

INSPECTION REPORT

**TURTON HIGH SCHOOL AND MEDIA ARTS
COLLEGE**

Bolton

LEA area: Bolton

Unique reference number: 105253

Headteacher: Mr F E S Vigon

Reporting inspector: Dr DMJ Benstock
20243

Dates of inspection: 24th – 28th February 2003

Inspection number: 249740

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 – 19 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Bromley Cross Road
Bromley Cross
Bolton

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Peter Murphy

Date of previous inspection: 13th January 1997

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11358	Vicki Lamb	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does school care for pupils? How well does school work in partnership with parents?
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12003	Andrew Marfleet	Team inspector	English 11-16 Educational inclusion English as an additional language Drama	
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12016	Catherine O'Leary	Team Inspector	Science 11-16 Biology Post 16	
15079	Tony Boys	Team Inspector	Chemistry Post 16	
8052	Ken McKenzie	Team Inspector	Information and communication technology	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
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Team Members			Subject Responsibilities	Aspect Responsibilities
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14790	Robin Schlich	Team Inspector	Modern Languages French Post 16	
31660	Marianne Young	Team Inspector	Music Media Studies 11-16	
3687	Godfrey Bancroft	Team Inspector	Physical education	
17288	Megan Warner	Team Inspector	Religious education 11-16	
30072	Joe Skivington	Team Inspector	Religious education Post 16 Psychology	
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12825	Niall Carr	Team Inspector	Business studies Post 16	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Turton High School and Media Arts College is an 11-19 mixed comprehensive school, situated on the edge of Bolton. This is an area where a higher than average percentage of families come from higher social class background and have experience of higher education. However, the intake to the school is much wider and overall the background context of pupils is broadly average. The school has 1675 pupils on roll of which 469 are in the sixth form. The school is much bigger than the average school. The number on roll has been increasing and the school is oversubscribed. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below national average. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is slightly higher than in many schools, but virtually all are in the sixth form. The majority of pupils have declared their ethnic background as "White British". A small proportion of students is of Asian, Black African or Chinese heritage. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average. The proportion with statements is also below the national average. The overall attainment on entry is broadly average. The school provides a largely academic curriculum, with few vocational courses. It has been awarded Specialist School Status in Media Arts, and is involved in many other local and national initiatives.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Turton High School is, overall, a good school and it gives good value for money. In the most recent National Tests in Year 9, standards of attainment were above average and in the GCSE examinations results were overall also above average. Work seen in Year 9 is average. As pupils enter the school broadly average in their level of knowledge, understanding and skill, they achieve satisfactorily to Year 9, but well from Years 10 to 11. In the sixth form standards of attainment are well above average and achievement from admission into the sixth form is very good. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, good in Years 10 and 11, where pupils are that much more responsive, and very good in the sixth form. The media arts college, including its sixth form, is well managed and receives very good support from the governing body in shaping its future development.

What the school does well

- Attainment at GCSE is above average in English, mathematics and science, and achievement at this level in these subjects is good.
- Standards in music, drama and history are well above average, and there is very good achievement in these subjects, and information and communication technology (ICT). There is good achievement in media studies and physical education. Standards in the sixth form are well above average.
- Teachers have a high level of knowledge that is used well to extend pupils' and students' learning, and relationships with pupils are used effectively to promote good discussion.
- The well above average level of attendance has been maintained over several years.
- The school has developed very good links with the community, and with primary schools and other partner institutions.
- There is a very clear vision expressed by the headteacher, with good leadership and management by the leadership team, vigorously supported by members of the governing body.
- The media arts development has had a major impact on the learning throughout the school.

What could be improved

- Overall attainment and achievement in mathematics, English and science, of pupils in Year 9, relative to their prior attainment in Year 7.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs, particularly the contribution of all subject departments to the quality of individual education plans.
- Teaching of control and data logging, so as to comply with statutory requirements of the National Curriculum in information and communication technology.
- Consistency in assessment procedures and use of assessment data by departments, and procedures to ensure pupils are more fully aware of their levels of performance.
- Consistency of monitoring of teaching and learning by heads of department to ensure good practice is more widely shared.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1997. At the time attainment was well above average in the National Tests for Year 9 and also in GCSE examinations. It was judged to be significantly higher in the sixth form. In the most recent tests and GCSE examinations results were above average, which indicates a fall in standard over the six years. Sixth form standards have remained well above average. Overall, good teaching has been maintained. Improvement in assessment procedures has been satisfactory but the use of assessment remains inconsistent in departments. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs remain inadequate. Considerable improvement has been made in the provision of ICT in different subjects, although more remains to be done, and data logging and control still do not comply with National Curriculum requirements. Monitoring of teaching has improved through performance management, but there is a need for department managers to be better informed about the quality of teaching in the classroom, by more regular observation. Good improvements have been made in staff training. The recent development with new sixth form accommodation and award of media arts status is having a considerable impact, but accommodation remains tight. Overall the improvement since last inspection is satisfactory.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

In the GCSE examinations, standards of attainment in 2002 were above average compared to all schools but well below average in schools with a similar range of pupils eligible for free school meals. The target for the percentage of pupils gaining 5, or more grades A*-C was not met in 2002. Standards in GCE Advanced or Advanced Subsidiary examinations were above average in 2001, but results in 2002 show a marked improvement and return to the previous consistent level, which was well above average.

Over the last five years, the GCSE results increased from 1998 to 2000 but declined a little from 2000 to 2002. Girls have attained higher than boys consistently but the margin is small. The reduced attainment is attributed to a higher than usual number of disaffected boys in the year. Results in the National Curriculum Tests in English, mathematics and science, for Year 9, were above average in 2002, but have declined each year from being well above average five years ago. The attainment in 2002 was below average in mathematics and well below average in English and science compared with similar schools, again based on the comparison of the school with others in this lowest band of free school meals eligibility. Boys attained at the same level as girls in 2002 in the Year 9 tests. Overall achievement from Year 7, where pupils were broadly average in attainment, to Year 9 is satisfactory. Targets for Key Stage 3 were met for English and exceeded for mathematics and science. On the basis of work seen in the current year, however, pupils are achieving satisfactorily in Years 7 to 9 and well in Years 10 and 11. In the sixth form standards are well above average and students are seen to make very good progress in their chosen subject.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils show positive attitudes to school. They relate well to their teachers and respond well to challenge. They show maturity towards their studies, and participate well in the range of opportunities available.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The majority of pupils behave well in class and show respect to their peers and to staff. They are good-natured and comply willingly with school requirements.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils' personal development is enhanced by the good relationships that abound. There is no significant bullying and they respect each other's views.
Attendance	Very Good. The rate of attendance is well above national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning in the school is good overall. It is satisfactory at the lower end of the school, good in Years 10 and 11. The quality of teaching is significantly better overall in the sixth form and in many subjects it is very good. There are variations between subjects in the main school. It is very good in discrete ICT in Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11. It is very good in art, music, drama and religious education in Years 10 and 11. It is satisfactory in design and technology and in English, science and geography in Years 7 to 9. The learning is very good in the sixth form because of the high level of specialist knowledge of the teachers and the very positive motivation shown by students. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. It is good where the individual education plans are effective in setting appropriate targets. Overall, the teaching of literacy is satisfactory and the teaching of numeracy is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school offers a broad range of subjects and the particular emphasis on media arts. There are very good links with the community, and very good extra curricular opportunities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. There is good support from teachers and teaching assistants, but individual education plans are not sufficiently subject specific. Insufficient opportunities are found for mainstream and support staff to plan for pupils' subject needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils in Years 7 to 11 identified with language needs as a result of them not having English as their first language. Students in the sixth form are sufficiently fluent in English to not need added support.
Provision for pupils'	Good. Provision is very good in social and cultural education. The

personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme provides a good range of activities and opportunities for discussion on relevant issues.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils are well cared for through a strong pastoral system. There are clear procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare. Procedures for assessing and supporting pupils' progress are good.

The school works well in partnership with parents. Information for parents is wide-ranging and detailed. The curriculum is broad and endeavours to provide a wide range of opportunities. The unusual provision for the development of literacy and ICT through the media studies course in Year 7 is particularly motivating. There are relatively few opportunities for vocational courses. The statutory National Curriculum requirements for ICT are not currently fulfilled and there is no daily act of collective worship.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff	Good. The leadership team works closely together to realise a clear vision for the school and ensure its educational direction. Inconsistencies are found in the monitoring of teaching in subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors have a very clear understanding of the school and work hard to provide strategic support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school compares the progress students make to GCSE and GCE Advanced Level from their prior attainment, with other schools in the local authority and nationally.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The procedures for managing the finances are secure. Resources are being continually developed with big investment in the sixth form and media arts development.

Overall, the level of staffing, learning resources and accommodation is adequate. Teaching staff are well qualified to teach the school's curriculum. Learning resources are adequate overall, but there is limited provision for special educational needs, design and technology and art and design. The library is under-stocked. In other areas resources are good and exceptionally good in media studies. Accommodation is adequate, but cramped in many areas. The new building has provided a sixth form centre. The school applies the principles of best value well in its accounting procedures

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School expects the pupils to work hard and do their best • Teaching is good • School is well led and managed • School is helping pupils to become mature adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality and amount of homework • The extent to which they are kept informed about their child's progress • How closely the school works with parents • Behaviour of pupils

The inspection team agree with parents on most issues. In particular they agree that school expects pupils to work hard, but there are inconsistencies across departments. Overall the teaching is good but there are some subjects where it is just satisfactory, and it is felt that the school is well led. The homework often would benefit from improvement, but is normally adequate. The team feels that reports to parents contain detailed information, but agree that the format is unhelpful and information as to how the work of pupils compares with national expectation is often omitted. The school produces a great

deal of information to develop its links with parents. Overall, the inspection team found the behaviour of pupils to be good.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form is an integral part of the media arts college but has its own identity. It benefits from having a new purpose built centre and many new study and social facilities. There are over 450 students, making the sixth form much larger than other schools. Approximately half of the students are admitted from other schools and the intake is from a wide area of Bolton and surrounding villages. There are no students eligible for free school meals. There is one student who is designated as having special educational needs. A significant number of students are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The proportion of students from homes where English is not the only language is approximately 12 per cent, but no students are deemed to be at an early stage of language acquisition, and no special arrangements are made. Access to the sixth form is on the basis that they are academically able to achieve on the course, and this normally means good GCSE grades. All students are interviewed. The curriculum is all advanced level work. There are thirty-one subjects from which to choose, some of which such as performance studies are unusual in schools. The sixth form has grown and is oversubscribed. It is at its maximum capacity.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form is very effective in providing a largely academic curriculum that prepares the majority of students for entry to university and other higher education. Attainment in advanced level examinations was above average in 2001 but in previous years was consistently well above average. Results in 2002 show improvement over 2001. Achievement from GCSE has been at least good and, for many students, very good. Teaching and learning are good and students are very well motivated to achieve. The sixth form is part of the school and as such benefits from good leadership and support from the governing body. It has an appointed head of sixth form who has a clear vision and works hard towards the identified goals. The structure does not at present have a position for a deputy to share management responsibilities although this is in the development plan. The sixth form meets the aspirations and needs of students very well.

Strengths

- Excellent standards in physical education, well above average standards in music, history and ICT, above average in food technology, business studies, art, geography, RE and French. Good achievement in the majority of subjects.
- Very good teaching from dedicated and very knowledgeable teachers that results in considerable depth of study and learning.
- Very well motivated students who demonstrate a strong sense of determination to succeed.
- Good support and guidance for careers and university applications.
- Good resources and new accommodation that provides very good study facilities and environment.

What could be improved

- Management structure to ensure support and guidance are more readily available from a wider group of teachers attached to the sixth form.
- The extent to which students in a small number of subjects take a more active part in their learning.
- Provision for religious education and daily act of collective worship to satisfy statutory requirements.
- Procedures for registration.

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

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Very Good. Results are consistently higher than the national average. Teaching is very good. Management is very good.
Chemistry	Good. Standards of attainment in chemistry are in line with national averages overall and above average at the higher grades. The quality of teaching is consistently good. The subject is well led and managed.
Biology	Good. Students are attaining well in relation to prior attainment at GCSE. The good teaching enhances opportunities for students to do well. Leadership and management of biology are good, ensuring the good quality of access.
Food Technology	Good. Standards are above average in Year 13 and average in Year 12. Teaching is good and the subject is well managed.
Business Studies	Good. Examination results are average. Teaching is good. The teaching of business integrates independent, reasoned argument through discussion and the use of electronic data sources. Good leadership of subject.
ICT	Very Good. Standards are well above average and teaching is very good. The subject is well led and managed.
Physical Education	Very Good. Standards in AS and A level examinations are above average. The quality of teaching is excellent. The leadership and management are excellent.
Art	Very Good. Standards are above average. Teaching and leadership are very good.
Music	Very Good. Standards are above average: students have very good instrumental and composition skills. Teaching is very good: teachers have high expectations and students benefit from high quality professional workshops. Leadership and management are good, but accommodation restricts individual instrumental and ensemble work.
Geography	Good. Standards in geography are above average. Teaching is good. Leadership and management are very good, with the department well led by a very experienced geographer.
History	Good. Good, purposeful teaching, in a good learning environment, promotes consistently high standards for well motivated students who are able to convey the complexity of historical interpretation in relatively clear and concise terms.
Religious Studies	Good. Above average standards. Good teaching and leadership of the subject.
Psychology	Good. Above average standards. Good teaching. Committed leadership and management.
English Language	Very Good. Standards are well above average. Students achieve well because of good teaching and their own very good attitudes. Good management but not enough use is made of assessment data.
French	Good. Above average standards in both Years 12 and 13. Students are

	well taught and relations between teachers and students are very good. There is a good sense of purpose and progress in lessons.
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OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Students receive good support and guidance. They have clear help with university applications. Tutors provide additional help. Assessment is rigorous and students are kept well informed on progress.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Leadership and management are good at both the whole school and college levels. There is a very clear, shared vision for future development. Major responsibility for day-to-day management is delegated to the head of sixth, which can lead to him not being as available as he might be to give full support to students.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The choice of courses • Access to teachers to get help • Good teaching and challenge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of advice on what to do after leaving school • Range of worthwhile activities and enrichment courses • Support and help with personal problems

The inspection team agrees that there is a very good choice of courses and that teachers seem to be accessible for help. The school does endeavour to provide a very thorough programme of advice and guidance for university entrance but less help on subsequent careers. There is a good range of extra curricular activities and areas of responsibility to undertake to enrich the curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Main

1. When pupils entered the school in 2002, in current Year 7, their attainment in National Tests in English and Mathematics was above average and in science was close to average. Their verbal and non-verbal standardised scores in cognitive abilities tests (CAT) were broadly average, although the quantitative scores were better. For previous years, attainment in Year 6 tests and the CAT scores have varied slightly, but following a similar pattern. Overall, the attainment on entry to school is consistently broadly average, with some strength in quantitative skills.
2. In the National Curriculum tests in Year 9, in 2002, the proportion of pupils gaining target level 5 or higher, was well above average in English, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils gaining level 6 or higher was average in English, above average in science and well above average in mathematics. The overall performance, taking results of all pupils, and measured by the mean point score, was above average in English and science, but well above average in mathematics. On entry to the school pupils' standards were average overall and therefore, these results indicate that progress of these pupils has been good from Years 7 to 9.
3. There was very little difference in the performance of boys and girls, and this has been the case for the past three years.
4. Overall, the attainment in the National Tests in core subjects in Year 9 was above average in 2002, but in 1998 it was well above average, and overall the mean score of pupils relative to national average has declined steadily over the past four years. However, the decline has been in English and science, with mathematics remaining consistently well above average.
5. The performance of pupils in comparison with similar schools, defined as those with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals, was well below average in English and science, and below average in mathematics. However, the schools in this comparison reflect the lowest level of eligibility for free school meals, and does not take account of the wide spread of socio-economic backgrounds of pupils admitted to Turton School.
6. The performance of pupils in comparison with the schools having a similar range of prior attainment in Year 6 was also well below average for these schools, although the number of schools in the sample is small.
7. In the non-core subjects, results were higher than average in every subject in the 2002 teacher assessments. Results were highest in art and design but most pupils performed well in all subjects.
8. Results in the GCSE examinations of 2002 were overall above the national average. Both the percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A* - C and the average point score of all pupils were above the national average. The performance of girls was better than that of boys, which has been a repeated pattern for five years.

