge and understanding and ensuring that students are systematically developing their historical skills. Teachers are confident in their subject, use historical terminology confidently and teach in an interesting and stimulating manner. Lessons are always well planned with the clear objectives of lessons made known to students. Teachers have a good understanding of their students and use a variety of stimulating and challenging activities to meet the needs of their differing interests and attainment levels. Lessons are effectively paced, support to individuals and groups is good and questioning often very challenging. Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve.

169. The department is well led. There are some good strategies for improvement in the Department Improvement Plan. The scheme of work is being effectively revised to involve students more with their learning and to focus on curriculum objectives. Borderline students are being targeted but more work needs to be done with student assessment so that it can inform planning. ICT is being systematically written into the revised schemes of work but remains underdeveloped. The department has made some progress since the last inspection but most of this has been in the last few months and standards are still too low. However all teachers have a shared vision for the future and the department therefore has a good capacity for improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

170. The quality of provision for information and communications technology (ICT) is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching in ICT lessons.
- The quality of learning in ICT lessons.
- Good resources (hardware, systems and technical support)
- Achievement in Year 7
- Protection for children using the Internet.
- Most students have positive attitudes and behave well.
- The positive experience of students with special educational needs.

Areas for Improvement

- Standards at Key stages 3 and 4
- Compliance with the National Curriculum.
- The use of ICT in all subjects.
- The strategic management of ICT.

171. The standards reached by students at the end of Key Stage 3 are well below the level expected within the National Curriculum. Pupils in Year 7 are taught a discrete ICT course introduced in September 2002. This is having a positive impact and the standards seen in those lessons are a little above what is expected for their age group. However, the students are not given sufficient time to apply the computer skills they have learned in their studies in other subjects. The standards reached by students at age 16 are below the level expected

within the National Curriculum. Students following GCSE or vocational options achieve satisfactory standards. ICT capability in Key Stage 4 is helped by the use of computers in art, business education, design and technology English and mathematics. For students in the sixth form standards are appropriate for the courses they are taking.

172. The quality of teaching in ICT lessons is satisfactory or better with almost half of teaching very good. The best teaching is seen in Year 7 and in the sixth form. Teachers prepare their lessons well, have very good subject knowledge and a high level of ICT skills that help them to cope with the range of help required in their mixed ability groups. In a lesson where students were learning how to transfer information from a database to a spreadsheet the teacher used the data projector to give a good demonstration and supplemented this with a very good worksheet for students reference during their task. In this way he was able to devote time to work with those who found the task very challenging. In a GNVQ class in the sixth form the teacher had set a very challenging project where students had to design and produce a three fold leaflet based on the study of how Bitmaps and Vector Graphics fit different business applications.. Her excellent subject knowledge, the resources she had produced and the ICT resources available all contributed to high quality learning at a sustained pace during a long session lasting most of a day. When teachers in other subjects apply ICT in students' learning they raise achievement and consolidate skills. In a Year 10 business education lesson on spreadsheets, following a brief but very effective introduction, students quickly engaged with their work drawing on prior skills and using the teacher's guide. They were engrossed in their work setting up the spreadsheet and inserting formulae into cells. They concentrated hard and could use features of the program to present their data in a range of graphical formats.

173. Students behave well in ICT lessons and have a very positive attitude to their work. They arrive very keen to learn and clearly enjoy using computers. Unsatisfactory behaviour was seen in a Year 11 lesson. Students had no access to guidance from worksheets and many quickly became frustrated with the very challenging task. Unable to make progress, they engaged in distracting off-task conversations and behaviour requiring appropriate disciplinary measures from the teacher.

174. ICT lessons reflect the school's commitment to inclusion. Teachers have a good awareness of students with special educational needs in their teaching groups. They anticipate their needs in lesson plans and give them high quality support on an individual basis. They adapt learning resources they produce to help the students with learning difficulties to cope with the tasks the class is given but there are insufficient opportunities for the least able students to complete tasks specifically matched to their abilities or needs. As a result much of the work in their folders remains incomplete. Students attending the SPELD unit make good use of the ICT facilities to build basic literacy and Numeracy skills during sessions at the beginning of the day.

175. The provision for ICT is not meeting statutory requirements for Key Stages 3 and 4. The school has good resources for ICT but their current use for a discrete ICT course in year 7 and to a Dual Award Applied GCSE option at Key Stage 4 prevents many students from their entitlement to follow the programmes of study for ICT or for their entitlement to use ICT in all subjects except physical education. This lack of co-ordination is missing opportunities to raise standards across the curriculum, to raise the quality of teaching in all subjects and to improve the curriculum for the ICT course by drawing in specific content from the other subjects of the National Curriculum. The school has very good systems to protect children who are using the Internet.

176. Overall, the leadership and management of ICT across the school is unsatisfactory. There is no policy for the implementation of the National Curriculum for ICT. How the school expects teachers of all subjects to support the delivery of ICT is not clear. There is no management plan to show how the school intends to move forward from the present

situation. The leadership and management of the ICT department is good. Members of the teaching team have a good grasp of the courses they teach and their deployment and the use of the resources, works well. Three ICT technicians provide very good support and maintain a network which is simple for staff and students to use and is very reliable in operation.

177. Since the last inspection in 1997 the school has made unsatisfactory progress in addressing the issues highlighted for ICT. Very recent changes have improved the provision and are beginning to have a positive effect in Year 7. The mathematics department has made good progress in ensuring the use of ICT to improve data handling skills.

178. In order to improve ICT provision the school should: -

- Raise standards of attainment in ICT for all students at the end of Key stage 3 and by age 16.
- Ensure that the National Curriculum requirements for ICT are met.
- Develop the curriculum to fully integrate National Curriculum subjects into the ICT course and ICT into all subjects.
- Publish a policy and a development plan for the use of ICT for all students and staff.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

179. Overall, the quality of provision in French, German and Spanish is **good**.

Strengths

- Standards of attainment have risen since the last inspection.
- The progress that girls make is very good.
- Teaching is a strength, so most pupils learn well and make good progress.
- There is good support between teaching colleagues, and support for NQTs is good.

Areas for Improvement

- There is no clear leadership in the department as a whole.
- More opportunities for pupils to speak and write at some length, and more use of ICT.
- More consistent, thorough and helpful marking.
- Raising standards even further by promoting boys' performance.

180. In 2002, GCSE results in French at A*-C were above the national average and higher than in the previous year. Girls attained higher results than boys, reflecting the difference found nationally. Both boys and girls performed better than they did in most of their other GCSE subjects. Results in both German and Spanish were below the national averages in 2002, but the number of entries was low, making comparisons less sound. In Spanish, as in French, pupils performed better than in most of their other subjects at GCSE. Five pupils in Year 10, entered early for Spanish GCSE, were successful at Grade B or above.

181. At the end of Key Stage 3, in Year 9, standards of attainment are above average. Pupils write accurately in the foreign language, more able pupils doing this independently and from memory, and less proficient pupils in appropriately structured activities. When listening to simple tape recordings and their teachers, pupils understand the foreign languages confidently and proficiently. The origins of this so clearly lie in Year 7, when their teachers conduct lessons fully in the target languages, setting a pattern that remains a real benefit to pupils. Pupils' pronunciation is generally good, and pupils in Key Stage 3 progress to be able to talk about themselves and aspects of daily life, stating their preferences about sports and types of films, for example. Some pupils in Year 9 hold short conversations with partners, speaking quite fluently and confidently.