9. In 2001, the results were significantly better with a higher percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A* - C. The trend over the past five years showed increasing attainment from 1998 to 2000 and then a decline. The changes are attributed to changes in the profile of motivation and more variable attitudes of pupils entering the school.
10. The proportion of pupils with 5 or more A* - C was well below average in schools with a similar context, but in line with those having a similar range of attainment in Year 9. Progress from Years 9 to 11 on this basis has been satisfactory.
11. Subjects in 2002, where performance was particularly strong, were drama, history, information and communication technology (ICT) and mathematics. Results were less strong in art, French, and German, and modest in geography, design & technology and physical education.
12. Overall, standards of work seen in lessons and on scrutiny of pupils' written work are average at the end of Year 9 and above average at the end of Year 11. In English there is a wide range of quality, with standards average in Year 9 and securely above average in Year 11. Speaking and listening skills are less well developed. In mathematics, standards are average overall in Year 9. The problem solving skills in manipulation of number and algebra reflect the improved teaching that emerges from the Key Stage 3 strategy in numeracy. In Year 11, the standards have risen to be above average. There is a noticeable consistency in the level of skill and aptitude shown in mathematical tasks.
13. In science, standards are broadly average at the end of Year 9 and above average at the end of Year 11. Pupils can understand scientific concepts well, but need to develop more independence in practical scientific investigation.
14. In other subjects, standards of work seen are above average in ICT, art & design, music, media studies, physical education, history and religious education. They are average in design & technology, but within this there is good work seen in textiles and child development in Years 10 and 11. In music, the standards of performance are high and composition is mature.
15. Achievement of pupils from entry to the school to the end of Year 9 is satisfactory and to the end of Year 11 is good, overall, but there are some variations between subjects. In English, mathematics and science achievement is satisfactory from Years 7 to 9 and good for Years 10 and 11. There is satisfactory progress, especially in developing writing skills, from Years 7 to 9, but this accelerates in Years 10 and 11 where overall progress is good. In mathematics, the positive effect of the national strategy is making an impact on achievement, in particular with developing mental calculations, algebra and independent learning. In science, pupils consolidate their understanding well, within the modular approach.
16. Achievement is good in information and communication technology, art and design, music, media studies, physical education, history and geography in Years 10 and 11. It is good in religious education with pupils gaining a very good depth of understanding in the short course for GCSE. Pupils make satisfactory progress in design and technology and in modern languages. In Year 7, pupils learn rapidly about the skills of media and ICT and use these well to develop their literacy in an interesting lesson of combined media studies and information and communication technology, called "commit". These skills are also applied well to other parts of the curriculum.

17. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. In Years 7 to 9 progress was at least satisfactory in all subjects with good examples being seen in Mathematics and ICT. This satisfactory rate of progress is maintained in Years 10 and 11 with particularly good progress being made in physical education and science.
18. Standards of literacy are in line with the national average. In most lessons pupils listen carefully to teachers and to each other. As a consequence learning in most subjects is improved by discussion. For example, in history pupils express sound judgements based on textual sources. In a Year 11 science lesson, oral work enabled pupils to gain understanding of the impact of nitrites on the environment. Reading standards are good enough to ensure that pupils understand what they have to read in class. Thus they are able to carry out research competently in subjects as diverse as design and technology, ICT and religious education. Writing standards are average and pupils gain from being given opportunities for extended writing in many subjects, particularly in GCSE coursework and in the sixth form.
19. Standards in numeracy are above average. For example, in physical education, there is good interpretation of fitness testing data, good presentation of data in graphs, and leagues. In design and technology, judgements are made about size, proportion, volume, distance, weight and measurement; in science there is good understanding of fractions and percentages; in many subjects pupils interpret data when researching a project; in art, 3D work contributes effectively to spatial development; in history, pupils construct time lines, date structures, chronology and graphs for population studies.

Sixth Form

20. Results in GCE advanced level overall were well above average from 1997 to 2000, but dropped to be just above average in 2001. In 2002 there are as yet no national comparisons possible, but results are similar to earlier years and indications are that the performance is back to the previous standard. There was no significant difference in the results of male and female students.
21. The analysis of results in 2001 compared to prior attainment at GCSE indicates that progress has been good. Results that were well above average in 2001 included history and home economics. Above average performance was found in biology, ICT, geography, German, mathematics and PE. Standards were average in French, design and technology, religious education and sociology.
22. Results in 2002 show a marginal improvement over 2001. The overall average point score rose in 2002 after a slight decline in previous years. In the 2002 results, a significant proportion of students gained higher grades A and B in GCE Advanced Level, including art, English, government and politics, music, PE, chemistry and physics. Results were also impressive in biology, theatre studies, media studies and ICT. Students were less successful in French, psychology, history and sociology.
23. Standards of work seen in the sixth form reflect the attainment that has been consistently well above average in most subjects, particularly English and mathematics. For example, in English, there is a very good analysis of a range of texts, and very good use of drafting. Technical accuracy is still a weakness. In mathematics, students have a very good grasp of fundamental concepts, which they apply to unfamiliar problems.
24. Standards in the sciences for which there was a focus, biology and chemistry, are not quite so good. They are, however, still above average in biology, consistent with recent examination results, and reflect a good understanding of biological concepts. The students have developed good discussion skills and are much more self-critical and evaluative in this work. In chemistry, standards are average, which again reflects the

examination results. There are good skills of calculation and problem solving, that match the numerate quality of many students, but there is less confidence in practical work, for example, handling reagents.

25. From inspection of fifteen focused subjects, standards seen are well above average in ICT, English, music, and history. They are above average in mathematics, biology, home economics (food technology), art, physical education, geography, and French, and are broadly average in business studies, religious education, chemistry and psychology. From the brief sample of work observed, standards are also well above average in media studies.
26. Achievement by students in the sixth form is good overall, and in several subjects it is very good. These include mathematics, ICT, art, and music. In physical education, the students make excellent progress in their acquisition of knowledge and skills as a result of excellent provision and teaching in this subject at this level.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Main

27. Pupils like school and display positive attitudes towards lessons. There is a very good level of involvement in the range of activities that the school provides. Behaviour is good overall. Pupils, personal development is good. Good quality relationships are established between staff and pupils. Attendance is very good.
28. Pupils, personal development is well promoted through good relationships between student and teacher. Pupils generally get along together well and demonstrate a regard for the views and feelings of others. Pupils are willing to consider others, attitudes, values and beliefs and respond constructively when their own views are sought. Students with specific responsibility take their duties seriously. They respond well to school requirements. For example, the school expects the wearing of uniform and students generally comply with these expectations well.
29. In the majority of lessons, students and staff relate well and this encourages mature attitudes and raises self-esteem. Pupils of all ages are willing to take responsibility, for instance to represent their year peers at the school council or to contribute their views on what they would like to see improved. The vast majority of pupils are well behaved and take care of materials and equipment. They are very willing to talk about their work and school life when asked to do so. Students are generally courteous for visitors, for instance by holding doors and offering directions, and usually move around the school in an orderly way despite the constraints on space in corridors and doorways.
30. Behaviour around school is good overall. During the inspection, students made good use of breaks to enjoy time with their friends, congregating in a number of places or moving around the outdoor area without too much noise or boisterousness. Behaviour in the eating areas is good as pupils keep to established routines and take advantage of the opportunities to socialise in a responsible manner. In the corridors, behaviour is generally good and, although there is some pushing in congested areas this is minimal. Students are entrusted with access to form rooms during lunchtime and behave well even when supervision is minimal.
31. Behaviour in lessons is good overall. Where the best behaviour is seen students are respectful of the staff and each other and respond well to the challenges set. In the vast majority of lessons students show interest and concentrate throughout. They pay attention and listen well. They show a good degree of motivation and are keen to participate. They make valid observations, follow instructions and respect each other's contributions. In the minority of lessons where unsatisfactory behaviour occurs students are restless, chatter and are too easily distracted. They take little heed of

instructions and do little work. Although most students respond well to the school's behaviour management strategies a minority of students frequently display unsatisfactory behaviour. The ultimate sanction that students can expect for very poor behaviour is exclusion from school. The school permanently excluded one pupil during the year prior to the inspection.

32. Attendance is very good and the vast majority of students arrive at school and lessons on time. The rate of unauthorised absence is lower than in other schools nationally.
33. Most pupils with special educational needs work collaboratively with their peers both in mainstream lessons and special support groups. Their behaviour is satisfactory on the whole. They concentrate well in lessons and try hard to complete their work, seeking assistance as appropriate from teachers and teaching assistants. They participate well in question and answer sessions in most lessons. However, during the inspection one or two pupils with behavioural difficulties seriously disrupted lessons and created considerable problems for staff who were trying to manage the situation.

Sixth Form

34. Students have very positive attitudes towards their studies, staff and each other. Relationships are very good. They are satisfied that they are challenged to do their best and generally treated as responsible adults. Students behave in a mature way and act as very good role models for younger pupils. Students value the experiences offered to them and enjoy life in the sixth form. In particular they are keen to take responsibility, for their own learning and to enhance the experiences of others. For instance, several students support younger pupils by providing a listening service and advice and guidance as appropriate. Attendance is very good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

Main

35. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In lessons seen across Years 7 to 11, teaching was satisfactory or better in ninety five per cent of lessons, good or better in sixty per cent, very good in or excellent in twenty per cent. Teaching was unsatisfactory in five per cent. The proportions were very similar for learning.
36. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 was satisfactory overall, and in English, mathematics, science, modern languages, design and technology; in ICT it was very good, and in all other subjects, good. In history, for example, good learning resulted from young, enthusiastic, specialist teachers who taught very well-planned lessons to well motivated pupils in a good learning environment. Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 were good overall, and in almost all subjects, except modern languages, where they were satisfactory, and in music, religious and physical education, and ICT, where they were very good.
37. An important element in the quality of teaching is teachers' subject knowledge and understanding which is at least good in all subjects, and very good in many. In physical education, this is evident in the teaching of basketball, hockey and swimming. This aspect is also a strength in religious education and in ICT, where specialists with very good subject knowledge teach all discrete lessons.
38. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory. In most subjects key words are prominently displayed and due emphasis is placed on their importance. For example, in geography a glossary is produced before each unit of work. Hence teachers ensure that pupils know what is meant by such technical terms as "subsistence farming" and "the common agricultural policy". In most subjects teachers make good use of oral work to

improve pupils' learning. In art, for example, in nearly every lesson pupils evaluate their work orally. In history all pupils benefit from well-planned strategies to raise levels of literacy and there are many opportunities to express themselves orally. In media studies there is scope for ensuring that literacy is more fully developed across the department, for example, through greater consistency in the marking of pupils' work.

39. In physical education older pupils make presentations to the rest of the class. In most subjects pupils are required to write at some length and teachers pay due attention to literacy standards. The training that teachers have had has encouraged some subjects such as science to put emphasis on developing literacy. Other subjects are not as far advanced. In music, for example, there is less emphasis on literacy than in many schools.
40. The teaching of numeracy is good. The school has a numeracy policy and the mathematics department has liaised with other departments to introduce a cohesive and unified approach to developing numeracy across the curriculum.
41. Overall, the teaching of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. Within discrete ICT lessons skills are thoroughly developed and the award of the media arts status has resulted in more emphasis on ICT in many parts of the curriculum. However, the extent of use of ICT in subjects is inconsistent. There are some aspects that are not being fulfilled, for example in data logging, which is a breach of statutory requirements.
42. Detailed planning and high expectations are characteristics of lessons where teaching is good or better. In geography, planning and preparation are based on excellent documentation and are major strengths of the department. In a well-planned Year 10 lesson on the poetry of Gillian Clarke, pupils were enabled to consolidate their understanding effectively and learned well as a result of the setting of appropriate tasks and well-organised group work. Weaknesses in planning, sometimes allied to expectations, result in less successful teaching.
43. Individual challenge and very high expectations are features of the very good teaching of music in Years 10 and 11. In science, good teaching is characterised by high expectations, brisk pace and well-organized group work in a lesson investigating the effects of acid on limestone.
44. The range, variety and effectiveness of teaching methods differ from one subject to another; for example in mathematics, satisfactory lessons in Years 7 to 9 could be improved by teachers devoting more of the lesson to explanation and illustration. In science there was a lack of variety in teaching styles, and of tasks and strategies to engage pupils in most lessons. In design and technology some lessons had over lengthy demonstrations or explanations and some teachers had a tendency to talk over pupils. By contrast, specialist geography teachers employed a wide range of teaching strategies and methods.
45. In some subjects where teaching was not better than satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 the management of pupils was an area for improvement. For example, in modern foreign languages weaknesses in classroom management allowed minor distractions to interrupt learning unduly in some lessons, while in others the efforts made to limit disruption meant that learning was significantly undermined for all. In some lessons in English in Years 7 to 9, teachers do not always address immature behaviour effectively, and even in Year 11 classes where lessons are not planned appropriately there can be disaffection. In art, however, despite some challenging behaviour, pupils are generally managed skilfully, and very good relationships result from clear and consistent expectations of good behaviour.

46. There is inconsistency in the quality of day-to-day marking between different subjects. In many lessons in physical education, not enough attention is given to evaluating the quality of pupils' work and consequently they do not have sufficient understanding of how well they are doing, or of what they need to do to improve. In mathematics greater consistency in the marking of pupils' work would give them clearer guidance about how they might improve their standards of attainment. In media studies, the quality and rigour of marking is inconsistent, especially for pupils following the GCSE examination.
47. In many subjects, including English, history, modern languages and religious education, homework is used well. In mathematics, homework is set and marked regularly but marking is sometimes inconsistent; for example, advice on how to improve is sometimes omitted. The best homework demonstrated consolidation and extension whereas some homework was just many more examples of a routine nature.
48. Subject specialists in ability sets teach pupils with special educational needs satisfactorily. The school employs a large number of teaching assistants who give in-class support to identified pupils. Though the quality of this support is often good it would be further improved by the school creating more opportunities for teachers and assistants to liaise more closely on work planned in advance of lessons. Similarly, more thorough completion of learning objectives on pupils' individual learning plans by subject teachers would allow support to be more accurately targeted on individual needs. In the lessons seen for special needs support groups given by specialist teaching staff, the overall quality of teaching was satisfactory. Where teaching was good teachers planned a clear structure for pupils to follow so that there was a natural progression in lesson content, which they could understand. Where teaching was not so good such structure was absent and planning did not follow the logical and clear sequence that the pupils needed.

Sixth form

49. The overall quality of teaching is good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching in the sixth form: 92 per cent of lessons seen were good or better, and 36 per cent very good or better. The consistently good teaching that they receive enables students of all levels of subject competence to learn successfully and achieve well. Of the 15 advanced courses reported in depth, teaching is excellent in sports studies and very good in mathematics, ICT, art, music and geography. Teaching is good in biology, chemistry, design and technology, business studies, history, religious education, psychology, English and French.
50. Teachers' subject knowledge is a clear strength: it is very good or excellent in the majority of subjects, and good in biology, design and technology and French. This is supplemented in many areas by a genuine enthusiasm for the subject, and in some, such as business studies and ICT, by valuable commercial and practical experience as well, so that students learn well and very well as a consequence.
51. Sixth form teaching develops students' independent learning and key skills well. Communication skills are widely employed and practised although in ICT the use of a dictionary would aid precision in language; in psychology, better adapted materials and a wider range of teaching strategies would support lower attaining students to achieve a clearer understanding of new and difficult concepts and psychological terminology. The use of ICT is variable: electronic data sources are well used in business studies but in chemistry limited access to computers is affecting the quality of teaching and learning.

52. Very high expectations and challenging activities are features of the best teaching in many departments such as French and music; in religious education, for example, students are challenged by higher order questions which force them to think deeply and produce that extra intellectual effort which drives the learning process. Very good or excellent classroom relationships underpin the quality of teaching and learning in many subjects including mathematics, music and physical education. In English teachers' friendly yet purposeful approach is much appreciated by students, and contributes to an excellent climate for learning.
53. Students are encouraged to become independent learners in many subjects; in religious education, they gain valuable insights into their own strengths and weaknesses by marking real examination answers. There are many opportunities for whole class discussion in English but in some lessons in history and religious education, students' passivity and reluctance to contribute mean that they learn less well from each other.

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

Main

54. The school provides a full, broad and balanced curriculum with considerable enhancement and a wide range of opportunities beyond statutory requirements. The curriculum is effectively organised. The school and pupils benefit from Media Arts College status and the associated provision.
55. The provision for mathematics in Years 7 to 9 is very good and there is good support for lower attaining pupils. Separate sciences are taught in Year 9 and all pupils have the opportunity to study two languages. As part of the media arts provision a module has been introduced to establish a firm connection between media arts and ICT.
56. The Year 7 "commit" course is part of the media arts commitment and it includes film literacy and uses the new facilities of media provision including a TV studio, editing suite, although this is currently only in Year 7. Although this course provides a vehicle for ICT in the curriculum, the total time available for ICT is below the minimum recommended in the Key Stage 3 ICT Strategy. Overall the time currently available for taught ICT lessons is inadequate and cross-curricular provision is not firmly established, largely because of a lack of access to resources for many subject departments. In design and technology there is a broad curriculum covering most of the programmes of study, but coverage of systems and control is a weakness, as they are not dealt with in sufficient depth. In PE the provision for gifted and talented pupils is very good and the school has outstanding success in sports competitions. In Years 9 - 11 the curriculum provides a broader range of opportunities as the media arts provision becomes more prevalent.
57. In addition to the National Curriculum, examination courses are offered in dance, performing arts, music, drama, social studies and business and communication studies and child development in Years 10 and 11. A number of twilight courses are needed to meet demand in six subjects: art, drama, history, languages, music and religious education. There are no vocational courses.
58. In all years provision for citizenship education is good. Much of the citizenship programme is delivered through PSHE. Sessions are frequently double-staffed to facilitate effective teaching of the programme. There are several whole-day sessions as part of the citizenship provision, for example, in Year 9 a number of external agencies are involved in a "Crime and Consequences Day". There is a great deal of

work with the local community and local charities in most year groups as well as international organisations such as “Lepra”. Education for careers is good. The careers education programme begins in Year 7. In Year 10, all pupils have two weeks of work experience. This programme together with the preparation and debrief provides a vital element of the provision for citizenship. The school council is an example of citizenship in action. As part of the school’s social, moral, spiritual and cultural provision all pupils in Years 10 and 11 take a short GCSE course in religious education.

59. Some aspects of the ICT National Curriculum need to be implemented fully at both key stages. The use of ICT “to measure, respond to control and automate events” is not covered adequately enough to meet National Curriculum requirements. Although there is some use of control technology in the design and technology curriculum there is no “data logging” in science. In addition a number of subject departments need to meet requirements fully in respect to their use of ICT.
60. The curriculum provided for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. They have access to the same broad and balanced curriculum as their fellow pupils. This is achieved by a combination of providing support to pupils in their lessons, providing specialist additional support, as seen, for example, in the mathematics department, and timetabling some pupils for literacy support or catch up groups provided by the special needs department. Most, though not all, mainstream staff take note of pupils’ learning objectives and modify their teaching appropriately. This should improve further when all staff have full involvement in the writing of individual education plans (IEP) as recommended by the Code of Practice.
61. There is satisfactory equality of access and opportunity in the school. All parts of the curriculum are available to all pupils. The school makes good use of outside specialist support agencies to make it possible for physically disabled pupils, for example visually impaired, to have access to normal lessons. However, there are few alternatives offered at present to academic GCSE courses in Years 10 and 11. This can restrict the needs of some pupils with special educational needs who would benefit from less academic vocational courses, tailored to their preferred learning styles.
62. No provision is made for English as an additional language, in the main school, as there are no pupils identified where there are grounds for pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds being in need of support for their English as an additional language .
63. There is satisfactory provision for literacy. There is a whole-school literacy policy based on the national literacy strategy. All teachers have had suitable training and further training is ongoing. However, the emphasis given to literacy is not spread evenly across all subjects.
64. The school has a numeracy policy and the mathematics department has liaised with other departments to introduce a cohesive and unified approach to developing numeracy across the curriculum. The other departments in the school are making positive contributions towards numeracy and other mathematical skills.
65. There is good understanding and practice among the mathematics teachers of when and where to use mental skills for calculations. The introduction of the national strategy for mathematics has meant that each lesson at Key Stage 3 starts with a number activity. Calculators are used sensibly when the size and complexity of the numbers involved demand their involvement.

Sixth form

66. The school provides a broad post 16 curriculum for its students, from which they benefit both academically and socially. It is a well-planned, predominantly academic curriculum, which meets the needs of large numbers of students from the school as well as the high number who join in Year 12 from a wide catchment area.
67. The post 16 curriculum has been significantly extended since the last inspection to include media studies, performance studies, physical education, textiles, and psychology. In addition to A-level and AS mathematics, further mathematics is also offered with the students able to choose modules in pure mathematics, statistics, mechanics and decision-making. There is a very full and wide range of courses leading to A or AS level qualifications fulfilling a wide range of aspirations.
68. In addition, students have personal and social education in Year 12 and general studies is taught in Year 13 leading to a GCE A-level qualification. There are opportunities to re-sit the GCSE examination in mathematics and English. In its role in meeting local needs, the school has considered vocational courses but has not identified them as a priority. There are, however, opportunities for work experience for students who identify this as a need.
69. Guidance and advice on higher education and careers are very strong features of sixth form provision. Much of the emphasis is upon increasing students' self-confidence in order to make the best of the opportunities, which are available to them beyond school. A large percentage of students go on to higher education and much help is provided with preparation, choices and applications. A very good guidance booklet is provided for students and there is provision for outside advisers to help students with their personal statements. All Year 12 students attend an annual higher education conference and smaller groups attend specific venues during Years 12 and 13. Students have access to an external careers adviser each week. The school has a wealth of materials, both paper and computer based, to assist students in the higher education and career choices. There is also a good tracking system to follow-up student destinations after leaving school.
70. A significant number of sixth formers are from ethnic minorities and whilst their English is perfectly adequate for them to study effectively, that of their parents is sometimes inadequate for good communications to take place between school and home.
71. Students play an important role in organising events particularly in the media arts field. They organise the raising of funds for charity as well as helping pupils further down the school. Students in the sixth form who are old enough are encouraged to become blood donors. Students have access to a large number of extra curricular activities associated with most subjects but particularly those with a media arts focus. There is a wide range of sporting activities, which lead to a high level of success in external competitions.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

72. Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good overall and very good in the areas of social and cultural development.
73. Although there is no whole school policy document against which provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development can be monitored and evaluated, the school has a clear vision of its aims and objectives in this area based on its status as a media arts college and its intention to be a caring and friendly community. The contribution of the performing arts and physical education, combined with the media facilities, is a strength.

Spiritual Development

74. Provision for the spiritual development of the pupils is good. Although the arrangements for collective worship do not meet statutory requirements in respect of provision for all pupils, several assemblies contained satisfactory moments of reflection and worship, catering sensitively for believers and non-believers alike. Some assemblies and most registration periods did not make any contribution to this area. There are very good opportunities throughout the curriculum for moments of reflection in music, art, physical education, and dance and drama, and good opportunities in most other subjects except mathematics, science and modern foreign languages, where a contribution may be intrinsic rather than planned. Religious education, English and history make a distinctive contribution to this aspect.
75. The personal social and health education programme contains appropriate matter for spiritual development, as in the lessons on loss and bereavement in Year 8. A prayer room is provided for Muslim pupils. Music and physical education provide very good opportunities for that aspect of spiritual development associated with pride of performance and the satisfaction of fulfilment of ambition, which comes with achieving notable success. Individuals have received town, county and national recognition. Workshops, performances and master classes, as well as having an emotional effect on the listener, enable music students to perform to a very high standard in public and to develop self-confidence.

Sixth form

76. Formal provision for spiritual development in the sixth form is weakened by the fact that the school does not fulfil the statutory requirements either for religious education or collective worship. Nevertheless there is a spiritual basis for a lot of the good work that the sixth formers do for others in the school. And there are opportunities for reflection in religious education, general studies, tutorials and the performing arts.

Moral Development

77. Provision for the moral development of pupils is good. The school has clear expectations of the pupils in terms of obeying the code of conduct and of exercising personal responsibility, and the majority of pupils respond well. Pupils, including sixth formers, look after younger ones and less fortunate ones, inside and outside the school. The concerns of younger pupils are partly looked after by the sixth formers who operate the listening scheme and other initiatives. It is noticeable that pupils speak positively about the school and feel safe. Parents in the pre-inspection meeting spoke of the effectiveness of the school's strategy to help pupils become more mature and responsible.
78. Good relationships are a strength of the school. Opportunities exist to discuss moral issues in religious education; issues such as abortion in Year 10, a just war in Year 11 and forgiveness in Year 9. Personal, social and health education music, drama, history and other subjects provide further opportunities such as when history pupils visit a concentration camp. Pupils demonstrate a good deal of moral concern which shows itself in many charitable activities that benefit old people, the hospice or local special schools. They participate in red nose appeals and other fund-raising activities, which benefit charities such as Dr Barnados.

Sixth form

79. Students in the sixth form act as peer mediators for pupils in the main school. They are trained to operate the Turton Listening Centre every lunchtime, which is a bully free zone in which younger pupils can find a listening ear. They also help in tutor groups and in classes. They participate in many fund raising activities for charities.

Social Development

80. Provision for the social development of pupils is very good. Most subjects can produce evidence of co-operative learning in lessons, in sports and in clubs. There is a very long list of extra curricular activities and clubs, such as in the craft, science, media and ICT clubs. Extra curricular workshops in music have a very good social mix including sixth formers who help main school pupils. Team sports foster sportsmanship and playing by the rules and the many different media projects involve lots of different participants inside and outside of school. Various visits such as those to France or Austria further the socialisation of the pupils. The school council helps pupils to take on responsibility.
81. There are good opportunities to learn about society in several subjects such as history and geography and by visits to the House of Commons or by the days devoted to crime and the work of the courts. In religious education they can profitably discuss topics such as poverty, beggars and the third world. Good use of display in religious education also brings awareness of issues such as marriage, divorce and personal relationships. PSHE introduces pupils to responsibility and choices. Social and moral issues such as abortion, parenthood, sex and relationships are covered in religious education, personal social and health education and the course in child development. An excellent contribution was seen from drama during inspection week.
82. Pupils also learn about society by being involved in society. There are very good links with feeder schools, with the community as a major provider of adult education and with institutions such as the hospice. An impressive feature of the programme is that most of these many activities involve using media facilities to link up with the local community. Making a video for the Active Citizenship network about the work pupils do at the hospice as part of a teaching pack to deliver citizenship within the National Curriculum won an award for active citizenship. A further link involves fundraising and voluntary work on a large scale. The school is a big collector of donations for Barnados and other charities. In keeping with its declared aims and media status, the school shares the benefits of its facilities with parents, adults and the children of a local special school for children with cerebral palsy. There are many good links with primary schools and efforts are made for the smooth transition of primary pupils who are involved with open days, quizzes and concerts.

Sixth form

83. Students in the sixth form play a large part in the provision for social development in the school at large. They act as listeners for younger children, they chair the school council, they ease the transition of primary schoolchildren into the main school by holding quizzes and they hold sixth form quizzes which raise money for charities. As well as responding to comic relief and poppy appeals they give an excellent response to suggestions for donating blood. There is a programme of social events, which caters for all tastes and cultures. In the sixth form there is a very impressive programme of complementary studies, which enables students to do community service of various kinds in conjunction with Bolton Volunteer Bureau. They help, in and out of school, pupils in local special schools in art, music, cooking and horse riding and other matters.

Individuals can gain qualifications in counselling, first aid and life saving. The school council enables students in the sixth form to shoulder responsibility and voice opinions on school issues.

84. Provision for cultural development is very good. In religious education there are opportunities to widen knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other religions and cultures such as Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. The history department plays a role in the social and cultural development of the pupils in that its schemes of work offer an insight into different societies with different values, including multi-cultural societies. In modern foreign languages pupils make visits abroad and also learn about aspects of French and German life and culture. The school has actual or planned links with Sweden, Japan, Germany, Thailand and Zimbabwe.
85. In art there are good visits to textile exhibitions, the Bluecoat Gallery, the Tate in Liverpool and London galleries. Art students also have good links with primary schools. There are plans for two artists in residence and a dance teacher is visiting for nine weeks.
86. Music makes a very strong contribution to all elements of this aspect. The Halle Orchestra and Ballet Rambert visit and there are visiting musicians for concerts, workshops or master classes including concerts for primary children.
87. Music gives excellent opportunities for performers to participate in concerts linking with outside agencies. The Key Stage 3 schemes of work foster multicultural awareness, as do concerts and workshops and also music played in ensembles: Blues, Gamelan, Jazz, and Indian. The school contributes a lot of members to the Bolton Youth Orchestra and one to the National Youth Orchestra. Drama makes a big contribution not in major productions but in a series of small performances. Pupils can study the food from countries such as India, China, Mexico and Greece as well as Japanese fashion and Egyptian influences.
88. The school is at the forefront of introducing pupils to the modern technological culture of the twenty first century. Its intention is to share the benefits of its ethos and facilities with the community. This shows itself in very many ventures from the participation in the Millennium newspaper to the help that is given to the classes of a local school for children with cerebral palsy. There are links or planned links with Thailand, Sweden, Zimbabwe and many events are filmed or videoed and exchanged with other institutions. "Cineliteracy" and technical skills are combined with social, cultural and multicultural endeavours. The harmonious multicultural community is linked by media facilities to the local community. Thus Asian girls have made professionally produced videos of the Hindu temple, which are then used by the temple to teach about rituals and festivals and by the religious education department as a resource. An Asian girl has shown her jewellery and dress and customs to staff and pupils. Another video made about the hospice, and used by the hospice as well as by the school, helped the school to win an active citizenship award.

Sixth form

89. Sixth formers are prominent members of musical ensembles and they have benefited from visits by musicians in the Halle Orchestra as well as by pop and jazz musicians. They have visited exhibitions of embroidered textiles, and summer exhibitions of work in colleges and galleries. The sixth form is a harmonious multicultural unit in itself and it also has a beneficial effect on the main school's attitudes to multiculturalism.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Care For Pupils and Students

Main

90. Pupils and students are well cared for by staff through the strong pastoral system. Overall, relationships between staff and students are good and make a significant contribution to students, welfare and personal development. Students are generally well managed by staff and helped to behave well. Good arrangements are in place to monitor and promote attendance. The school has a conscientious approach to child protection and ensuring students, health and safety. Personal development is well promoted, although not all tutors make good use of registration periods to help students develop responsible and mature attitudes.
91. Overall, the school promotes pupils, personal development well. Arrangements to smooth the transition of pupils from primary school to secondary school are well established. Staff liaise with all the schools from which the pupils transfer and this gives pupils and their parents many opportunities to get to know the school and staff before the move up. Staff share a wide range of information that helps them to meet pupils, academic and personal needs. Pupils are happy with the induction arrangements and parents feel that their children are well supported. There are several opportunities for pupils to take responsibility within school, increasing as they move through the school. Representatives from each year group work as school councillors to raise and consider pupils views on a range of issues designed to enhance the quality of pupil's experiences in school.
92. Similarly, students in Year 11 have the opportunity to work as prefects by assisting staff with supervision and administrative duties and providing personal support for younger pupils. Pupils and students support charitable events and good causes. Their views are sought by the school on relevant issues and new developments enabling them to take an active role in school life. The programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education provides students with opportunities to learn skills to help keep themselves and others safe as well as providing a forum for sharing views and knowledge about a wide range of personal and social issues. The promotion of pupils personal development makes a significant contribution to helping pupils acquire caring and understanding attitudes and a strong sense of personal responsibility.
93. The school has adopted local authority procedures for managing health and safety and these are rigorously implemented to identify and respond to risks within the site and working practices. The school has taken action to reduce the opportunities for smoking in the students toilets, but have not been wholly successful in eliminating them. The school has very carefully devised procedures and supervision of students when they arrive and leave the site by bus.
94. Locally agreed procedures are established for child protection and staff are aware of who to notify about concerns. Staff with designated responsibilities are trained accordingly and are very knowledgeable and conscientious in carrying out their duties. Other staff are updated on procedures and provided with essential information to enable them to respond appropriately to a range of situations. The school's very good practice in this aspect of its work is shared with other professionals locally.
95. The school has established appropriate policies that are helping to maintain good behaviour within the school. In their dealings with pupils and other staff, the staff, on

the whole, demonstrates the kind of respectful behaviour they expect of pupils. The vast majority of teachers remind pupils about how to behave properly when they observe unsatisfactory conduct and take appropriate opportunities to reward good behaviour and to highlight the consequences of continuing poor behaviour. The vast majority of teachers successfully minimise any disruption of learning caused by poor behaviour through skilful handling of pupils in lessons and through the consistent application of established whole-school behaviour management strategies.