182. The majority of pupils in Years 8 and 9 learn two languages, and they develop good skills in the new language quickly. This enables them to choose between two languages when they move into Key Stage 4, or to continue to study both languages. The majority of pupils have chosen to continue with French, the language they started in Year 7, and only small numbers study two languages.

183. The quality of teaching in all three languages is good, and in around half of lessons teaching and learning are very good or excellent. The pace of lessons and the variety of activities that teachers introduce have a very positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils with special needs are well included in lessons and they make generally good progress. A particularly strong feature in lessons is the teachers' extensive use of the foreign language, providing both linguistic and intellectual challenge that pupils live up to, even in Year 7. Teachers have developed a good system of cues for questions they want the pupils to be able to ask, using the first letters of words, and this helps pupils to ask and answer questions in pairs. Language lessons are purposeful and teachers and pupils use the time well, in an atmosphere usually of high expectations. There are exceptions to this, however, particularly at Key Stage 4, when teachers have to work very hard with groups of pupils who find it difficult to make sufficient progress, often due to their own poor attendance.

184. Leadership in the department is currently unsatisfactory. The subject heads give good support to colleagues, including NQTs and temporary colleagues, and there is good mutual support. Schemes of work and support materials are particularly well organised in Spanish. There are some inconsistencies in practices, however, for example in marking and assessment, and in linking sharp lesson objectives to plenaries. There is a need for strong, over-arching leadership, also to extend further the good practice that already exists.

185. Resources and accommodation are good. There is a dedicated ICT facility with great potential, but in spite of this the use of ICT to support language learning is underdeveloped.

186. Overall there has been good progress since the last inspection, and the capacity and will to improve further are strong.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- The teachers' subject knowledge and musical expertise.
- The quality of curriculum planning and the range of opportunities provided for pupils.
- Excellent extra-curricular provision and opportunities for public performances.
- The provision for instrumental teaching is very good.
- Standards at Key Stage 4.
- The accommodation for music.

Areas for Improvement

- Standards at Key Stage 3.
- Provision for ICT at Key Stage 3.
- A clearer focus on students' learning during practical work at Key Stage 3.

188. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, judged by teacher assessments in 2002 shows that around 59% of students achieved the national standard expected in music. This is just below the national average. There is, however, a wide range of ability within classes, with the most able students attaining above the national expectation. Generally, girls achieve better than boys.

189. Many students are making good progress overall. They are actively engaged in an appropriate range of music making activities, which consolidate their understanding of the basic elements of music. Currently, insufficient attention is paid however to applying their understanding to practical activities. Keyboard skills are weak and key concepts such as repetition, dynamics and contrasts are not well applied to improvisation and composition work.

190. Whilst pupils have the opportunity to appraise their own work and the music of others, a greater emphasis needs to be placed on applying their knowledge and understanding to refining and improving their work, particularly through the use of ICT.

191. At Key Stage 4 the Music Department has a history of exam success. In 2002 for example, 100% of students achieved A*-C grades. Students can make good use of music technology to compose music and the standard of composition is generally high.

192. Currently, 9% of students have instrumental and vocal lessons and this contributes significantly to the good standards at Key Stage 4 and in extra-curricular activities.

193. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 3 and 4 ranges from satisfactory to good. Students benefit from secure, well-planned lessons which are delivered at a brisk pace. Although learning objectives are clearly explained at the start of lessons, there is insufficient consolidation of objectives during practical work.

194. A good range of teaching strategies are employed and students respond very well to enthusiastic teaching. Good use is made of the excellent facilities for music. Students work co-operatively and handle expensive musical equipment with care. Good support through differentiated work is provided for all students in mixed ability classes and special needs students make good progress.

195. The music curriculum at Key Stage 3 and 4 is meticulously planned and new assessment arrangements are beginning to track students' progress against national curriculum levels. 13 visiting music teachers offer wide opportunities for students and the quality and range of extra-curricular activities is excellent.

196. The department is well led and all staff work well as a team.

197. In the last inspection, music was judged to have a high profile in the school. With new staff, this profile has continued and is well deserved.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teachers know students well, are good role models and enjoy good relationships
- Specialist teachers work very hard and are good at teaching basic skills
- Levels of work challenge pupils
- Lessons are well planned and structured and link theory to practice
- Teachers organise students efficiently
- Extra curricular provision is very good.

Areas for Improvement

- Standards at GCSE
- Monitoring & Evaluation
- Levels of activity in some lessons
- Consistent routines for sharing learning objectives, dealing with student answers, expectations of students to listen, dealing with difficult behaviours
- Opportunities for students to demonstrate
- Opportunities to evaluate & improve their own and others' performances

199. Standards by the end of Key Stage 3 are above national expectations. Students know how to and are able to keep possession in small game contexts. Students learn and refine new skills and have good basic knowledge of rules and how to use them in competition. In athletics many students demonstrate good performances in jumping activities.

200. Standards by the end of Key Stage 4 are in line with national expectations with some individual students well above. In badminton students can use light touch shots and know when to use them in competition. In dance students are able to choreograph and perform advanced motifs.

201. GCSE performance in 2002 was well below the national average with 26% gaining A* - C grades, national 56%. Students' performances were slightly better than their overall average point scores across all subjects. The standard of the current Year 11 is better.

202. Special educational needs pupils make the same progress as other pupils. Provision is good.

203. Extra curricular activities impact very positively on the standards of work of many individual students. Many staff give generously of their time and work very hard. Opportunities beyond the curriculum are provided for teams and individuals to compete at various levels including national.

204. Teaching and learning at both key stages are good. Specialist staff are good at teaching basic skills. Lesson plans are good. Learning objectives are clear but inconsistently shared with pupils, in both verbal and written forms at the beginning lessons. These are central to the delivery of best lessons and to the plenary. The level of work demanded of students is almost always appropriate with a degree of challenge. Teachers are skilled at incorporating question and answer opportunities which helps students to relate theory and practice. In dance an opportunity to communicate a theoretical base is missed. All teachers are very good at explaining and give clear instructions. Older students benefit from clear demonstrations in table tennis for the spin serve, in badminton for the flick serve and smash and in high jump. Lessons are very well structured into the various phases with a good range of activities to maximise participation. All teachers are good at explaining and organising students. Resources are sufficient and well organised. Student performances

benefit from pertinent whole class feedback but there is scope to increase the feedback given to individual students to further accelerate progress. Students need to be asked to demonstrate their work more often and older students to evaluate their own and others' performances.

205. Students are well known by teachers who earn respect through enthusiasm, competence and care. All are good role models. This impacts positively on relationships and behaviour. Strategies for managing behaviour are wide ranging but dealing with student answers and expectations of students to listen are not consistent across the department and different approaches vary in their effectiveness. There are very good examples of communicating expectations of attitude for example the teacher asking pupils to work hard for the teacher.

206. The deployment of support staff in GCSE is not planned and is ineffective to maximise pupils' learning, especially girls'. The lack of routine for managing pupil answers in one session resulted in boys dominating. Levels of GCSE work, both practical and theory are appropriate to pupils' needs. Some classes experience a narrow range of teaching and learning styles with too much teacher talk and copying notes. There is little evidence of the use of ICT. GCSE lessons are delivered at a good pace. Homework is appropriately used.

207. Student attitudes and behaviour at both key stages are good. Relationships with teachers are excellent. There are high standards of kit and footwear but girls do not change for some extra curricular activities. Pupils are friendly and well mannered. In a few classes pupils lack self-motivation and despite the considerable efforts of teachers do not physically work hard enough. Some students, including GCSE, chatter when the teacher talks. Some individual behaviours of older pupils are extreme and staff need support to ensure the learning of the vast majority is sustained.

208. The work of the department is well led and managed by the head of department, ably supported by the head of girls' PE. The skills of specialist teachers meet the demands of the curriculum well. Schemes of work are good. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Pupils are assessed at the end of a block of work to National Curriculum levels and these are aggregated and standardised at the end of the key stage. Monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet sufficiently embedded. Lesson observation, scrutiny of GCSE work, and pupil targets need further development. Resources are plentiful but there is no proper high jump landing module.

209. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. There are insufficient designated teaching areas for classes in inclement weather. The sports hall is unheated and requires many repairs. Changing facilities for both the gym and sport hall are too small and very poorly maintained, neither has working showering facilities. Storage facilities in the gym are not secure.

210. Improvement since the last inspection is good. All issues have been addressed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

211. Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- the quality of teaching and learning is good
- planning and preparation of lessons is good and secures a good range of learning opportunities for 11-16 year old students of all abilities
- students have positive attitudes to religious education and enjoy good relationships with teachers and peers
- the department is well led and managed and teachers work conscientiously to deliver quality religious education
- improvement since the last inspection has been good

Areas for Improvement

- standards of attainment have improved but remain below local and national expectations
- the head of department requires continuing professional development opportunities
- formalised structures and systems are needed to support departmental improvement
- procedures for monitoring and evaluation
- expectations of students' behaviour and quantity of work
- the provision of information and communication technology (ICT) is underdeveloped
- contact with local faith communities needs to be developed

212. At the end of both key stages levels of attainment are broadly in line with local and national expectations and are improving. The majority of students reach expected standards though a minority attains below expectations, which reflects the range of students' prior attainment on entry to the school. In the GCSE short course in 2002 40% of students achieve A*-C grades, a similar result to the previous two years and an improvement of 11% from the previous inspection. However this result is 11.5% below the national A*-C average and almost 10% below the school's average. 10% fewer boys than girls achieve A*-C grades. 97% of students gain A*-G grades, this is 3% above the national average and a very creditable performance as almost all students in a cohort are entered. Low levels of literacy skills and inconsistent attendance limit the achievement of some students.

213. In Key Stage 4 Year 11 students show some understanding of how religion, for example Islam recently is presented positively and negatively through the media and of how reporting can affect public perceptions and attitudes. Year 10 students have limited knowledge of Judaism but can compare aspects of Jewish and Christian practice. In Key Stage 3 students in Year 9 show knowledge and awareness of different religious attitudes to the environment and Year 7 students of religious perspectives on evil and suffering. Year 8 students have good understanding of concepts and symbolism associated with Easter and of types of celebration in different cultures and Christian traditions.

214. The quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory and in almost three-quarters of lessons it is good or better. In the best lessons, thorough planning ensures good pace and a variety of strategies and tasks which engage students of all abilities and enable them to learn. Students are well managed, relationships are very good and students respond well to teachers' high expectations of behaviour and quality of work. Homework is used effectively to extend learning and students' work is regularly assessed to monitor progress and provide targets for improvement.

215. Students' learning is good or better in almost three-quarters of lessons and is never less than satisfactory. Increasingly students know at which attainment level they are working and what they must do to improve. More able students and those with special educational

needs make sound or good progress though occasionally slower workers need more time to think and complete tasks.

216. Students' attitudes and behaviour are at least satisfactory in all lessons and in almost three-quarters they are good or very good. Students show interest in the subject content and they collaborate well on paired and group tasks, particularly those involving discussion. They show respect for the values and beliefs of others. Where behaviour is less than good, students are not on task and resultant low level disturbance is distracting and slows progress.

217. Leadership and management of the department are good. In two years the head of department has developed examination courses, schemes of work and assessment. She has gained the commitment of departmental staff and developed an action plan appropriately focused on raising standards. She and the department would benefit from the establishment of formal structures and support mechanisms to secure ongoing development.

218. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Standards at both key stages are rising, the quality of provision is good and the department has the capacity to continue to improve. Priorities for development include appropriate professional development for the head of department and more frequent and rigorous assessment to monitor students' progress and raise standards.

DRAMA

219. Overall, the quality of provision in drama is very good at Key Stage 4.

Strengths

- Very good student achievement and progress.
- The quality of teaching
- Detailed lesson and curriculum planning.
- Excellent extra-curricular provision and opportunities for public performances.
- Quality of teacher and pupil relationships.
- Provision for social and personal development.

Areas for Improvement:

- Provision for drama in Year 8 and 9.

220. Standards in Drama at Key Stage 4 are good. In 2002, 62.6% of students achieved A*-C grades which is just below the national average. In 2001 however, 94.7% of students achieved the higher grades. 100% of students consistently achieve A*-G grades each year. Considering the wide range of ability represented by groups and that students have little previous experience of drama at Key Stage 3, this represents very good achievement and progress overall.

221. In lessons, students demonstrate sound knowledge of dramatic rules and conventions. They are able to effectively express themselves using physical theatre techniques, mime, voice and monologues. Year 10 students are able to use role play and characterisation to very effectively develop and perform extracts from the Play Blue Remembered Hills for example. Many students use technical vocabulary to evaluate their work, although more attention should be paid to providing less able students with the opportunity to articulate their knowledge and understanding.

222. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and often excellent. Lesson planning is detailed and the range of teaching and learning styles employed in lessons is excellent. Students are very well managed throughout lessons. They are encouraged to

relax and build confidence through very effective warm-up activities. Planned group activities are excellent, often enabling less able pupils to interact effectively with a range of other students. Practical work is characterised by excellent relationships between teachers and students. Students are engaged, committed and appreciative of teaching which is creative, energetic and skilful.

223. Students' behaviour in lessons is consistently positive. They show considerable respect for each other's work and ideas and respond well to creative and imaginative tasks. The quality of their written work is very good.

224. The very positive and purposeful atmosphere generated in lessons provides excellent opportunities for personal development.

225. At Key Stage 3, drama is only offered fully in Year 7. Further development is needed to provide opportunities for students in Year 8 and 9.