96. The school has developed disciplinary procedures designed to meet more challenging instances of poor behaviour, managed by senior members of staff and supported by governors. Training provided for teachers to develop strategies and forge good relationships with pupils supports this aspect of the school's work. The school is in the process of establishing a unit within school designed to eliminate disruption and provide guidance for pupils who frequently display poor behaviour by withdrawing them temporarily from all or some of their lessons.
97. The curriculum is well used to provide guidance for students on a wide range of issues as part of the school's procedures to eliminate any bullying. These PSHE lessons are very well planned to allow all teachers and students to work together in discussion and on practical exercises, backed up by a framework of tutor, year group and senior management staff to respond to incidents and deter further ones. Students say that they feel safe in school and know whom to turn to for help.
98. Arrangements for promoting and monitoring attendance are good. Tutors use registration periods to check absence, including receiving formal notification from parents. Registration procedures meet statutory requirements and it is a good feature of this school that registration is completed at the beginning of each lesson as well as at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. Late arrivals are carefully recorded and cautioned if an unacceptable pattern develops. School staff carefully monitor information about attendance, absence and punctuality. With additional support from the education welfare service, they provide help for those who develop erratic or infrequent attendance. The school has developed a system of rewards for good attendance that helps to remind pupils of its importance and praise those who achieve high levels.
99. Annual reviews of pupils with special educational needs are carried out in accordance with statutory requirements. Provision for these pupils is made in line with the requirements of their statements. The special educational needs co-ordinator has produced for teachers a file containing details of all pupils identified as having special educational needs, together with useful practical strategies to assist in their teaching. Pupils are thoroughly assessed for early identification of special educational needs by liaising with feeder primaries and use of appropriate tests on arrival in Year 7.
100. Targets, which are included on individual education plans, are sufficient in number, manageable and achievable. There is an established system of regular review of these plans. However, since the plans are produced by the special needs co-ordinator they are necessarily generic in nature and depend on subject departments to supply subject specific learning objectives. This process is patchy and inconsistent and requires careful monitoring by the school. Nevertheless, this area is one of improvement since the last inspection and the school has plans to broaden the involvement of all teaching staff in the writing of individual education plans.

Sixth form

101. The educational and personal support and guidance for sixth form students are an extension of the strong pastoral system operating in the main school. There is a good level of contact possible between sixth form students and key staff and this, combined with the very good relationships based on mutual respect that students and staff enjoy, means that a range of information, support and guidance is available. Students receive good quality guidance on how well they are doing and how to improve. Students are provided with a base where they can meet each other informally during leisure periods as well as a spacious study area. Opportunities for students to work as a team with pastoral staff in support of pupils in the main school are a significant feature of the school's work to enhance and develop individual skills and aptitude and provide detailed training in counselling skills and working as a team.
102. Good attendance in the sixth form is actively encouraged and very well monitored. However, the requirements and rationale for registration at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions for students who do not have lessons timetabled then are not fully understood or appreciated by everyone concerned. Some students find the requirement to register interferes with their freedom to plan and use their time as best suits their personal needs. Others prefer the discipline of attending each day. Some staff and students are unclear about what is formally expected. Students who shared their views with inspectors were glad that they had joined the sixth form. They are satisfied that teachers are easily accessible and willing to provide support for academic or personal difficulties. A few students are not so happy with the level of personal support and information available to them.

Advice, support and guidance

103. Frequent discussions between teachers and students, both informal and formal, ensure that students are kept well informed about the progress they are making and about what they need to do to improve. This underpins the diagnosis and provision made to meet students' individual learning needs. This provision is also good and helps to ensure that students are well motivated and do their best. The majority of students, including those who are new to the school when they enter the sixth form, report feeling well-informed about how well they are doing and feel that the arrangements to monitor and support their academic progress are good.

Assessment

Main

104. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. These procedures have improved since the time of the last inspection. Departments have good systems in place to ensure that pupils in Year 7 are assessed thoroughly shortly after they enter the school. This helps to ensure that pupils are placed in classes where their learning needs are met well. Assessment information provided by the primary schools that pupils have previously attended is also used well and helps to ensure that pupils' transition into the high school takes place smoothly. As pupils pass through the school their attainment and progress continue to be assessed regularly and accurately.
105. The information gained from assessments is generally used well to guide the next stages of teaching and learning. Teachers are clearly aware of the stage their pupils have reached and are mindful of this when they plan their lessons. The use of assessment information to guide the planning of the curriculum is satisfactory. In most subjects the information gained from assessments and examinations is analysed closely to see if there are any trends in pupils' attainment and progress that suggest changes are needed in the way that subjects are taught. In some subjects, although

pupils are assessed thoroughly and teachers are aware of pupils' learning needs, not enough use is made of the information gained to analyse trends in attainment over longer periods of time for groups of pupils.

106. Procedures to monitor and support pupils' academic progress are good. Pupils are well informed about the progress they are making because teachers frequently discuss this with them. Targets for pupils' learning are regularly set. These are modified in the light of progress following discussions between pupils and their teachers. This helps to keep pupils aware of the progress they are making and motivates them to do well. Some departments have chosen not to share National Curriculum levels with pupils. This is because they feel the period of time it sometimes takes for pupils to move from one level to the next can be long and makes it difficult for pupils to understand fully the progress they are making. Where this is the case, teachers still keep pupils informed about their progress through regular discussions.
107. The school's system for tracking attainment and progress has recently been streamlined. A teacher in the school has designed this. As data becomes available it is entered on the school's computer system by support staff. This is helping to ease teachers' workloads. The information retained by the system is easily accessible to teachers and is provided in a form that enables them to see how well pupils are doing and to identify trends in attainment efficiently.

Sixth form

108. Procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are good. Information about how well pupils performed in GCSE examinations is used in careful consultation with students to decide the best courses for them to follow in the sixth form. As students progress through the two years covered by this stage of their education their attainment and progress are assessed thoroughly and accurately.
109. The information gained from the assessments made of students' attainment and progress is used well by teachers to plan the next stages of teaching and learning. It is also used well by managers to identify trends in attainment and to consider any changes that might be necessary to improve provision.
110. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are also good. The use of the information gained from assessments to guide the planning of the curriculum is satisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

Main

111. The school works well in partnership with parents. Information provided for parents is wide ranging and the school seeks parents views and assistance with many aspects of its work. Parents express positive views of the school overall although a few have concerns, mainly about communications between home and school, behaviour and homework.
112. Parents are satisfied that their child likes school and that they would feel comfortable approaching staff with queries and concerns. They are satisfied that the school expects their child to work hard and helps children to become mature and responsible. Parents believe that teaching is good and are satisfied with the progress that their child makes. However, a significant minority of parents express concerns about the quality and amount of homework set and communications between home and school. Some

experience difficulty in contacting specific people and are not wholly satisfied with the level of school response when contact is made. Some parents are concerned that behaviour in school is not as good as they would like and is not improving over time. The vast majority of parents who shared their views with inspectors and those who responded to school questionnaires are pleased with the work of the school overall.

113. The quality and range of information provided for parents about school life and the progress that their children make are good. The school prospectus is a thorough and clearly presented document. It gives details on school routines, the curriculum and the results of public examinations. Brochures and information sessions supplement the prospectus for parents at key points in their child's school career. Consultation and reporting times are carefully timed to coincide with major events in each year group so that parents and staff can provide support when it is most needed. A very good feature of this aspect of the school's work is the way in which parents are provided with opportunities to learn about course work requirements and how best to support their child with revision and preparation for examinations. Annual written reports are detailed and personal to individuals. Although the information contained in these reports is generally clear, the variety of formats for different subjects is not helpful and information that would let parents know how well their child is doing in relation to what is normally expected of children of the same age nationally is often omitted.
114. Parents are well involved in the life of the school and make some very significant contributions to its work. The school emphasises the importance it places on maintaining a good working partnership and provides many opportunities for parents to visit and share in new developments, several of which are designed to ascertain and meet parents needs. The vast majority of parents attend consultations with staff on their child's progress. In particular, parents are involved when their child is transferring from primary to secondary education.
115. The school is committed to working in partnership with parents whose children are experiencing difficulties in school by sharing information and possible remedies. Parents respond well to opportunities to attend discussions and workshops on specific issues. The school is interested in parents responses to what is provided, for themselves and their children, and seeks their views accordingly. For instance, parents have been consulted about their views on bullying and where they think the school could focus its work. There is a small group of parents and teachers who organise social and fundraising events that are well attended by parents and students.
116. The school provides parents with opportunities to be further involved through a Parents Forum convened to share views on various aspects of school life. The school takes up issues raised and works with parents to make improvements. For instance, a new style of parents evening has been trialled with parents of students in Year 8 as a result of dissatisfaction expressed. The school followed this up by seeking parents views on the effectiveness of the new arrangements with a view to further modification and introduction of a new system throughout the school. The Parents Association and Forum conduct their work in a businesslike manner and are instrumental in improving relationships between home and school and enhancing the facilities and experiences available in school for their children.
117. Parents are informed when their children are put on the special educational needs register. There is then regular contact between parents and the special education needs co-ordinator. The attendance of parents at annual review meetings is generally good.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and Management

Main

118. The quality of leadership and management of the head teacher and key staff is good. The governing body is very good in fulfilling its responsibilities, providing strategic support and direction. There is a clear commitment by senior managers to the continued and further development of the school, and its status as a media arts college. The head teacher has a very clear vision and is ably supported by his immediate deputies.
119. The leadership team members function well together to ensure that the work of the school reflects closely the aims of the school. Responsibilities are delegated with an exceptional level of trust and authority to staff with designated roles. This results in a strong collegiate approach to the management of the school and to its further development. Nevertheless, staff are held with clear accountability to line managers.
120. Middle managers, including heads of department, demonstrate good leadership overall, but with some variation between departments. The extent to which assessment data, for example, is used to develop planning and evaluate subject performance against national expectation, is variable and needs more consistency. Departments are not well enough aware of the average performance of pupils compared with national averages and expectation, or aware of the trends in performance over recent years.
121. The level of monitoring and evaluation of teaching is also variable between departments. The procedures of performance management are securely in place, but the routine observations and development of teaching styles and skills are inconsistent. For example, of the core subjects, it is good in English, but only satisfactory in mathematics and science because insufficient time is allowed for monitoring to occur.
122. Leadership is good in ICT, except that insufficient tracking of cross-curricular ICT work has taken place. It is good in mathematics, science, music, physical education, geography, history, religious education and citizenship. Leadership and management are very good in art and design, and in media studies, including that work related to the recent developments within the sixth form. Elsewhere, departmental management is satisfactory.
123. The governing body has been extremely supportive and key members instrumental in the developments towards specialist status and new accommodation for the sixth form. Governors work mainly through the committee structure and as such play a key role in shaping the direction of the school. Development plans are thoroughly drawn up and all staff contribute to their evaluation. Governors are encouraged to make proactive contributions to planning, as well as discussing school managers' proposals. Governors fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school because they come into school frequently and have full and frank discussions in governing body meetings. The school benefits from the professional expertise of many of the governors.
124. Leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. The special needs co-ordinator attempts to implement the principles of social inclusion. Within the department itself staff work hard at the co-ordinator's

direction to ensure that pupils with special needs are able to cope with the demands of the school's academic curriculum. However, the effectiveness of this work is hampered by several factors. The special needs co-ordinator is not a member of the school's leadership team, and as a result has a more limited overview of the needs within the school. A senior special needs assistant who organises the support timetable manages the large team of special needs assistants on a day-to-day basis. She carries out this task efficiently, but does not have specialist teaching knowledge. In addition to the SENCO, there are just two teachers who teach special needs pupils, each on a half timetable, which creates management difficulties. There is very little time timetabled to allow adequate liaison between special needs staff and subject specialists.

125. The quality of teaching or support offered by members of the department has not yet been monitored. This has resulted in inappropriate support strategies, an example of which is teaching assistants being expected to successfully manage pupils who exhibit very challenging behaviour with only basic non-specialist training to rely on. Accommodation and resources for special educational needs are quite limited, being confined to one teaching room and two small offices. The school is currently planning the establishment of a specialist resource centre for pupils with behavioural problems, which may well help this particular problem.
126. Learning resources are adequate to meet the needs of the National Curriculum in most curriculum areas, although there are reservations regarding the adequacy of resources for special educational needs and art, and some aspects of design and technology. The school is able to provide satisfactory teaching and learning materials in most subject areas; these are produced in-house.
127. The library is still not well stocked with reference materials and computers, but is evolving positively under the guidance of a newly appointed chartered librarian. A rationalisation and refurbishment programme is planned to create more effective study space and learning resources, including the provision of additional reference books, computer facilities and a security system. All departments have been asked to bid for appropriate subject specific library resources as the school library is targeted this year for receipt of funding from the Parents' Covenant Scheme.
128. There is a shortage of technological equipment including audio-visual resources in some departments. New technological equipment, including digital whiteboards is currently being introduced in certain departmental areas.
129. The standard of accommodation is satisfactory overall and has improved since the last inspection, although the increase in pupil numbers means that there is still insufficient and inadequate accommodation in some areas. The new sixth form block and the specialist facilities for teaching media arts provide very good accommodation, as do the new facilities for the English department, although accommodation for drama teaching is currently unsatisfactory as the new facilities are not yet in use. Accommodation for information and communication technology is good, and the school has several suites of computers. The facilities for teaching food technology are also very good.
130. Several areas still have unsatisfactory accommodation that is in need of improvement. There are insufficient laboratories to cater for the amount of science being taught with the result that too many sixth form lessons have to be taught in ordinary classrooms and room changes have to be arranged in order to allow practical work to be undertaken. The accommodation for teaching textiles, art and music is unsatisfactory, as is the provision of accommodation for teaching pupils with special educational needs. The accommodation for teaching other subjects is satisfactory. Disabled

access is good in the new buildings but poor in the older parts of the school due to their inherent design.

131. The school has used grant funding and other funds from its own resources in order to make considerable improvements to the accommodation since the last inspection. There has been a new building programme and many areas have been refurbished or extended in order to provide extra space where possible. The accommodation is generally in satisfactory condition, although there are some unsatisfactory aspects such as worn out floor coverings and leaking roofs that cannot be repaired until asbestos has been safely removed.
132. Considerable time, effort and resources have been invested in improving the accommodation and further major improvements are planned but the large numbers in the school place great pressure on the existing accommodation. Despite this, the standards and quality achieved in the school have not been seriously affected by deficiencies in accommodation.
133. There is a good match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum. Staff are well qualified and have a range of experience from different schools. Most are engaged to teach in the sixth form as well as the main school. There have been relatively few recruitment difficulties.
134. Procedures for support and induction of new staff are good and arrangements for newly qualified teachers are clear. Very good documentation is provided for staff to know the school routines. Regular in-service training days are arranged for all teachers, where topics that are very relevant to raising attainment, such as pupil tracking, are discussed. Staff development is a key element of the school. Arrangements for performance management are in place.