226. The Drama department is very enthusiastically led and committed staff provide excellent extra-curricular opportunities for students. Departmental planning and assessment is secure and opportunities for sharing good practice across the department is having a good impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

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

GCE AS level courses

| Subject | Number entered | % gaining grades A-E | | % gaining grades A-B | | Average point score | |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| | | School | England | School | England | School | England |
| Art | 6 | 100 | 88 | 50 | | 8.00 | |
| Biology | 10 | 70 | 84 | 30 | | 4.00 | |
| Business Studies | 14 | 57 | 87 | 0 | | 2.29 | |
| Chemistry | 6 | 83 | 87 | 17 | | 4.67 | |
| Design | 5 | 100 | 85 | 20 | | 5.60 | |
| English Literature | 29 | 93 | 62 | 14 | | 4.69 | |
| French | 9 | 78 | 66 | 44 | | 4.40 | |
| Geography | 6 | 83 | 61 | 17 | | 5.00 | |
| German | 1 | 100 | 64 | 0 | | 4.00 | |
| History | 7 | 100 | 67 | 14 | | 4.86 | |
| Mathematics | 18 | 56 | 44 | 6 | | 2.22 | |
| Media Studies | 11 | 91 | 66 | 36 | | 6.00 | |
| Music | 6 | 100 | 69 | 50 | | 7.00 | |
| Physical Education | 8 | 88 | 45 | 12 | | 2.44 | |
| Physics | 7 | 43 | 59 | 29 | | 2.86 | |
| Religious Education | 7 | 57 | 64 | 0 | | 2.00 | |
| Spanish | 2 | 100 | 69 | 50 | | 7.00 | |
| Theatre Studies | 7 | 86 | 68 | 71 | | 6.86 | |

GCE A level and AVCE courses

| Subject | Number entered | % gaining grades A-E | | % gaining grades A-B | | Average point score | |
|---|----------------|----------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| | | School | England | School | England | School | England |
| Art | 5 | 100 | 96 | 80 | 46 | 8.40 | 6.57 |
| Arabic | 1 | 100 | 93 | 100 | 56 | 8.00 | 6.84 |
| Biology | 4 | 75 | 88 | 0 | 34 | 3.50 | 55.25 |
| Business Studies | 12 | 75 | 92 | 25 | 32 | 3.83 | 5.50 |
| Chemistry | 5 | 80 | 90 | 0 | 43 | 4.40 | 5.90 |
| Comm. Studies (Media + Theatre Studies) | 19 | 100 | 93 | 26 | 31 | 5.37 | 5.53 |
| English Literature | 22 | 77 | 95 | 5 | 37 | 3.36 | 5.91 |
| French | 8 | 100 | 89 | 13 | 38 | 4.00 | 5.59 |
| Full Design & Technology | 7 | 86 | 91 | 0 | 30 | 4.29 | 5.38 |
| Geography | 7 | 71 | 92 | 14 | 38 | 3.14 | 5.74 |
| History | 11 | 55 | 88 | 18 | 35 | 2.73 | 5.45 |
| Mathematics | 17 | 65 | 87 | 6 | 43 | 2.71 | 5.80 |
| Physics | 10 | 70 | 88 | 20 | 40 | 3.00 | 5.67 |
| Religious Studies | 4 | 100 | 92 | 25 | 38 | 6.00 | 5.84 |
| Spanish | 2 | 100 | 89 | 100 | 39 | 8.00 | 5.70 |
| PE Studies | 6 | 50 | 92 | 0 | 25 | 1.67 | 5.09 |
| Health & Social Care AVCE | 8 | N/a | N/a | N/a | N/a | 6.75 | 10.79 |
| Information Technology | 10 | N/a | N/a | N/a | N/a | - | 9.97 |
| | | | | | | | |

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

227. The focus was on mathematics and physics, but work in chemistry and biology was sampled.

MATHEMATICS

228. Overall, the quality of provision for mathematics is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good; teachers make themselves available to help students on a regular basis.
- Students enjoy the subject. They learn in an atmosphere where good relationships prevail and they look forward to using the subject to enable them to enter related university courses.
- Results in 2002 have improved.

Areas for development

- Encouragement to risk and explore understanding is limited.
- As outlined in the development plan, the time is right to introduce marketing strategies to increase the number of students taking the subject.

229. In the sixth form, students are able to take A and AS levels. These are built from combinations of Pure 1, 2 and 3, Statistics 1 and 2 and Mechanics 1 and 2 papers. They can also retake GCSE mathematics in Year 12.

230. Overall, results improved in 2002. However, the number of students taking advanced courses has declined to approximately half of those in 2000 and 2001. Despite these low numbers, there is a spirit of improvement emerging. In 2002, standards at 'A' level, although well below national norms for 2001, represent a significant improvement for the higher grades A – C and some improvement for grades A – E. There have been no full AS entries of late.

231. In the work seen, standards are about average. School predictions indicate that the results may be slightly lower. Students' work in files is of a satisfactory standard. Content indicates that the syllabus is being followed properly. Work includes useful examples, good notes and some exercises, including lots of examination paper questions. Marking is helpful. Students in Year 13 can integrate a simple function. They can use pre-defined substitutions. They can differentiate when required. In the lessons, girls' attainment tends to be lower than that of boys and they need more help. In Year 12, standards are in line with national expectations. Students can interpret a stem and leaf diagram and can find the median from these. Most can estimate from cumulative grouped frequency charts. Mechanics students can calculate the distance that a train needs to travel before stopping and the speed it is travelling when it passes through a station, having applied the brakes too late. All students contribute well to lessons.

232. Students re-taking their GCSE mathematics enjoy lessons on probability. They know the probability scale impossible (0) and definite (1) but need reminding of a two-way table, from which they find it difficult to draw probabilities. They clearly need more practice in the different forms questions can take but gained a good overview from a discussion with the teacher.

233. The quality of teaching and learning are good, overall. Teachers have clear aims and objectives which they share with students and lesson planning is good. In Year 13, the pace is quite fast, perhaps a little too fast for some in the group. The majority, however, cope well. Expectations are about right. Teachers check homework and promote learning positively. In one lesson, students learned effectively how to integrate using substitution. The small number of students in groups means that students do not experience much competition and this reduces the amount of challenge they encounter. In a Year 12 lesson, the teacher continually involved students, setting them appropriate tasks and using resources very well.

In mechanics, the teacher uses high expectations well, for example, on occasions makes students think hard and work out questions on their own and on other occasions spells out algebraic manipulation. Students with learning difficulties are welcomed to the groups and their problems are catered for well.

234. Students indicate firmly that they are enjoying their mathematics courses in the sixth form. All those interviewed had gained at least A at GCSE mathematics. Generally, they like algebra but some find calculus difficult. Although students like mechanics, they find some questions on friction problematic. Overall, they are given many practice papers to work but find that the Pure I examination occurs too early for them to give of their best. Students are happy with the standard of teaching and marking but would like to use computers more. They report that homework is very regular and that they record it in their diaries as do staff in their planners. They are using their 'A' mathematics to enable them to follow related courses at university or in the armed services for example in business studies, accountancy and a mathematics degree.

235. Leadership is good and is moving the subject forward. The department is working to one end and has a vibrancy that will enable it to attract more students, an area for development.

SCIENCE

236. In **chemistry** students' performance in the 2001 GCE A-level examinations was below average. There were no higher grades. The results for 2002 were better with one high grade. Students generally did as expected considering their GCSE results. Students' performance in AS-level examinations was approaching average with one higher grade. Students generally did as expected considering their GCSE results. The teaching seen was satisfactory and students made satisfactory progress. Over the last three years there has been some improvement in A-level performance but AS-level performance has remained about the same.

237. In **biology** students' performance in the 2001 GCE A-level examinations was below average. There were no higher grades. The results for 2002 showed a definite improvement with one student obtaining a higher grade. Students generally did as expected, based upon their GCSE performance. The 2001 AS-level results were approaching average and several students obtained higher grades. The 2002 AS-level results however were not as good with no higher grades. Students generally obtained what was expected of them based upon their GCSE results. The teaching seen was good and the students made good progress. Students are given opportunities to develop Key Skills and to take responsibility for their own learning. Over the last three years there has been some improvement in the A-level results but AS-level performance has remained about the same.

PHYSICS

238. Overall the quality of provision in physics is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Student teacher relationships are good
- Students are enthusiastic about physics and enjoy the lessons
- Good use of information communication technology by the teachers for the presentation of information.

Areas for Improvement

- Students do not achieve as well as they should at AS level, as indicated by their previous qualifications
- The monitoring of students' achievement is not yet sufficiently developed in the department
- Strategies that encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning are not sufficiently developed.

239. The students' performance in the 2001 GCE A-level examination was well below average overall but there were a few higher grades and students generally achieved what was expected of them based upon their GCSE performance. The 2001 results showed an improvement but student numbers were small. In the 2001 AS-level examination students' performance was below average although there were a few higher grades. However, they did not achieve as well as expected based upon their GCSE performance. The 2002 AS-level results were not as good as the previous year and no higher grades were obtained. Over the last 3 years there has been some improvement in A-level performance but no improvement in AS-level performance.

240. The quality of students' work seen indicates an improving picture in some areas and was satisfactory overall. AS-level students in Year 12 were able to use equations of motion to solve problems but were not always able to select the correct equation to use in the first instance. Students' use basic electrical formulae reasonably well to solve problems but sometimes do not use the correct units in their answers. Most of the work appears to be fairly closely directed by the teacher and there is little evidence of independent research and prior preparation for lessons. At A-level students show a good grasp of quantum physics but are less successful with mechanics. Students generally take pride in their written work and the files seen were well organised and well presented.

241. The teaching overall is satisfactory. All the lessons seen were satisfactory or above and a third of the teaching seen was good. Good teaching was characterised by good lesson planning that placed the emphasis on a high degree of student involvement together with motivational strategies that stimulated student problem solving. Teacher expectations for student progress and productivity were high. For example in a Year 12 lesson on thermodynamics, the teacher used an interactive computer presentation to outline the first law of thermodynamics and then ran a series of questions to evaluate students' understanding of the topic. Students responded to the questions in a teacher led discussion. The students were motivated by the visual presentation of the topic and enjoyed the friendly but competitive atmosphere in answering the questions. The correct answers given by the programme enabled the students to evaluate their own progress and this resulted in good learning. Lessons that were less successful tended to concentrate far too long on concepts that should have been established in Year 11. In several cases the students came to the lessons without prior preparation which would have enabled them to move on to more challenging work after a brief recap of essential prior knowledge. Consequently the pace of

the lessons was too slow. Students' assessment work is generally well marked, with grades reflecting A or AS-level performance. Students know their predicted grades based upon prior GCSE performance and are given some guidance on how to improve. Although some independent learning does take place, this aspect of lesson planning is not fully developed. Student expectations of how much time is reasonable to spend on independent work are low and do not match teacher expectations.

242. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed and there is a commitment to building on what has already been achieved. The strategies to monitor achievement at both AS and A-Level need further development. Teachers are very well qualified and they are respected by their students. A new scheme of work is under development and needs to identify a range of approaches to encourage effective learning based upon the good practice already taking place within the department.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

243. The focus was on design and technology

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

BUSINESS

244. The inspection focus was not on any subjects in this curriculum area but business was sampled.

245. A level **business** is an increasingly popular subject and the provision is good. A level results were below average in 2001 but broadly as expected considering students' previous attainment. Results in 2002 showed improvement. Students are achieving well. Teaching and learning are good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

246. The focus of the inspection was on information and communication technology at AVCE Level in Years 12 and 13.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

247. Overall, the quality of provision is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The teachers' good subject knowledge.
- The relationships between teachers and students.
- The positive attitudes of students about the courses.

Areas for Improvement

- The provision of structured ICT courses for students not taking AVCE courses
- Documentation for ICT in the Sixth Form

248. Standards of students' work seen during the inspection are at expected levels for both Years 12 and 13.

249. There is a wide range of ability in both Years 12 and 13. A few students have poor attendance records, and because of their lack of commitment, they are likely to be ungraded for some units of their work. Students have a good understanding of databases and are competent at creating and amending databases from their own source material. Skills in

word-processing, spreadsheets, databases and the use of e-mail are generally satisfactory. Students use hyperlinks and screen dumps into their documents.

250. Some students are working on a systems installation unit. They know the internal workings and components of a computer and are making good use of the Internet to source components for their systems. In both years, higher attaining students have well organised and structured files that assist them in their work and help them achieve higher grades.

251. Achievement is satisfactory. Most use computers and software confidently. Despite no previous experience, progress is satisfactory in using a wide range of software to complete their units of work required for the AVCE-ICT examination.

252. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Good features include good subject knowledge and good expectations that result in students making good gains in understanding and working hard. Good assessment procedures include precise marking that informs students well about the quality of their work. Lessons are well planned and good use is made of the technology, including data projectors. The sharing of objectives at the start of the lesson helps students understand and to focus on what is required of them. Teachers know their students very well and set them realistic yet challenging targets. Students work well in lessons, although a small number are too frequently late for the start of the lesson. They generally show independence but also good co-operation with one another and with the teacher.

253. Management of the subject in the Sixth Form is good. However, more documentation, beyond the outline planning sheet and the current examination syllabus, needs to be produced to assist teaching and learning. Access to computers for course work other than discrete ICT is limited.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

254. The focus for the inspection was on physical education

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

255. Overall, the quality of provision is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Students' achievements are sound in relation to their GCSE results.
- Students' attitudes are good and students have very good relationships with their teachers.
- The analysis of results is used well to inform curriculum planning.
- Good planning and positive strategies help students' learning.

Areas for Improvement

- Raise attainment levels.
- Regular monitoring of students files to ensure they have an accurate and complete future learning resource.
- Include more opportunities for interactive and independent learning.
- Provide ICT resources in the teaching base.

256. A level results have varied over the last four years, but have mostly been below the national average. In 2001 results were well below average. The 2002 results were better with one student from the six on the A2 course attaining a B grade and three students from the nine on the AS level course attaining C grades. There was a direct correlation between students' attainment at GCSE and their final A level results. Over time the number of higher grades (A or B) has been well below the national average.

257. The standards attained by current students in Years 12 and 13 are below average. Students make satisfactory progress from their low attainment levels on entry to the courses. The attainment and achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language follows a similar pattern. A few students are working above this level and in line with the national average. Students in Year 13 have researched well to produce comprehensive personal performance portfolios. Higher attaining students present their work very well and match it closely to the examination criteria. They make very good use of ICT to illustrate sports movements. Class and homework files of several students are not sufficiently well organised but girls' files are much better presented than those of boys. Students' files are not monitored sufficiently by the teachers to ensure students have an effective learning resource for the future. Students in both years find it hard to use specialist vocabulary but Year 13 students can define terms such as hypertrophy and stroke volume accurately. Year 12 students discuss ethics in sport with knowledge and understanding but over half the group find it difficult to record their answers in sufficient detail. The majority of students attain highly in the practical elements of the course. Boys play football skilfully and several are members of local club teams. When playing netball girls have consistent passing and dodging skills.

258. Students are positive about physical education, and express an interest in the subject. Their attitudes are good and they have very good relationships with one another and their teachers. A few boys do not take enough time and care with their written work.

259. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have very good subject expertise and very good knowledge of the examination criteria. Lessons are very well planned but are not always sufficiently interactive. Teaching is based in one room that has no computers. This limits how some topics are taught and has a negative effect on students' learning. One good lesson was observed when photographs were used to illustrate sporting actions. Teachers give very good individual support and guidance when students are working in class. They circulate well to extend some students and to give extra help to others. The two teachers sharing the responsibility for the sixth form teaching work very closely together and

have devised many positive strategies to help students, especially those who are less able, to organise and plan their work.