Sixth Form

135. The head of sixth form has a significant degree of autonomy and is instrumental in the development of sixth form provision. At the same time the sixth form remains an integral part of the whole school and benefits from its qualities of leadership and management and the support of the governing body.
136. There is a strong vision for development and proposals are discussed carefully within the leadership group. The students, many of whom come from other schools, are helped by the clear structures in place.
137. Staff support the sixth form well and nearly every teacher has a commitment to sixth form work on their timetable. The size and reputation are factors that help recruitment of teachers of high calibre to work in all year groups. The school enables many teachers to be involved in the good support and guidance that are given to students, although a limitation in the management structure is the lack of a deputy head of sixth form who could share some of the management responsibilities.
138. Resources in the sixth form are good, with new facilities and equipment available for key subject areas in the new building.

Financial Management

139. In 2001/2002 spending was above average compared to schools with sixth forms in UK metropolitan areas. Total staffing costs are in line with spending in similar schools. Spending specifically on special educational needs in the last financial year rose this year. Financial planning and control are good, with the school's strategic planning on fiscal matters being very good.

140. The school has undertaken major changes to its financial administration since the last inspection in 1997. One of the most significant changes is the appointment of a business manager at senior management level, to oversee the day-to-day financial organisation and to plan future fiscal strategies, in conjunction with the head teacher and finance sub committee.
141. The school has a clear organisational structure with defined lines of reporting for all financial operations. In order to carry out its financial responsibilities the governing body delegates most of its decision making to the financial sub committee. Governors are deeply involved in all aspects of planning and fiscal management, often contributing expert advice in the process. They share the headteacher's vision, not only in establishing challenging targets, but working to ensure that resources are available to realise those objectives.
142. The decision to pursue the specialist status in media arts has proved to have a significant impact not only on the sixth form and the media studies curriculum but also across the whole school provision in literacy, numeracy and ICT. The governors, headteacher and senior colleagues have worked hard to establish the considerable funding associated with the project.
143. The school is well supported by the Local Education Authority, with its officers regularly supporting the school and its initiatives. A recent initiative has been their support for the school's bid for funding in the sport and physical education area, where a substantial grant has been acquired to improve playing field provision. A recent audit report concludes that the financial administration is of a satisfactory standard, making just a few procedural recommendations to facilitate further improvements.
144. The school has made good use of funds available through various local and national bodies to enhance facilities, together with good housekeeping within the school establishment to exercise maintenance work and repairs. Good use has been made of evolving tendering regulations to obtain value for money, and the school benefits accordingly. The governors, and the finance sub committee in particular, effectively work to apply best value principles in management and use of resources, and are currently working on a best value statement to be included in financial documents as a school commitment.
145. Recently developed management strategies regarding finance have had a significant impact on standards and the development of the school with the specialist school status providing 'spin-off' resource effects across the curriculum. The specialist school status complements these whole school developments, with the extra resources and accommodation attracting further post 16 students into the academic sixth form; this area now subsidises the main school. The new buildings have brought significant improvements in the teaching facilities and in the staffing quota, allowing the school to cope with both initial staff cover problems, and inset /staff development provision from within its own resources.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

146. Raise standards and halt the decline in the overall performance of pupils in Year 9 National Curriculum Tests in English, mathematics and science, for example by:
- ensuring assessment procedures are fully used by all departments;
 - giving greater emphasis to the measurement of achievement of pupils by the end of Year 9 in relation to national expectations.
- (Paragraphs 4, 46, 120, 155, 165, 173 and 235)
147. Improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs by:
- monitoring more closely the quality of support given and the involvement of subject areas in making IEPs subject specific;
 - ensuring that clear provision is in place for those with specific learning needs as opposed to behavioural difficulties;
 - review the management of special educational needs with regard to the involvement of the co-ordinator in whole school strategic management.
- (Paragraphs 48, 60, 124 and 125)
148. Ensure that the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum in ICT are met by:
- increasing the amount of time given to the use of ICT in control and data logging in science and design and technology.
- (Paragraphs 41, 59 and 221)
149. Improve the consistency in use of assessment data by departments by:
- providing further training for heads of department in the use of National Assessment Data to evaluate performance of the subject and monitor the progress of individual pupils in relation to targets based on prior attainment.
- (Paragraphs 105, 120, 180 and 186)
150. Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
- increasing the extent of monitoring by heads of department, ensuring more regular classroom observation and formal feedback occurs;
 - arranging strategies for the sharing of good practice in teaching across subjects;
 - evaluating the quality of on going assessment by all teachers.
- (Paragraphs 46, 121, 125, 160, 171, 179, 197 and 204)

Sixth form

151. Ensure the provision for religious education complies with statutory requirements.
- (Paragraphs 76 and 318)
152. Improve procedures for morning registration to ensure reliability of attendance procedures.
- (Paragraph 102)
153. Review the effectiveness of the sixth form management structure in order to ensure adequate guidance is available to students.
- (Paragraph 137)
154. Improve the degree of active participation by students to improve their independent learning.

(Paragraphs 53, 256, 305, 309, 320 and 332)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	146
	Sixth form	74
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		85

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	3	26	58	52	5	1	0
Percentage	2	18	40	36	3	1	0
Sixth form							
Number	5	22	41	6	0	0	0
Percentage	7	30	55	8	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1206	469
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	31	0

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	24	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	251	1

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	49

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	1.2

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	123	123	246

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	87	99	101
	Girls	109	105	102
	Total	196	204	203
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	80 (78)	84 (81)	83 (81)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	34 (41)	61 (58)	35 (41)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	92	97	95
	Girls	114	101	97
	Total	206	198	192
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	87 (96)	83 (80)	80 (79)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	48 (58)	66 (56)	38 (55)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	147	92	239

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	74	143	147
	Girls	63	90	91
	Total	137	233	238
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	57 (63)	97 (99)	100 (100)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	42.4
	National	39.8

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0
	National	

Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13)-2001

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	75	135	210
	Average point score per candidate	18.0 (18.3)	18.2 (19.9)	18.1 (19.3)
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9 (17.1)	18.0 (18.0)	17.5 (17.6)

		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	75	135	210	0	0	0
	Average point score per candidate	18.0	18.2	18.1			
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.9	17.4			

Data for 2001 as national comparators for 2002 are not yet available. Figures in brackets refer to 2000.

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

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	1488	108	2
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	33	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	2	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	14	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	127	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	107.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.6

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	27
Total aggregate hours worked per week	738

Deployment of teachers: Y7– Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	81.4
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Average teaching group size: Y7– Y13

Key Stage 3	25.7
Key Stage 4	18.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001- 2
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	£
Total income	4,837,007
Total expenditure	4,942,379
Expenditure per pupil	2,997
Balance brought forward from previous year	101,443
Balance carried forward to next year	-3929

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	21
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	30

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1675
Number of questionnaires returned	329

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36	55	7	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	36	56	6	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	56	14	2	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	47	19	8	2
The teaching is good.	28	63	3	1	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	52	21	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	42	48	7	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	43	4	2	1
The school works closely with parents.	20	57	18	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	41	48	5	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	58	6	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	48	11	1	10

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths:

- Overall, standards are above average.
- Achievement by end of Year 11 is good.
- There is good teaching and learning from Year 10 onwards.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- The new accommodation is good.

Areas for improvement:

- Progress to the end of Year 9 is only average.
- Teaching and learning in Years 9-11 are only satisfactory.
- Some pupils with special needs are not given enough support in lessons.
- Behaviour of a minority of pupils could be better in lessons.
- Pupils do not have sufficient access to ICT in lessons.

155. In National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9, pupils' performance in 2002 was above average compared with schools nationally, although well below average when compared with similar schools, and schools with similar range of prior attainment at end of Year 6. Although an increasing number of pupils reach level 5, relatively few are reaching level 6 or beyond. Over the last four years, the overall standard has declined in comparison with other schools in the tests. This is true for both boys and girls. In GCSE examinations in 2002, standards are shown to be above average by both English and English literature results. Over two thirds of pupils obtained grades A*-C in these subjects. Although the results for 2002 show a slight drop compared with 2001, when about three quarters of pupils achieved grades A*-C, they are still above the national average and are relatively strong in comparison with other school subjects. Girls were further ahead of their national averages than were boys. It should be noted that a high proportion of the grades achieved were B or C; - relatively few A or A* grades were achieved. The trend in GCSE results over the past five years has been one of steady improvement, and the 2002 results represent only a slight reversal.

156. The standards seen during the inspection show a similar picture to that given by recent test and examination results. Pupils in Year 7 produce work of a slightly higher standard overall than that found in most schools, and this is maintained through to Year 9. Pupils are competent readers and are able to use dictionaries effectively. They recognise different genres of writing, and can respond to a range of texts, including Shakespearean verse, in their own writing with some confidence. They also write confidently when given opportunities for personal, imaginative or persuasive writing. Much of their work is well presented, and benefits from redrafting, sometimes using computer technology. Not all pupils, however, are as confident as they might be in speaking aloud in lessons, and better listening skills would benefit some pupils. Steady progress is made from when the pupils arrive at the school, and achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory.

157. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve better. Standards are above average, and the higher attaining pupils in Year 11 are already producing coursework of an impressive quality. Even lower attaining pupils are able to respond to set texts in a competent way, as was

seen in a lesson on a Carol Ann Duffy poem. Average attaining pupils can make useful notes on media texts, including film extracts: they responded very maturely to tasks based on the film *The Matrix* in a Year 10 lesson, for example. Year 11 pupils were seen redrafting coursework on *Romeo and Juliet* on computers, and using the internet to look for new ideas on the play. They are keen to take notes in lessons and can reflect on their own writing. By the end of Year 11, most pupils have made good progress. Those in Years 10 and 11 have, on the whole, a more positive attitude to their work than pupils in Years 7 to 9, where there are a few incidences of immature behaviour which hinder progress to some extent.

158. In some of the lessons in Years 7, 8 and 9, teachers do not always address this immature behaviour effectively. Even in Year 11 classes where the lessons are not planned appropriately there can be disaffection. But teaching is satisfactory overall, and good – sometimes very good – in Years 10 and 11. All teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their subject, and there is a broad range of experience within the department. Where planning is good, for example in a Year 10 lesson on the poetry of Gillian Clarke, pupils are enabled to learn well and consolidate their understanding. Appropriate task sheets and well-organised group work contributed to the success of this particular lesson. A range of resources is deployed effectively: showing excerpts from a video was enhanced by the technology of the new conference room, where the teacher was able to use a data projector and a large screen. Another teacher was able to use the facilities of an ICT room to give a Power Point presentation on a set text. However, there are insufficient opportunities generally for new technologies to be used in lessons, and pupils' skills in using them are not as well developed as they could be.
159. Overall, there are many examples of good learning, particularly in Years 10 and 11, where teachers use appropriate methods and catch the interest of their pupils. Learning is least satisfactory amongst pupils with special needs, particularly in Years 7 to 9, because they receive no support in lessons unless they have a statement of special need, and tasks are not always sufficiently differentiated for them. This is one of the reasons why the behaviour in these year groups is less good, which impacts on the standards of all pupils but of this group in particular. It means that more demands are made on teachers, and most are already working very hard: they set homework regularly and mark pupils' work very thoroughly. Where expectations are high and challenging tasks are set, as they often are with GCSE classes, it is shown in the results achieved.
160. The head of department has only been in post since last September, but already has an accurate understanding of the needs of the subject and her priorities for improvement are very sound. She is aware of the need to raise achievement in Years 7 to 9, and is introducing better assessment arrangements. There is also recognition of the need to monitor, evaluate and develop teaching and to ensure that good practice is shared. There have been challenges: this is a large department, and two staff are only temporary; there is a newly qualified teacher to support and induct; some staff also teach other subjects. But effective systems of communication are in place and the good leadership and management are likely to have an impact on standards before very long. The department is benefiting from the very good new accommodation available for English and the future looks bright. Although it cannot be said that there has been any marked improvement since the last inspection, standards are still high and there is real capacity now for progress to be made.

DRAMA

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

Strengths:

- Standards are high.
- Teaching is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- Extra-curricular provision is very good.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to the personal development of pupils.

Areas for improvement:

- Accommodation for drama is inadequate.

161. There are high standards in drama. Many pupils opt for drama and theatre arts at GCSE, and obtain results well above average. Drama is taught to all pupils in Years 7,8 and 9, after which it becomes an option – a popular option, with four parallel sets in the current Year 11. In the limited number of lessons that inspectors were able to observe, the high standards and good achievement were apparent.
162. The subject benefits from having a strong team of teachers, including four specialists, with a good range of subject expertise. Creative timetabling allows team-teaching to take place from Year 10 onwards, and pupils learn well subsequently. Their response to the subject is positive: even pupils whose behaviour was clearly disaffected in other lessons were seen co-operating well in drama lessons, where the teaching is good or even very good. Teachers manage their classes well, building up very good relationships with the pupils, who acquire a good range of drama skills as a result. The subject also has a powerful impact on their personal development: it is difficult to exaggerate the value of drama in developing the social skills of pupils here, and its contribution to their spiritual, moral and cultural development. They gain in confidence and learn to respect themselves and others more: this was clear even with a Year 7 class relatively new to the subject.
163. Teachers give a considerable amount of time during the lunch hour and after school to the pupils, whether in the drama club (for those in Years 7 and 8) or in helping the large number of examination candidates prepare performances. Many of the works studied as set texts are presented publicly. Pupils also participate in performances and workshops in primary schools. Theatre visits or workshops are almost weekly events; pupils' experience of theatre is enhanced by the many opportunities provided.
164. The subject benefits from having a well-equipped theatre area, which doubles as a teaching space, and a good range of properties and sound and lighting facilities. Unfortunately, many lessons have to be taught in non-specialist areas, such as classrooms (where furniture limits movement) or dining areas (where there are poor acoustic conditions and time is lost because of setting-up time for meals). The problem is heightened by the need to hold GCSE classes at the same time as each other. The quality of the teaching means that the effect of the accommodation is minimised, but pupils receive a less than ideal experience of drama.

MATHEMATICS

The overall provision for mathematics is **good**.

Strengths:

- The attainment at the end of both Year 9 and Year 11 is above the national average.
- The teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good.
- The arrangement on the timetable that enables pupils to be placed into sets is of benefit to all pupils.
- The management of the subject is good.

Areas for Improvement:

- Better access to ICT hardware and software to support teaching and learning.
- A greater consistency in marking of pupils' work in order to give clearer guidance to the pupils on how they might improve the standard of their work.
- Further opportunities for the head of department to do more rigorous monitoring of the teaching in Years 7 to 9 in order that the good practice that does exist may be shared with colleagues.

165. At the end of Year 9 the attainment of the pupils is well above the national average when compared with all schools, but below average when compared with similar schools on prior attainment. Over the last five years the average point score of the boys against the national average has risen, but that of the girls has fallen by a greater amount resulting in an overall fall for all pupils. The attainment at the end of Year 11 is significantly above the national average, and the girls do better than the boys at attaining the highest grades. The pupils' performance in mathematics is better than in most other subjects.
166. The standards seen at Year 9 during the inspection were average because the demands being made on the majority of pupils were insufficient considering their attainment in this subject on entry to the school. This explains why the attainment in external examinations when measured against similar schools and against schools where pupils had similar levels of prior attainment is not as good as that against all schools. However, pupils are able to handle number well and work out in their head simple calculations involving decimals and percentages; use instruments to draw and construct figures; and draw and interpret information graphically. The higher attaining pupils use their knowledge and understanding to tackle extended work in a topic, whilst those of average and below average attainment can apply routine procedures but are given little opportunity to extend their work. A scrutiny of the pupils' exercise books confirmed this.
167. The standards seen at Year 11 were above average. The pupils' work demonstrated that they are learning effectively over a wide range of topics e.g. high attaining pupils can use the sine and cosine rules; solve quadratic equations both graphically and using the formula; – lower attaining pupils can draw and interpret scatter graphs; and understand transformations. All pupils use calculators accurately and sensibly. However, there was no evidence at all of the use of ICT in either lessons or in the scrutiny of the pupils' work.
168. The teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. All the lessons are well-planned with clear objectives. In the best of lessons good progress is made, but in some of the lessons seen involving pupils of average and below average attainment the progress was only satisfactory due to there being too little teacher input. Where the learning is good the teacher gives a good explanation of the topic; appropriately pitched examples are given

for the pupils to work on; the teacher circulates among the pupils not only engaging those pupils having difficulties but ensuring that all the pupils stay on task; the lesson is completed with a recap of its essential elements and pointers for the next lesson. The lessons that are satisfactory could be improved with the teachers devoting more of the lesson time to explanation and illustration e.g. drawing scatter graphs, where the teacher assumed that the pupils would be able to scale the axes; - a minority did not fully understand how to proceed which should have been foreseen by the teacher. Homework is set regularly and marked but there is an inconsistency to it and in some instances there are no comments on how to improve. The best homework demonstrated consolidation and extension whereas some homework was just many more examples of a routine nature. The use of support staff was seen to be effective, with the teachers having explained the work to be taught, for example, in a lesson on plotting graphs of linear functions.