260. The leadership and management of the department are good. The teacher with responsibility for the A- level course has analysed previous students' performances in all aspects of the course and as a result has changed department planning. The department has hosted an A- level conference and has gained valuable resources and shared ideas with other professionals. The curriculum is limited to the A-level and AS level examinations. A broader range of accredited courses would allow a more appropriate match to the individual needs of students.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

261. The focus was on health and social care AVCE and GNVQ intermediate courses.

Health and Social Care

262. Overall the quality of provision in health and social care is **very good**.

Strengths

- Attainment of students is above average and students achieve well in relation to their earlier learning.
- Good teaching that supports the development of independent learning.
- Students' positive attitudes and very good relationships with their teachers.
- Excellent enrichment activities linked to the care sector.

Areas for Improvement

- Students attendance and punctuality.
- More frequent links between lesson content and assignment outcomes.
- Regular use of computers within the subject base.

263. Health and Social Care is offered as a six unit ASVCE in Year 12 that builds to a twelve unit AVCE in Year 13. It is also offered at Intermediate GNVQ level in Year 12. Both courses give continuity and progression from the part one vocational course offered in Years 10 and 11.

264. Standards in previous years have been above average for those students who completed their courses but the small numbers involved and different course specifications do not allow accurate comparisons with national figures. The AVCE results in 2002 are better than in previous years and all students completed the course. All students passed the examination and fifty percent attained B and C grades. Students attained higher grades than expected based on their GCSE results. The provision of these courses in the sixth form helps those students resitting GCSE examinations by providing a flexible addition to their other learning commitments and a route into Advanced level subjects. The majority of students on the courses are girls but there are a small number of boys on both the Year 12 courses and their achievement is good and similar to that of girls. Students have aspirations to follow careers linked to care, with nursing, child-care, teaching, chiropody, the police force and social work being popular choices.

265. The attainment of the majority of present students is above the national average and students make good progress. Students in Year 13 understand the fundamental concepts of health and social care and manage their learning independently. Their assignments are thorough and well presented with good use of ICT and subject specific vocabulary. Students are confident in the way they match their evidence to the unit specifications. Because they draft their work and share ideas with their teachers before completion their finished

assignments are often of a high standard. Students in Year 12 report they found the independent style of working very testing at first but are now more comfortable with the process. They are still reliant on their teachers but all students can find accurate information from a variety of sources and share ideas in a group situation. However, when they research from books or the internet a few students copy their notes directly from the source material. Students on the intermediate GNVQ course have a good understanding of a child's social development but they find difficulty in recording their knowledge accurately. Students' learning is frequently based on primary evidence. In one lesson Year 13 students were planning play activities for a group of children who were to come to the school for an activity morning. Visits to health and care settings and visits from practitioners provide evidence for a variety of units. These extensive links, including the Comenius project that involves five European countries, provide students with a thorough understanding of the practice of health care and the demands of the sector locally, nationally and internationally.

266. Teaching and learning are good overall, mainly because of methodical planning, the sharing of objectives at the start of each lesson and focused questioning. When discussing the lesson objectives, teachers do not always link the lesson outcomes sufficiently to the unit criteria. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and draw from a wide range of expertise. During the inspection, one teacher taught a lesson on behavioural psychology, another on the characteristics of bacteria and a third on health and safety standards. Teachers were able to deal with students' responses effectively and their teaching was appropriate and well matched to the students' level of understanding. Teachers use a variety of strategies to develop literacy skills and handouts are appropriate for students' needs. Teachers do not make enough use of the internet for quick research activities within lessons because there are no computers in the main teaching base. However, the department does have access to an adjacent computer room and students use this when working on their assignments. The year plans and 'need to know' sheets provide clear guidelines to help students understand the timing and requirements of each assignment. Students have positive attitudes and very good relationships with their teachers. This contributes to their learning. However, a few students do not attend regularly and are not punctual to lessons. The subject co-ordinator rigorously monitors absence and lateness. Assessment is thorough, regular and informative. Teachers review and evaluate students' draft work giving time schedules and detailed areas for improvement. Students really appreciate the help and guidance provided by their teachers.

267. Leadership and management are very good. Very good documentation and good resources support the teaching and students feel they are a positive factor in their learning. Record keeping is secure as is the long term planning of all courses. The good achievement of students is directly attributable to the teachers' knowledge of them and recognition of their strengths and personal situations. There is a real commitment to meeting the needs of all students and ensuring they make good progress. The courses provide very good opportunities for students' personal, social, moral and cultural development through the many ethical and social aspects of the syllabus and the excellent enrichment activities organised by the subject co-ordinator. The department has moved forwards well since the previous inspection and met the new challenges of the evolving health and social care curriculum successfully.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

268. The focus was on art and music but lessons in performing arts were also sampled.

269. In **performing arts** the attainment of students is good. A number of Year 12 students are particularly confident performers. Teaching is very good. A particular strength is the range of teaching and learning strategies used. Students respond with confidence, imagination and enthusiasm. The quality of provision is very good.

ART and DESIGN

Strengths

- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good to excellent
- Staff commitment to extra curricular provision and the professional programme of life classes
- The leadership and management are very good.
- The curriculum structure meets the needs of the sixth form and progression into higher education.

Weaknesses

- Practical demonstrations of techniques are limited
- Appropriate consumable materials are not always provided by the department

270. The post-16 examination results for 2002 are excellent. The percentage of A – B grades was considerably higher than the national average and all students gained at least an E grade. The standard of work in Years 12 and 13 is good overall. Students are making very good progress. Sketchpads are very good records of their thinking and analysis of ideas. They contain a good amount of research in a wide range of media.

271. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are very good. Four lessons plus the life class extension lesson were observed: two were excellent; two were very good and one was good. Lessons are well led, planned and directed; it is all very purposeful and focused. Students know that there is an expectation to work hard and maintain a good momentum. Good in-depth introductions to lessons are given clearly showing the breadth of knowledge teachers bring to the subject. Formative assessment is ongoing as the teacher gives individual student support for both their practical work as well as their Personal Study. As a result, students are able to respond to new ideas, making improvements as they go. Students are helped by the teacher to set up their work quickly. Their progress is monitored every lesson and linked on a week-by-week basis with their homework. There is a clear link between an individual student's class work and the in-depth research done outside of lessons.

272. While all students are fully engaged with their work, the teacher conducts individual tutorials in the class discussing their written work in depth. The conversation is searching with inputs from both student and teacher. The level of debate is good and confirms the learning that is taking place. In one lesson the work of the Japanese artist Hokusai is linked to the work of Van Gogh explaining that Hokusai had a great influence on his work. This was extended by the teacher sharing the meaning of colour as seen in the world of the Japanese artists and culture. Within this context, learning is very sound and students were able to use media in a much more meaningful way. On one occasion a demonstration of working on a wet ground would have greatly increased the students understanding and use of the watercolour paint.

273. The attitude and behaviour of students throughout the inspection was excellent. In every lesson observed students concentrated throughout, demonstrating both interest and dedication to the task. In conversations with students it is clear that they have confidence in the department and what they provide as an educational experience. Before joining the sixth form, their observations of older students, their work and the atmosphere provided real encouragement for them to take up the subject. They find the work demanding. This requires a good level of engagement but never the less they are prepared to respond and generally meet the requirements of the programme.