169. In Years 10 and 11 the teaching is good and the pupils make good progress. The best teaching was observed when the pupils were using their previous knowledge to good effect in a new situation, for example, drawing trigonometrical graphs to solve equations, with the work being linked to other branches of the subject: – transformations and symmetry. Learning was good because the pupils developed a deeper understanding of the topic. Teaching could be improved given greater recognition to the fact that even in a setting situation there is a range of attainment within the set, and if they provided appropriate support for pupils who might otherwise fall behind. For example, in a lesson using trial and improvement methods, several pupils did not quite know where to pitch the substitution and needed more support than they were given. The homework set is of a better quality but its marking is inconsistent.
170. The overall attitudes of the pupils to the subject are good. They generally work hard and stay on task. Less than satisfactory progress occurs when the pupils' ability is over-estimated and they receive a limited amount of explanation and are left to get on with individual working for long periods.
171. The management of the department is good overall. A comprehensive annual development plan is produced with the action needed to achieve its targets. The curriculum is reviewed regularly which has resulted in the national strategy for mathematics being used in Years 7 and 8 and a new modular GCSE course in Year 10. The head of the department makes positive efforts to monitor and evaluate the work of the department by observing members of the department teach; keeping a close watch on the setting system to see that pupils are not wrongly placed; and by analysing examination results to see what other positive steps can be taken to improve the attainment of the pupils. The area that is least satisfactory is that of developing colleagues once the monitoring and evaluating have taken place by involving them in observing the good practice that does exist in the department.
172. The improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory: – the number and range of texts available are much improved; the pupils at the end of Year 9 are now entered for the highest tier in the national tests; a modular examination course is now in place which will enable pupils to know where they are in relation to national standards at more frequent intervals; and a permanent head of department is in place.

SCIENCE

Quality of provision in science overall is **good**.

Strengths:

- Strong subject knowledge and expertise of teachers.

- Good behaviour and attitudes of pupils.
- Good leadership of the department.

Areas for improvement:

- Monitoring of teaching and learning to identify and disseminate the good practice in a more structured way.
- Complete review of schemes of work to incorporate more fully the Key Stage 3 requirements, literacy and numeracy strategies and information and communication technology as a teaching and learning tool.
- Ensure that statutory requirements are fully met in relation to ICT within science.

173. Results at the end of Year 9 for 2002 are above national averages for all schools nationally. However, in relation to prior attainment they compare less favourably and have shown a downward trend for the last four years. Whilst the majority of pupils achieve at least satisfactory levels this downward trend is mainly due to relatively small numbers of pupils achieving the highest levels. At the end of Year 11 pupils' attainment is well above national averages for grades A*-C in the GCSE examination. This shows a fairly consistent picture since the last inspection with the exception of 2002 when results dropped significantly. The results for pupils achieving a grade in the range A*-G over the same period were very good with virtually all pupils being entered for and achieving dual award science. Evidence suggests that levels of attainment next year will return to similar levels as previous years. This is because the department has identified the need to set challenging targets to improve these results further and has implemented a number of strategies to focus teaching and learning more sharply, especially for the most able.
174. Pupils' levels of attainment seen during the inspection were overall satisfactory in Years 7 - 9 and more often good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are able to articulate their knowledge of scientific facts and apply them well. For example, in a Year 10 lesson pupils were able to explain in some detail how particle size related to the speed at which they would react with an acid, and in a Year 7 lesson pupils tested substances with litmus paper and were able to explain their results well. In general, pupils are making satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9. Higher attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9 apply knowledge well and are able to formulate hypotheses and conduct simple investigations to test them. They understand the concept of variables and can apply this to a variety of situations. Lower attaining pupils are able to follow instructions carefully, record information accurately and demonstrate they have conducted a fair test.
175. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are making good progress. They are attentive, contribute well to discussions and can interpret information well and use prior learning to enhance their understanding. There is too little opportunity provided to all pupils to develop the skills of extended writing to explore and consolidate their learning. No differences in the attainments of girls and boys were observed and pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.
176. The teaching of science is at least satisfactory at both key stages and often good. A higher percentage of stronger teaching was seen in Years 10 and 11 with half of lessons being good. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Lesson planning follows the scheme of work for each key stage and teachers have clear lesson objectives and good pace. The teaching styles used in most lessons did not vary, but the quality of teaching maintained pupils' interest well. On a very few occasions pupils lost concentration and interest because of lack of variety of tasks and strategies to engage them. Where teaching was good the approaches used met the

needs of the pupils well, encouraging the use of accurate measuring, observation and recording of results.

177. Group work was a positive feature as were high expectations and a brisk pace. This was well illustrated in a lesson investigating the effects of acid on limestone where pupils had to follow a set of complex instructions and record their results accurately and discuss the outcomes of their work. In the lessons where pupils make satisfactory, rather than good, progress the range of activities and methods of delivery lacked variety. The very few examples of inattention, misbehaviour and noise, which disrupted the work of the class, resulted from a lack of differentiated activities and from a slow pace, with pupils having to wait for something to happen during practical sessions. The provision for gifted and talented pupils and those with special needs across both key stages lacks clarity and the identification of more differentiated activities would enhance the learning of both these groups. All teachers would benefit from the opportunity to see the range of teaching styles used throughout the department and incorporate them into their own teaching. The marking of work, including homework, is consistent with the departmental policy.
178. Leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department, together with the teachers in charge of chemistry and physics, provides clear leadership and direction to the department. He has identified the key areas for development well and has introduced a number of key strategies to move the department forward. The departmental development plan now needs to be revisited to ensure it defines clearly the objectives, has clear success criteria and is time related. The ongoing revision of the schemes of work for Years 7 to 11 needs to address the issues of differentiation, the incorporation of ICT requirements as well as national strategies, for example, literacy, numeracy and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Access to information technology was identified as an issue for development at the time of the last inspection. This remains unsatisfactory. There is now an urgent need to address this as statutory requirements for the curriculum are not being met. A range of subject experience and expertise is available and this enhances the department.
179. Monitoring of teaching and learning is taking place. However, this needs to be given a higher priority at strategic level. Examples of good teaching and learning need to be identified and mechanisms put in place to ensure the outcomes are used to develop and enhance further the quality of teaching. The head of department and teachers in charge of subjects satisfactorily monitor curriculum delivery during regular meetings with staff, assessments and monitoring of pupils' progress towards the targets set.
180. Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils are well established and use National Curriculum assessment data to inform departmental, teacher and pupil targets. The link between these assessments and planning needs to be more explicit to ensure clear differentiation in terms of learning objectives.
181. Learning resources are adequate. However, one teaching space is cramped for the large number of pupils in some classes. The number and size of laboratories are insufficient to ensure satisfactory teaching of the curriculum for all pupils and the need for regular room changes only works because of staff and pupil cooperation. This, together with some very large teaching groups, needs to be considered when looking at timetabling to try and minimise movement of both staff and pupils and to reduce the group size especially in the higher tier groups. The laboratory technicians provide very good support. The lack of investment in the department in terms of computers is unsatisfactory and is of concern. The situation has worsened this year with the department not being able to identify sufficient time in any of the IT rooms. Scheme of

work requirements, for example, data logging, are not happening because of this situation. This is unsatisfactory and needs addressing as a matter of urgency.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths:

- The good and often very good teaching that enables pupils to achieve well and make good progress with their work.
- The very positive attitudes that pupils bring to the subject, helping to build and sustain the very good climate for learning.
- The curriculum, which offers a very wide range of creative opportunities for pupils to explore and develop their skills and understanding of the subject.
- The very good leadership of a strong team of teachers who work well together to raise standards in the department.

Areas for improvement:

- The analyses of data available to the department, to enable it to more rigorously monitor the attainment of pupils over time; the marking system is not centralised in the department.
- Some accommodation is cramped and there is insufficient control over available light to gain the full benefit from observational studies; there are health and safety concerns over the adequate removal of silica dust from the ceramics room at the end of the day.
- The use of computers for art is restricted by the lack of readily available computers and hardware resources such as digital cameras and graphics tablets.

182. Although GCSE results over the past three years have shown a slight decline, the number of pupils gaining grades A*-C in the GCSE examinations in 2002 fell significantly from previous years to a level below national averages and amongst the worst in the school. Within the examination cohort, boys performed significantly better than girls, narrowing the gap between them to less than 1 per cent. The overall result has been acknowledged as the worst on the department's records and has been explained as part of a wider problem with last year's Year 11. Temporary staffing for a period of five months led to patchy provision in a subject area that had enjoyed 100 per cent A*-C results in previous years and a dramatic fall in results in that area in 2002. With the good and very good teaching in all areas of art seen during the inspection and the generally positive attitudes of pupils, results are set to return to the high position they normally hold. Teacher assessments for the current Year 10 pupils show that almost ninety per cent are working at or above the national average standard, giving firm support to the predicted rise in results in 2003.

183. In work seen during the inspection, standards were broadly average at the end of Year 9. Pupils arrive at the school with standards that vary according to their primary school experience, but which are below national averages overall. They are taught the basic skills of line, tone, texture and colour and use clay to roll and form a tile to which they add texture and colour. Year 8 pupils are challenged effectively by the standards of drawing required and make good progress in their observational drawings. They gain confidence through the opportunities to engage in group critical discussion of their work. By Year 9 higher attaining pupils observe well and draw confidently. Lower attaining pupils require support and guidance to grasp proportion and perspective in their drawings. Standards at the end of Year 11 are above national averages. Pupils research the work of artists such as O' Keefe, Morris, Leger and representatives of the

Art Nouveau movement. They write good critical studies, using the Internet and resource books for information. They use the opportunities that teachers give for independent exploration well, creating very imaginative work along individual lines. Pupils with special educational needs are known well and experience few obstacles to learning, making the same very good progress as others in their classes. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 show a natural talent for drawing and rise to the challenge of the observational drawing approach to their research. Lower attaining pupils tend to over-use photographs in their supporting studies, often lacking confidence in their drawing and painting skills.

184. The quality of teaching is good and often very good. Teachers prepare well for their lessons, ensuring a prompt start. This is occasionally spoiled by an over-long introduction, leading to pupils losing interest in the lesson. In lessons where there is some challenging behaviour, pupils are generally managed skilfully, using very good relationships and firm, persistent expectations of good behaviour. Progress is accelerated by the positive feedback in group critical evaluation sessions, usually at the end of the lesson. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of their subject, although they do not always use the vocabulary of art consistently and pupils are not always clear about the terms they use in discussing their work. High expectations ensure that pupils put a lot of creative effort into their work and they are generally pleased with the results. On occasion, the background music to a lesson interferes with the communication between teacher and pupils and some pupils are distracted from their work. In most lessons the positive attitudes and good behaviour of pupils contribute to the positive and enjoyable atmosphere for learning.
185. The department benefits from the good leadership of a strong team of well-motivated teachers, whose skills and energy lead to high standards of achievement amongst pupils. The very good curriculum offers a broad and interesting range of learning experiences, and provides many opportunities for pupils to visit art galleries and museums, to improve their awareness and understanding of important works of art and craft.
186. Good improvement has been made since the previous inspection, especially in the area of teaching and learning. Teachers work without technician support and this creates difficulties in the management of resources such as clay. The unsatisfactory cleaning of surfaces that pose a health hazard when clay and glazes are in use further impedes work in the ceramics area. The department handbook, whilst well presented, is not sufficiently informative about the administration of important policy areas, such as health and safety, and does not give sufficient information on the achievements of the department that would give a clear picture of its work. In particular, the analysis of examination data lacks rigour. The department's resources for art are deficient in the areas of printmaking and digital art and there is a need for more in-service training in the use of appropriate computer software. The book stock in the library is entirely unsatisfactory, although adequate stocks in art rooms enhance it. The accommodation is unsatisfactory, as reported in the previous inspection: some rooms are very small and there is no adequate control over natural light in them.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths:

- Well planned introduction of this new National Curriculum subject.
- Wide variety of teaching and learning activities.
- Good management and leadership, with good collaboration between teachers.

Areas for improvement:

- Tutorial programme schemes of work do not accurately reflect citizenship opportunities.
- Curriculum not yet audited to establish coverage of citizenship in other subjects.

187. Elements of the subject were introduced in September 2001; from September 2002, it was incorporated into the completely revised tutorial programme, which is taught simultaneously in Years 7 to 11.
188. Overall pupils reach average standards by the end of Years 9 and 11; most approach the subject enthusiastically and take an active interest in their work. They achieve at least satisfactorily, and in many cases well, although some lower attaining pupils have yet to develop the broad and comprehensive knowledge and understanding about some areas of the subject, such as different forms of government or the provision of public services. Speaking and listening skills are effectively developed, as are those of active participation, for example, Year 7 pupils who raised £1500 for a leprosy charity last year. At present, there are only limited opportunities for the acquisition and practice of information and communication technology skills, although in accordance with the school's specialist status, many pupils demonstrate well developed media handling skills.
189. The quality of teaching in citizenship is good; the school has demonstrated its commitment to the tutorial programme by allocating two staff to each group, an arrangement that works well in most lessons. Pupils learn well in lessons where teachers have high expectations and clearly established ground rules, and are actively involved in their own learning. Pupils make good use of the school's media facilities to produce films of life in school, the local Asian community and a local hospice, which resulted in an "Active Citizenship" award. A variety of activities are organized to support the development of citizenship which has included an interactive "Crime and Consequences" day in conjunction with the Prison Service, Victim Support and the local fire and police services, and entering teams in the Citizenship Foundation national mock trial competitions. In some lessons where teachers are inexperienced or too directive, where pupils are insufficiently challenged or gender groups not split up, the quality of teaching does not rise above satisfactory.
190. The subject co-ordinator, who has been in post for eighteen months, initially liaised with English, history and religious education in order to ascertain the extent to which they covered the citizenship programmes of study, but this process has not yet been extended to the rest of the curriculum. The subject is well led and managed; the co-ordinator's calm constructive approach towards her responsibilities has engaged pupils' interest and challenged their prejudices well by introducing sensitive and controversial issues such as homophobic bullying and the human rights of asylum seekers. She has clear views about the future development of the subject. There are at present assessment procedures in Years 7, 8 and 10, to record pupils' achievement and pupils reflect on this through their self-evaluation sheets revealing positive attitudes towards the subject as a whole.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths:

- Good teaching in Years 10 and 11.
- Improved information communication technology facilities and usage including CAD/CAM.
- Good relationships and a positive learning environment.

- Good development planning across all areas.

Areas for improvement:

- Monitoring across the whole department for consistency of practice.
- Implementing control technology in Years 7 to 9.
- Developing strategies for monitoring pupil progress more readily.
- Sharing good practice across all areas of the department.