274. The curriculum offered is good although the introduction of GNVQ would improve provision significantly. The most frequent media used is acrylic paint which students

themselves have to purchase. Where this is good in the sense that they learn to appreciate the real value of this expensive material, it is a reflection of the level of resources within the department as a whole. The department provides supervised lunch time sessions for students to catch up on their practical work as well as an after school life class. This is a well-attended session. Work is well structured and focused and makes a significant contribution to their progress.

275. Leadership and Management are very good. The two members of the department that deliver the programme have a very co-ordinated approach and each compliments the other. The student records are detailed and thorough for both the practical elements as well as the written work. Where students need support for the written element, appropriate support is provided.

MUSIC

276. Standards in music are very good. Although few students go on to study music in the sixth form, their examination results are consistently high. In 2001 for example, 73% of students achieved A-C grades in the AS examination and in 2002 67% of students went on to achieve A-C at A level. 100% of students regularly achieve A-E grades in music.

277. There are currently 3 students studying Music Technology in the Sixth Form. Attainment is good. Students can confidently use music technology and sequencing software to accurately recreate a printed score. They understand how to control pitch, dynamics and articulation to create a musical interpretation of a piece by Mozart. Composition work is of a high standard. Students effectively use sequencing and recording techniques to develop songs and use their singing and performing skills with great musicality. Their knowledge of harmony and structure is developing well. This enables them to create effective music in a range of styles and idioms.

278. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and students benefit from intensive one to one teaching. The recent purchase of new music technology provides students with the improved facility to work both in groups and independently. Teaching provides a clear structure for sequencing and composing work. Deadlines for assignments are clearly articulated and students make good progress. Students are provided with good opportunities to apply intellectual and creative effort and they respond well. They are very self-motivated and enthusiastic.

279. Relationships between staff and students are excellent and students provide very good role models for younger students. They attend a range of extra-curricular activities and support good quality music making across the department. The music department provides students with a wide range of opportunities to develop performance skills and this is enabling them to develop self-confidence and high self-esteem. Further development is now needed to enhance music technology provision in the department, including the completion of detailed schemes of work and the setting up of dedicated equipment and facilities. Currently, the department has no costed plan to outline how further developments will be delivered.

HUMANITIES

280. The focus was on geography, history and religious studies.

GEOGRAPHY

281. Provision is **good**.

Strengths

- Teachers plan lessons well so students are challenged to work with increasing independence.
- Teachers inform students clearly about their progress and how they can improve.
- Students show much interest in their learning and benefit from mutually helpful relationships in lessons.

Areas for Improvement

- Examination results.
- Continued development of teaching methods that require students to think independently.

282. Advanced level GCE performance in 2001 was well below average. Between 1999 and 2001 the number taking the subject declined as did the average points' score. Girls did better than boys did in attaining higher grades. Results for 2002 appear to be similar, although a greater proportion of a smaller size group obtained grades A-E. At the end of year 12 in 2002 all students gained a grade (the majority with A-C grades) in the advanced supplementary examination. These results were an improvement on those of 2001. Retention of students through the sixth form is high.

283. Standards of work seen are close to what is expected of sixth form students. They have knowledge and understanding of theories that help to explain physical processes. Students use research skills to investigate evidence provided from case studies. For example, Year 13 students used the Internet to build a fact file on different types of volcano. They shared this information and categorised the features of each volcano. Students use models to understand how cities grow and change, but they are slow to recall terms, such as 'gentrification' used earlier in the course. They progress well because a majority begin with modest or below average attainment. They develop skills of scan reading to obtain key facts that they use in discussion, such as how global warming can be considered a hazard. Students from minority groups and students with a special educational need progress equally with other students.

284. Teaching and learning are good. Carefully planned lessons include prepared resources for learning that contribute well to making the best use of time. For example, a transparency projected on a screen to explain the formation of ocean ridges helped students to learn quickly. Teachers use their very strong subject knowledge to advance students learning through lively questions and answers. For example, a teacher used students' knowledge of London and economic changes to further their understanding of the regeneration of the former dock area of East London. Students respond well to the challenge of independent research, and with increasing opportunities they will improve their skills. Higher attaining students do question and see patterns in evidence more than others and show greater independence in their thinking. Teachers provide appropriately for the variation in ability found in classes, and students also support each other's learning commendably. Teachers provide students with clear information on their progress and how they can improve their marks.

285. The head of department gives good leadership to sixth form work. Teaching is appropriately shared with another teacher so that each specialises in an area of the course. Fieldwork makes a valuable contribution to both physical and human geography studies.

HISTORY

286. The quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Good strategies to actively involve all students with different prior attainment and to develop confidence.
- Students are making good progress in acquiring key historical skills.
- Lesson planning is good with clear objectives that are understood by the students.
- The department is well led.
- Relationships between students and staff are very good and this supports effective learning.

Areas for Improvement

- GCE A level and AS level results are well below average.
- Assessment to support student achievement.
- Insufficient use of information and communication technology (ICT).

287. Student performance in GCE A level examinations over the last few years until 2002 has continued to be well below the national average. This shows no improvement when compared with examination results at the time of the last inspection. AS level results are similar. The 2002 AS level results indicate that only 6% of students gained A-C and only 76% gained grades A-E. This compares to 64% and 92% nationally. In the period 1998-2001 the history department has consistently performed below national and school expectations. However in 2002, A level results have improved considerably and were well above the national average. There are no significant differences between male and female students.

288. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of samples of student work confirm that standards are below average but this reflects the lower prior attainment of the students who had below average GCSE results. Achievement is, however, good and this reflects significant changes that have been made in the department.

289. From September 2002 History it has been well led by two enthusiastic teachers who are very well supported by the rest of the department. This dedicated team of young staff has transformed this department. It is now well focussed on raising standards through activities that are systematically developing knowledge, understanding, confidence and the historical skills that students need to match examination requirements. Teachers know their students well and make sure that they all benefit from what is offered. Consequently those students with lower attainment also make good progress. Students respond well to history which they obviously enjoy.

290. Year 12 students have responded well and can more confidently analyse historical sources and evaluate a range of evidence to produce balanced and convincing arguments. Year 13 students are less articulate and confident in classroom discussion but are much more certain in expressing their ideas in writing. Their understanding of the reasons for radicalisation in Nazi Germany and the role of Hitler is limited as some have not prepared well for this lesson. More able students dominate the discussion. However when working individually with the teacher on their coursework about the rise of Fascist Italy, they are much more positive in developing their ideas. Year 12 students work well on exploring the impact

of the automobile on the USA economy from 1917-1928 through a range of sources. They work effectively, can discuss their findings and are confident in making initial inferences. They work effectively in small groups to develop accurate flow charts to explain the impact of the Industrial Revolution upon housing, sanitation and disease.

291. Teaching is often good or very good. There is now a strong emphasis on matching teaching to meet the different learning needs of the students so that they can all be successful in their learning. There is a good balance between developing knowledge and understanding and ensuring that students are systematically developing their historical skills. There are often good opportunities for group and paired work which develops confidence in them taking responsibility for their own learning. Teachers are confident in their subject, use historical terminology effectively and teach in an interesting and stimulating manner. Lessons are always well planned with the clear objectives of lessons made known to students. Consequently they have a good idea of the content and purpose of the lesson, which supports their good progress.

292. Teachers have a good understanding of their students and use a variety of stimulating and challenging activities to meet the needs of their differing interests and attainment levels. Relationships are very good with many students responding confidently and accurately. Lessons are effectively paced, support to individuals and groups is good and questioning often very challenging. Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve.

293. The department is well led by two teachers who have shared this responsibility since September 2002. There are some good strategies for improvement in the Department Improvement Plan. Schemes are being systematically revised to involve students more with their learning through well structured learning tasks which focus on curriculum objectives. Borderline students are being targeted but more work needs to be done with student assessment so that it can inform planning. ICT remains underdeveloped. The department has made some progress since the last inspection but most of this has been in the last few months and standards are still too low. However all teachers have a shared vision for the future and the department therefore has a good capacity for improvement

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

294. Provision overall is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Very positive attitudes of students.
- Head of department's commitment to improvement.

Areas for Improvement

- Attainment of students.
- Teaching approaches to suit needs of students.
- Assessment practice.
- Students critical and analytical skills.

295. Attainment in A level religious studies has been below the national average for the last two years. Standards attained by students in this subject reflect their prior attainment at GCSE where performance of those opting for A level has also been below the national average. Students embark on the A level course with limited knowledge of the areas they will study. The philosophy of religion syllabus covers arguments for the existence of God and whilst students can explain in writing and orally what the teleological and ontological arguments are, for example, their wider knowledge and understanding of philosophical debate is not secure. The students' critical and analytical skills, particularly in relation to

discussion about logical positivism and the relative merits of the proofs for God's existence are underdeveloped. Students do however, engage willingly in discussion and seek to improve their knowledge and understanding through effective dialogue with the teacher.

296. Teaching in the lessons observed was always satisfactory. There is clear planning and structure to lessons with good factual, academic text used to ensure students learning is focussed on the right objectives. Teaching methodologies observed were limited and despite good resource material this was not always pitched at a level which the students could easily or readily use to increase their understanding. There is an effective, supportive and encouraging relationship between teacher and students which aids their learning and contributes to their interest and motivation. Discussion is effective but precise and suitably illustrative examples are not always used to reinforce students' knowledge and understanding.

297. Students' learning in the lessons observed was satisfactory. They acquired a sound knowledge and some understanding of philosophical arguments for the existence of God, but at a slower pace than should be expected. This reflects their lack of prior knowledge of philosophy of religion. SEN needs in the group are well catered for and this helps to maintain good progress. Little opportunities are provided for students to increase their self-knowledge of their learning through assessment activities. Student attitudes are excellent. They show interest, commitment and have a very positive approach to their learning. This is a factor which helps their learning in lessons.

298. The syllabus followed by the small group of students presents a challenge to them and the teacher. Assessment practice is not informing teaching sufficiently. Irregular assessment by long essay is not effective in monitoring the students' progress and addressing areas of weakness. The planned curriculum is not sufficiently taking into account the students' prior attainment and addressing the weaknesses. Regular measurement of student performance which is used to improve lesson planning is not yet effective. Monitoring and evaluation of the way the subject is taught is developing. Professional development in relation to A level teaching methodologies, has not been undertaken but would help in order to secure higher levels of teaching required to improve standards.

299. There is a real commitment to improve teaching and learning in the department. Progress in raising standards of attainment is being made. The Head of Department is now aware of the need to set targets for improvement and is beginning to address weaknesses which will improve standards.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

300. The focus was on English literature, French and German but Spanish was sampled.

301. In **Spanish**, the single candidates in both 2001 and 2002 achieved above average grades. Attainment of current students in Year 12 is above average, and the progress they are making is very good. Teaching is very good, and students are well motivated. Overall provision is very good.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

302. Overall the quality of provision for English Literature is **good**.

Strengths

- Standards are improving.
- Teaching is good – effective use of professional experience and expertise.
- High expectations – allows for the development of critical and specialist vocabulary.
- Good student response.
- Positive relationships.

Areas for Improvement

- Provide opportunities for higher-attaining students to demonstrate their confidence in handling linguistic terms and complex themes.
- Develop a wide-ranging knowledge of other texts.
- Develop the appropriate critical and investigative skills of independent research.

303. Results at Advanced level have improved steadily but are judged to be below national average. This was particularly so in 2001.

304. Students in Year 12 reflect the whole ability range and attainment is good particularly in debate and explanation. Students were confident and articulate in their evaluations of the different interpretations of Hamlet's character. They are becoming skilful in supporting their opinions by reference to the text. Most of the students used their time effectively when working in groups.

305. Students in Year 13 are attaining good standards. When working on Betjeman's poem "Slough", they were able to tackle it with confidence. Their responses made references to tone, atmosphere and style. A depth of analysis was shown by two students with good cogent explanations for the author's particular emphasis.

306. In the lessons seen, students demonstrated good attitudes to work. Students can work collaboratively and respond well to each other's views and opinions.

307. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the texts and there is good use made of suggestion, correction and praise. More opportunities should be provided for students to develop their investigative skills as well as their ability to analyse, reflect and evaluate. There is a need to develop a culture of independent learning. Marking is constructive with a focus on improvement and strategies to progress learning.

Modern Languages

308. Overall, the quality of provision in French and Spanish is **very good**, and **good** in German.

Strengths

- Standards of attainment and the progress that pupils make.
- Teachers' subject knowledge, and the high expectations of pupils that they bring to lessons.
- The commitment that students show and their willingness to work hard.
- Access to Foreign Language Assistants in all three languages.

Areas for Improvement

- Guidance for students on expressing complicated ideas accurately in writing.

309. Standards at A Level have improved since the last inspection. In 2002, in French, results were higher than in 2001 when results were below the national average. In German and Spanish in 2002 and 2001 entries have not been more than one student, but results have been at or above the national average.

310. Currently sixth form students are making good progress in German and very good progress in French and Spanish. In Year 13 German, students are making some recurring errors that will need to be addressed before the final examination, including thorough knowledge of strong verbs.

311. Students generally show a good mastery and grammar and vocabulary. They express opinions and give justifications for these, speaking sometimes fluently and at other times reflectively, working out accurate phraseology. This enables them to get the use of complex constructions right, for example the conditional in Spanish, the subjunctive in French, and the passive voice in German. They interpret information well, paraphrasing and explaining the content of texts well. Students are confident and competent in understanding spoken language, in no small part a result of the teachers' fluent and extensive use of the languages in lessons.

312. The quality of teaching is good overall, with some outstanding features. The pace and intellectual challenge in some lessons are matched by pupils' high levels of concentration and engagement, and as a result rates of progress are very good. Teachers' use of the target language in almost all lessons is integral to the level of challenge and is a very strong feature of sixth form languages teaching. In the best lessons, teachers are extending students' linguistic competence and their background knowledge and opinions.

313. In students' independent written work, essays for example, it is clear that they experience a common difficulty. They make errors when they need to express complex ideas, requiring more practice in clarifying and simplifying their desired content before expressing this in complex sentences in the target language. Coverage of the grammar and syntax of the foreign languages has been extensive, but students have not been assisted to select a limited range of constructions that they will apply frequently to be able to express complicated ideas accurately.

314. The range of resources available to support 6th Form courses is very good, and this is being augmented in French in particular by access to the Internet. Students have access to additional language practice with Foreign Language Assistants in all three languages, with the opportunity to focus on oral fluency, which is another strong feature of the overall very good provision.