191. Standards of work in Year 9 are average overall and reflect broadly the recent teacher assessments. Girls usually achieve a bigger percentage of the higher grades. This is supported by the quality of the work produced by girls in their design folders. From broadly average attainment on entry, pupils make satisfactory progress from Years 7 to 9. Practical work is usually good and the better design folders are neatly presented. Good work in a cook chill food project, where good use of colour, sensory analysis and assessment records is seen, good development of ideas in a clock project and good research into Italian food products result in good evaluations. Where the work is weaker it is mainly due to designs not developed in sufficient detail, drawings not annotated, drawings in pen and not in pencil or where the work is not complete. Some design folders are rather untidy in appearance. Achievement is satisfactory overall across the areas of study.
192. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, results are below the national average for boys and above the national average for girls, who achieve a bigger percentage of the higher grades. This shows a marginal decline in results from 2001 when overall results were in line with the national average. In 2002 individual specialisms achieved varied success with textiles and child development results above the national average and other specialisms broadly in line with the national average. Results in resistant materials have shown a gradual improvement but pupils are less successful in this than in other specialisms.
193. Standards of work currently in Year 11 is variable across the specialisms but are satisfactory overall. There is good and very good work in most areas. Girls usually produce a higher standard of work than boys, particularly in design folder work. Higher attainers usually do well and especially so when suitably challenged, as in a food technology project researching gluten-free products and good investigation of oriental clothing in textiles. A graphics project looking at greeting cards used good freehand sketching, use of colour and investigation of mechanical movement in research and presentation. A child development project was well presented when looking at the social and emotional development of a young baby. These and other good projects show good levels of investigation and creativity.
194. Practical work, including modelling, is of a good standard in most areas. Middle and lower attainers can find aspects of the work difficult where presentational skills are weaker; there is insufficient volume of work in research and development and colour is not used appropriately. The use of information communication technology is not always exploited in the work. Although improving in examination performance the work in resistant materials is generally below average in design folder work, and practical work is of limited challenge. Achievement is satisfactory in design folder work overall but is good in practical work in most areas.
195. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with good teaching seen particularly in Years 10 and 11. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. In the best

lessons learning is increased and good progress made because teachers use good subject knowledge, lessons have good pace, effective strategies are used and they have good pupil management. This is seen in a Year 7 lesson where pupils were learning the value of resistors and safe use of the soldering iron, a Year 10 food technology lesson with mainly lower attaining pupils who developed practical and social skills in a bread making project and in a Year 11 graphics lesson pupils increased their learning of how to produce a quality flow chart for their project work. Satisfactory lessons have many positive features but there is a tendency for teachers to talk over pupils, and some lessons have rather lengthy demonstrations or explanations. There are occasions when teachers do not ensure that all pupils can see clearly when demonstrations are taking place.

196. Good relationships and pupil attitudes exist in most lessons. Pupils usually settle quickly to the task and respond well especially when suitably challenged and when work is planned for different pupils' needs. There are occasions when pupils are slow to respond to the teachers' requests for attention, which can affect the learning and progress made. Pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties integrate well and make satisfactory progress. The department's contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils usually work well in groups and respond to discussions in a constructive way. Teachers and pupils use technical language during lessons and pupils cope adequately with the levels of numeracy skills required. Cultural development is seen in pupils' work in textiles, food technology and graphics. Pupils look at foods from other countries, consider ethnic influences in textile design and Japanese shapes for packaging designs in graphics. Information and communication technology is used in pupils' work mainly to good effect and CAD/CAM is used in project work.
197. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A number of issues from the last inspection have been addressed and there is a good development plan covering all areas. Relevant schemes of work are in place and curriculum reviews take place regularly. Until recently examination results have been in line with or above the national average, and current work indicates an improving performance. There are good relationships between teachers and pupils and a positive learning environment established, including good displays of work to support learning. In Years 7 to 9 control technology is not implemented as statutorily required and assessment procedures need to include a map of progress to help with standardisation of work in Year 9. Monitoring for consistency of practice across the whole department requires a sharper focus, and further training is needed in the use of CAD/CAM for all staff. The department needs to share good practice in all areas. Technician support is good and there is now more stability in the teaching staff in the department. Marking is usually helpful and supportive but can be over generous at times. Some pupils are unsure of how well they are performing.
198. Accommodation is good in food technology but the workshops are in need of refurbishment and updating. Teaching textiles in a food technology room is not ideal. Resources are adequate but there is a shortage of information and communication technology equipment in food and textiles rooms. Resourcing for control technology is a priority.
199. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. CAD/CAM has been introduced into the curriculum, the food rooms have been refurbished and there are better dust extraction systems installed. There are improved links with outside agencies to support learning and improved primary liaison. There is no specialist area for textiles as at the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths:

- An enthusiastic, committed team of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.
- Strong planning and preparation procedures in place.
- Progress and attainment levels are generally satisfactory, often good.
- Comprehensive worksheets and exercise sheets provided for pupils.
- The department is well led and managed.

Areas for Improvement:

- Development of an appropriate range of differentiated teaching strategies and materials to address the breadth of pupil needs particularly across Years 7 – 8.
- Monitoring and evaluation procedures that rigorously follow up department strategies for improvement.
- Timetabling arrangements operating in Years 7 and 8.
- Gender issue regarding take-up of geography in Years 10 and 11.

200. Standards of pupils' work are at least satisfactory throughout. In many lessons standards are good and in some, very good. The provision for special educational needs pupils is generally most commendable, but there are some inconsistencies of provision and support. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are consistent with National Curriculum expectations.

201. Pupils have made satisfactory progress since entry. In 2002 the proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades in the GCSE examination was above the national average. Results have risen steadily in recent years. However, pupils do less well than in their other subjects. The proportion of pupils gaining A* - G grades is slightly below the national average. Although more boys opt to take geography, the girls' results are significantly better.

202. The standards of work seen during the inspection were at least satisfactory across all year groups, with the best work in Years 10 and 11. Pupils in all groups exhibit clear understanding; they generally listen attentively, approaching their work with enthusiasm and commitment. Class relationships are good, with some good collaborative work seen, especially in Years 10 and 11. The learning environment is generally good, with all pupils having a role to play. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by staff and making satisfactory progress. The majority of pupils achieve well, with presentational skills in class work and homework of at least a satisfactory standard, as well as showing satisfactory levels of application of knowledge to case studies. This was particularly the case in Years 10 and 11, where good levels of understanding and application are often directed towards linking physical and human factors.

203. The quality of teaching is a major strength of the department, with most of the teaching being at least satisfactory, largely good, and some very good. A major strength is that planning and preparation are of the highest order, based on excellent departmental documentation that offers support and guidance on a wide range of issues, including assessment, marking and other relevant policies. The specialist teachers exercise a

wide range of teaching strategies and methods; they are all enthusiastic and knowledgeable, with high expectations of their pupils. Most pupils respond well to this pupil-friendly style of teaching, and generally exhibit a reciprocal enthusiasm and commitment to their studies. However, there are occasions, in Years 7 to 9, where teaching strategies and timetable structures are not fully matched to the needs of the broad ability range of pupils. The use of information and communication technology is limited, but is quietly improving. Pupils' work is well marked, having heed to departmental and school policies, as laid down in the useful documents held by all staff, specialist and non-specialist. Although considerable priority is given to assessment procedures and target setting, this facet of teaching needs greater refinement and application by all staff. Not enough use is made of data and information available in determining future improvement strategies.

204. The leadership across the department is good, with good support documents and exemplar material made available to staff, backed with satisfactory levels of resources. The high standards of teaching, however, are not fully matched by standards and outcomes in the classrooms. There is a need therefore, for the department management to be more effective in applying monitoring and evaluation techniques to the teaching and learning environment.
205. Overall since the last inspection, the department continues to maintain standards of attainment above national averages, and its progress is satisfactory in terms of teaching and learning. There is, however, a need to focus on extending the steady progress made at classroom level, via relevant strategies that seek to address the needs of all pupils.

HISTORY

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

What the department does well:

- Standards attained in the GCSE examination are well above national averages.
- The teaching is good overall and there is evidence of some very good teaching.
- The handling of source evaluation and the discussion of judgements is a strength of the teaching.
- Relationships and pupils' attitudes are very good.

What could be improved:

- Access to ICT .
- The inconsistency in the quality of the learning between classes in Year 8.

206. By the end of Year 9 the attainment of the majority of pupils is above national expectations and this represents good achievement and progress in the light of the pupils' attainment on entry in Year 7.
207. By the end of Year 11 the standards achieved in the GCSE examination are well above national averages for all pupils but the girls do particularly well in getting the highest grades. This represents good achievement and progress in relation to their prior attainment and in the light of their performance in some other subjects.
208. Pupils with special educational needs attain appropriate standards with the help of adapted teaching materials and without much in-class support assistance. Gifted and talented pupils attain high marks in external examinations in line with their predicted grades. All pupils benefit from well-planned strategies to raise levels of literacy and there are many opportunities to express themselves orally.

209. The work seen in lessons and in exercise books and files shows that the majority of pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 have a good and developing knowledge of major historical topics such as the Slave Trade or the Great Plague and are able to ask pertinent questions of historical sources in order to arrive at sound judgements about causes and consequences of historical events and processes. There is some evidence of inconsistency in the quality of the learning of two different classes in Year 8.
210. Pupils in Year 10 have a very good knowledge and understanding of Nazi Germany and are capable of producing structured, balanced, personal narratives and arguments based on a range of sources. Year 11 pupils show similar abilities in respect of the history of the USA 1919-41. Higher and lower attainers alike can produce substantial evidence of a steady build-up of work. The pupils in one Year 10 class have sustained their conscientious attitude to work and continued to build up notes even though their lessons have been disrupted by teacher illness. All lessons in Years 10 and 11 had a strength in helping pupils to understand examination requirements and thus opening up the possibility of gaining higher grades. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils was successfully advanced by many aspects of the history provision, not least by the discussion of such moral issues as the Holocaust, Slavery and the Campaign for Civil Rights in the USA. Such topics also make for a good contribution to citizenship.
211. Teaching overall is good. Although the head of department and another teacher were absent during the inspection it is clear that good, and often very good standards are underpinned by good and very good teaching. Where lessons were judged to be satisfactory they were sometimes taught during a teacher's absence and, although competently handled, there were some missed opportunities in terms of depth and sophistication. The picture as seen in other lessons and the work in pupils' books is that good, and often very good, results are the product of young, enthusiastic, specialist teachers who are presenting very well-planned lessons to well-motivated pupils in a good learning environment. Most, but not all, lessons are helped by the good learning environment of the new building and will be helped more when the rooms are equipped with up-to-the-minute technology. At the moment access to ICT facilities is limited. Pupils in at least one class, in Year 8, have each of their history lessons in a different room of the main school. This means that books and resources have to be carried around. Some teaching has to be done after normal school hours because of timetable considerations. This happens to be successful but is not desirable as a normal practice.
212. A strength of the teaching is the emphasis placed upon source evaluation and upon examination technique. The best teaching seen and one which could serve as an exemplar for the benefit of all was a very good lesson in Year 8 on the Great Plague. In this lesson all five key elements of the National Curriculum were covered by an enthusiastic teacher with good subject competence and purposeful delivery to well-motivated pupils who co-operated in their own learning. As well as the nominal subject matter, the lesson introduced them to a "real" historical interpretation of evidence by a series of questions posed so that they ended up knowing who wrote the source, why and when, before assessing its usefulness in forming judgements. They also became aware of the limitations of sources because of what they do not tell us. In addition to all this they developed an empathetic understanding of the victims of plague and used some numeracy skills to look at death rates as well as some literacy skills in describing the different types of plague in the correct medical vocabulary. Pupils with special educational needs were looked after by modified materials and by seating arrangements; gifted and talented pupils received extension tasks and the whole was

enlivened by the use of some harmless but “gruesome” detail of the suffering and deaths involved.

213. Although there is a temporary, acting head of history at the moment, the normal good leadership and management are being continued by a deputy. All the expected policies are in place and there is good monitoring of teaching and learning. Results have been improving over the past few years and the subject is a popular choice of pupils who rightly feel that they will be guided to success.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths:

- Standards in the GCSE examination.
- Teaching on ICT course in Years 7, 10 and 11.
- The management of discrete ICT courses.
- The management and effectiveness of the computer network.

Areas for improvement:

- There should be more consistent and systematic use of ICT in all National Curriculum subjects to meet subject requirements and to ensure pupils have adequate opportunities and time to develop and use ICT skills.
- ICT should be used to “measure, respond to, control and automate events” in appropriate subjects to ensure compliance with National Curriculum requirements.
- The school should provide further opportunities in Years 7 to 9 for all pupils to develop skills and use ICT to enhance learning.

214. In 2002 about one third of pupils in Year 11 took GCSE ICT. Standards were well above average for the higher A* - C grades. About one quarter of the entrants were girls, almost all of who achieved the higher grades. This represents a very significant improvement over the previous year when results were slightly below the national average.
215. By age 14 standards are consistent with expectations. Pupils follow a ten-week ICT-based module in Year 7. They make rapid progress in a range of applications, word processing, and information handling with spreadsheets and databases as well as use of the Internet. Standards seen in Year 7 ICT lessons and in samples of ICT work were often consistent with expectations where pupils had followed the taught module. However, in a group, which had recently begun the module (well into the second term of Year 7), standards were below expectations because many pupils needed help to make use of some relatively basic word-processing and desktop publishing functions.
216. There are plans for a new “commit” course in Year 9. At present there is no planned, systematic use of computers across the curriculum in Years 8 and 9 and pupils have to rely upon the very variable use of ICT in subjects, to make further progress. Opportunities are limited because access to ICT rooms is restricted as the ICT department for timetabled courses from Year 10 onwards heavily uses them. The planned time available for ICT is below that recommended in the Key Stage 3 ICT Strategy. Many pupils continue to make progress through ICT use in some subjects and through autonomous use, in extra curricular activities and at home. Overall attainment by the end of Year 9 is only just consistent with expectations. This has implications for work in Year 10. For example, in one Year 10 lesson relatively basic spreadsheet functions and formulae needed to be covered before pupils were able to move on to work with appropriate challenge for Year 10.

217. By Year 11 standards are good. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 now follow a Key Skills course in ICT with one lesson per week. This has replaced the GCSE course, which means that resources are now available for all pupils to develop appropriate ICT skills. Most pupils make good and often very good progress in the use of a range of software. This includes word-processing, desktop publishing, spreadsheets, databases, Power Point presentations and in the use of the Internet for research. The current Year 11 pupils are the first ones to have followed this course. Their attainment overall is ahead of expectations. Pupils who take the business and communication GCSE make very good progress in developing ICT skills, which results in good attainment.
218. In ICT lessons in Year 7 pupils have a very positive attitude towards their work, they are very enthusiastic and keen to impress with the ICT skills being learnt. In Years 10 and 11 almost all pupils enjoy working with computers to develop their ICT skills and knowledge. They are prepared to work hard and to demonstrate their abilities with a range of software.
219. Specialists who have very good subject knowledge teach all timetabled ICT lessons. In all discrete ICT lessons, pupils with special needs are catered for with differentiated work and given additional support by teachers and technical support staff. More able pupils are given extension work to ensure continued progress. Teaching in discrete ICT lessons in Years 7,10 and 11 was never less than good and often very good. Courses have good schemes of work and lessons are very well planned. Activities are interesting and challenging. A good working atmosphere is engendered and good pace maintained resulting in good and often very good learning and progress. Suitably challenging homework is a feature of ICT courses. The development of both literacy and numeracy skills is well supported in ICT lessons. Pupils are very willing to continue their ICT work outside lesson times, where there is good access to ICT rooms and often specialist help where necessary. In Years 10 and 11 assessment is thorough and meets the requirements of the Key Skills course; work is marked regularly and pupils know how well they are doing. Teacher assessment of pupils' ICT capability by the end of Year 9 should be more rigorously referenced to National Curriculum levels.
220. ICT is well managed and the provision for ICT is undergoing significant changes. There have been a number of curriculum changes recently with the aim of providing taught ICT courses for more pupils. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 can now achieve a qualification and the module in Year 7 will be extended to Year 9. These developments have been facilitated by an increase in the number of specialist ICT teachers who are in turn supported by a very well managed and reliable computer network which provides access to a range of school-based resources as well as a Broadband connection to the Internet. The new courses need to be backed up with ICT experiences across the curriculum, and subject departments should take advantage of pupils' ICT skills.
221. There are some interesting uses of ICT in several subjects, for example, in modern languages where "e-mail" is exchanged with pupils in French and German schools. In mathematics and science the use of ICT is unsatisfactory. In design and technology (DT) there is much scope for further ICT use. The use of ICT to measure, respond to, control and automate events should be developed in science and DT as appropriate, to ensure that National Curriculum requirements are met adequately. The ratio of computers to pupils has improved since the last inspection. It is currently consistent with the national average but this is not adequate to meet the high demand in the curriculum. There are now arrangements in place to increase the number of computers for use in subject departments to make this possible. The ICT department has the

capacity to oversee further improvement when current plans for increased resources are realised.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **satisfactory**.

Strengths:

- Teachers are well qualified in the languages they teach.
- Teachers are hard working.
- Teachers know their pupils well and give them good support.
- Higher attaining pupils made good progress.

Areas for improvement:

- Teachers should aim to make more use of the target language in lessons.
- Pupils should be given more opportunities to practise spoken language.
- In some lessons the pace is too slow and activities are not sufficiently varied.
- The poor behaviour of some pupils seriously affects the learning of others.

222. Until this year pupils learnt German or French in Year 7 and both languages in Years 8 and 9; Spanish has now been added as an alternative second language to German. There is also a small group learning Spanish in Year 10. All pupils continue with one language until the end of Year 11, but only very few continue with two. In 2002 teachers' assessments of attainment at the end of Year 9 were broadly in line with national figures, though a little below at the higher grades. GCSE results at grades A*-C have declined steadily in both French and German since 1998. In 2002 they were among the weakest in the school. The attainment of girls has been significantly better than that of boys. One group in each language has followed a course for the Certificate of Achievement; recent results have been very disappointing.
223. Overall standards of attainment in Years 7 to 9 are in line with or a little below those found nationally, but there is a wide range. In Years 10 and 11 the range is even wider. Pupils in higher sets achieve good standards, but in some other sets standards are very poor. The best-written work is good or very good, with careful, accurate and well-presented work in early years and coursework in Year 11 which includes excellent work on a variety of topics in both German and French. Most work in books is of a satisfactory standard, but some lower attaining pupils produce work that is scrappy and untidy and sometimes incomplete. Work in early years is limited to copying or adaptation, but higher attaining pupils in Year 9 are beginning to write more originally and ambitiously, and this progress continues in Year 10.
224. Very little work in reading comprehension was seen during the inspection. Pupils' understanding of spoken language varies greatly, but the system of setting allows most pupils to achieve satisfactory progress, with appropriate help from teachers. Pupils' use of spoken language is, however, disappointing. In Years 7 and 8 they enjoy learning new vocabulary and repeating words and phrases in chorus, but active use of language does not develop well in later years and pupils remain lacking in confidence. Many are reluctant to speak and all but the most able depend too much on written

material as a stimulus. There is too little use of spoken language as a means of communication in the classroom.

225. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour vary greatly and are an important factor in what they learn in lessons and what they achieve over time. Where attitudes are good there are good opportunities for learning and all pupils can make at least satisfactory progress. In some groups the poor behaviour of a small minority of pupils has a significant effect on the learning of others and progress is not as good as it should be. In more extreme cases, usually in lower sets, pupils are deliberately uncooperative and disruptive and make it very difficult for others to learn. Most, but not all, of these problems are caused by boys. As pupils with special educational needs are often in lower sets their learning can suffer as a result. Teachers are well informed about those with learning or behavioural problems and are often able to give them additional help and support. It was, however, a matter of concern that no specialist support was seen in any of the twenty-three lessons observed during the inspection.
226. Teachers in the department are well qualified and have a good command of the languages they teach. They are hard working and know their pupils well. Almost all lessons observed were at least satisfactory, but less than half were good or better and only two were judged very good. Good features were often balanced by weaknesses. Planning was usually good, but objectives were not always clearly explained and pupils were not always aware of what had been achieved. Activities were appropriate but sometimes lacking in variety and pace, or not successful in keeping pupils actively involved. The better lessons were enjoyable and had moments of fun, but others had less to hold pupils' interest and imagination. Some lessons included successful use of the target language, but in others its use was too limited. It could be used more effectively in almost all lessons.
227. Weaknesses in classroom management allowed minor distractions to interrupt learning unduly in some lessons, while in others the efforts made to limit disruption meant that learning was significantly reduced for all. Opportunities to include information and communication technology in teaching are limited at present, but there are well-attended French and German ICT clubs. The new multi-media classroom is eagerly awaited. Cultural horizons are widened by well-supported visits to France, Germany and Austria.
228. The work of the department has been disrupted by long-term staff absences and problems of staff recruitment, which have inevitably affected the morale of teachers and pupils and contributed to the recent poor results. For more than two years the head of department has had to bear an extra burden of responsibility and support for other teachers. Under the circumstances he has done well to manage the department, maintain departmental organisation and documentation in good order and look ahead to the future. The situation is now much more stable and standards are beginning to rise again. Forecasts for this year's GCSE results suggest that they will see a return to standards more like those achieved at the time of the last inspection. That may be optimistic, but the evidence of the inspection is that standards will certainly rise.

MUSIC

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

Strengths:

- Standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11.
- Good and often very good teaching contributes significantly to pupils' learning.
- Relationships are good and they underpin pupils' enjoyment of the subject.

- High quality of and provision for extra curricular activities.

Areas for Improvement:

- Lesson planning in Years 7 to 9 so that all groups of pupils are always challenged.
- Quality and range of accommodation, especially for group and ensemble work.

229. Standards of attainment in music for students at the age of 14 are above average and well above average at the age of 16. The teacher assessments undertaken at the end of Year 9 are acknowledged by the department to be over-generous with the attainment of both boys and girls well above national averages. However, in lessons and from other evidence standards are above average. By the age of 14 pupils are able to make sophisticated musical decisions when using technology to aid their compositions. This was seen in a lesson where pupils added different layers of sound and rhythms to a short film extract. Musical dialogue was evident with pupils displaying critical awareness of their individual roles in performance. Their work with acoustic instruments is also good, despite the limitations of the accommodation, which severely affects the way ensemble and group work can be organised. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress between Years 7 and 9.
230. Standards attained by pupils in their GCSE examination, despite very small numbers are consistently well above average. Pupils display very high instrumental skills and they use this ability and knowledge to good effect in their compositions. They are mature with detailed commentaries, written for ambitious ensembles, many reflecting pupils' personal musical interests. Pupils practise listening exercises regularly which means they understand musical form and style. However, written work lacks analytical detail. They are competent users of information and communication technology, which means that their coursework is impeccably presented.
231. Students learn well because teaching is good and always very good for those in Years 10 and 11. The musical knowledge and high quality demonstrations by staff ensure that students want to learn, take pride in their work and are well motivated to reach high standards. Teaching for pupils in examination classes is systematic and supported by clear guidance material to supplement examination requirements. Teachers have very high expectations and all pupils are individually challenged, for example, a pianist given an extract to analyse chord changes and harmonic changes. Year 10 and 11 pupils are confident in their opinions and also challenge teachers' opinions showing mature and reasoned argument.
232. Teaching is not always planned sufficiently to ensure all pupils in Years 7 to 9 are given work that challenges them sufficiently and at present there is a lack of regular singing for these pupils. This means that their vocal improvisations during Year 9 blues compositions were lower than expected. Conversely, the high standard of many pupils' instrumental skills meant that these pupils are able to improvise melodic lines over 12 bar blues and riff patterns.
233. Although literacy and numeracy development is not planned for across the department, a Year 7 class enjoyed exploring the division of syllables when adding words to rhythmic patterns. There is a paucity of written work, which means that pupils lack the ability to give opinions about the music to which they listen. Pupils in Year 7 learn to use editing equipment and adding music to a film extract during the 'Commit' course. This course links music, media and information and communication technology.

234. Relationships are good and pupils enjoy the subject. There is a very wide range of high quality ensembles where pupils learn pieces in a variety of musical styles. Performances are of a very high standard and pupils participate in local and national festivals.
235. Leadership and management are good. The head of department leads by example and pupils appreciate his hard work. Teachers give freely of their time, support each other and provide a very strong musical environment for their pupils. At present assessment procedures are limited and pupils do not know how their work compares against National Curriculum levels. The quality and range of accommodation are unsatisfactory, which restrict teaching styles and there are no practice rooms for group and ensemble work. The only ones available, plus the recording studio, are situated at a distance from the department. This means that it is difficult to monitor the work done there and leads to a disconnected department. The work and support given by the music technician are invaluable, ensuring that the keyboards and other information and communication technology equipment runs smoothly.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths:

- Standards by the end of Year 9 exceed those expected for pupils of this age.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The leadership and management of the department are good.
- The provision for extra curricular activities is excellent.

Areas for development:

- Explanations provided by teachers at the start of lessons do not include enough information about what pupils are to learn.
- In Years 7 to 9 and in non-examination lessons in Years 10 and 11 there are not enough opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work or that of others.
- Pupils are not able to make enough use of information and communication technology to enhance their learning, particularly in relation to fitness and fitness testing.

236. Assessments undertaken by teachers at the end of Year 9 show that attainment exceeds that expected for pupils at this age. In recent years, including 2002, attainment in GCSE examinations was average. Standards seen during the inspection agree with the assessment of standards at the end of Year 9. Observations during the inspection indicate that attainment in GCSE examinations in 2003 will be above average. However, standards in non-examination classes in Years 10 and 11 are in line with those expected. Overall, pupils in Years 7 to 11, from all ability groups, achieve well and make good progress. Improvement since the time of the last inspection is good. Standards have improved and the issues identified at that time have been addressed successfully. Very good improvement is evident in the provision of extra curricular activities.
237. The quality of teaching is good. In some lessons, particularly hockey and dance, the quality of teaching is excellent. Teachers' subject knowledge is a significant strength and this is very evident in basketball, hockey and swimming. In examination lessons and in some non-examination lessons teachers provide pupils with clear explanations about what they expect them to learn. They also involve pupils well, for example, in dance and gymnastics, in evaluating the quality of their work and that of others. However, there are many lessons in which not enough attention is given to these

features. When this is the case pupils do not have sufficient understanding of how well they are doing or of what they need to do to improve.

238. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for pupils are good and provision for extra curricular activities is excellent. At lunchtimes and after school clubs for activities, such as basketball, dance, netball, football, are provided for each year group. These are very well attended and make a significant contribution to the standards that pupils attain. The school also achieves considerable success in competitions with other schools across a wide range of activities. These include athletics and cross country running, cricket, football for boys and for girls, netball, swimming and synchronised swimming. These and other activities provide outlets for gifted and talented pupils to develop their sporting prowess. These pupils achieve very high standards and many gain representative honours at regional, national and international levels. The school provides excellent support for the learning of these pupils and liaises very well on their behalf with clubs and the governing bodies of sport.
239. The leadership and management of the department are good. There is a relatively new head of department and he has helped to bring about the improvement in extra-curricular provision and procedures to assess pupils' attainment and progress. Overall accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory. The swimming pool and sports hall provide good accommodation and are used very well. However, pupils do not have access to a fitness suite and this restricts this aspect of their learning. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology, for example, by the use of video to analyse pupils' skills in examination classes. However, pupils do not have sufficient access to information and communication technology for measuring their fitness. The outdoor all-weather area is in poor condition and is often too wet to use. Measures are in place to resolve this latter issue.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

What the school does well:

- There are three specialists, with excellent subject knowledge, in the department.
- Higher-attaining pupils show a considerable depth of understanding in their writing.
- The marking of pupils' work is of a high quality, so that pupils know what to do to improve.
- Targets set by pupils in their books are evaluated regularly so that they can see what progress they are making towards them.

What could be improved:

- Management of a small minority of very disruptive pupils.

240. Improvement, since the last inspection, has been satisfactory, and in some aspects of the subject has been substantial. Since then, the school has introduced the short Certificate of Education course for all pupils in Years 10 and 11, and an Entry-level Certificate for lower-attaining pupils in these years. It plans to introduce the full Certificate of Education course in September.
241. Over the last three years the number of pupils reaching A* to G grades in the short course has risen from 89 per cent to 92 per cent. In 2002, 41 per cent of pupils attained A* to C grades. In each of the past three years there have been 2 to 4 pupils who have reached A* grades. The number of pupils whose performance in the GCSE examination has been unclassified has halved in the last two years. Standards are improving.

242. Inspection evidence shows that standards in Years 7 and 9 are as expected by the Locally Agreed Syllabus and higher attaining pupils are making very good progress, often through thoughtful homework and their very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils gain a satisfactory amount of knowledge and a very good depth of understanding. This is often because of teachers' specialist knowledge, high expectations and very good class management skills, particularly of teachers quite new to the profession. A considerable amount and variety of work is often completed within a lesson. Where progress is not satisfactory, this is because of the disruption caused by a very small number of pupils, resulting in a two whole classes being unable to learn satisfactorily. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are, overall, above average for pupils studying the short course. They have a good depth of understanding and, for example, are able to put forward the two sides of an argument clearly. They are able to 'stand in another's shoes' and write from the view-point of people of different religions. Whilst higher-attainers attain well, they are capable of achieving more and the planned full-course should provide for their needs. Lower-attaining pupils in Year 11 are particularly successful because of the expertise and good relationships built up with a very experienced teacher. Most pupils are achieving well across Years 7 to 11.
243. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. In two lessons a very small number of pupils were disruptive, resulting in interruption and wasting of time, to the extent that teaching and learning were unsatisfactory. However, the teachers handled the situations well. In the best lessons a considerable amount and variety of work is completed within a lesson, and pupils are exceptionally keen to contribute. Occasionally, pupils are inattentive when they are allowed to chat whilst the teacher is teaching. Teachers value pupils' ideas, question them well and use homework very well to extend what has been learned and prepare for the next lesson. Homework is also used particularly well to extend higher-attaining pupils' achievements through open-ended tasks. The department uses display to particularly good effect, taking considerable trouble to mount pupils' work and display it well. Pupils appreciate this and this helps to raise the standard of the presentation of their work. More could be done to improve the standard of presentation, however, when pupils speak to the class on a given theme, such as seen in a Year 10 video. The quality of teachers' marking is excellent. Assessment is used very well to provide tasks that are suitable to pupils of a range of abilities within a class. Questioning, to equally match their different needs, is being developed.
244. There has been considerable staff disruption since the last inspection but the present staff are very successful in working collaboratively, making the most of each other's strengths: they are building up a successful department. The subject does not have a suite of rooms next to each other and resources are barely adequate to meet the requirement of the Agreed Syllabus with any degree of imagination. However, music was used very well when pupils closed their eyes as a story was read and they compared losing a burden from one's back with the same sense of relief that comes with forgiveness. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

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

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

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Sociology	1	100	63	0	7	1.00	1.17

GCE A level

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	31	94	96	45	46	6.26	6.57
Biology	64	92	88	33	34	5.56	5.25
Business Studies	26	88	92	35	32	5.54	5.50
Chemistry	50	88	90	50	43	5.92	5.90
Communication Studies	43	98	93	40	31	6.23	5.53
Computer Studies	33	91	86	30	23	5.27	4.62
Economics	12	83	89	33	36	5.17	5.52
English Language	37	97	91	22	30	4.76	5.27
English Literature	57	98	95	21	37	5.47	5.91
French	20	70	89	30	38	3.90	5.59
Full Design and Technology	9	56	91	11	30	2.89	5.38
General Studies	85	81	85	31	30	4.49	4.91
Geography	11	100	92	45	38	6.18	5.74
German	6	100	91	50	40	6.67	5.81
History	37	97	88	49	35	6.49	5.45
Home Economics	7	100	83	29	28	6.00	4.73
Mathematics	73	88	87	40	43	5.95	5.80
Music	3	67	93	67	35	6.67	5.74
Other Social Studies	57	88	87	33	34	5.47	5.30
Physics	20	70	88	35	40	4.20	5.67
Religious Studies	6	83	92	0	38	3.00	5.84
Sociology	10	70	86	10	35	2.80	5.32

Sport / Physical Education	7	100	92	29	25	5.43	5.09
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SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

245. Mathematics, biology and chemistry were inspected in detail, and physics was sampled. In 2001, results in mathematics and biology were above average, in chemistry they were average, and in physics they were below average. Standards were broadly similar in 2002, with physics showing some improvement.

Mathematics

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

Strengths:

- The teaching is very good.
- The teachers' knowledge and understanding are very good.
- Attainment of the students is above the national average.
- The management of the subject is very good.

Areas for Improvement:

- The structure for teaching the Year 12 GCSE course.
- The retention of students from the Year 12 AS course to the Year 13 A level course.

246. The inspection covered GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level, Advanced Level and Further Mathematics courses. In addition the department offers a re-sit course for GCSE, which was not observed.

247. In 2001 the examination results at both AS, A Level and Further were above the national average in comparison with all schools. The relative performance of the subject at these levels in relation to other subjects taken within the school is both significant and positive. The results of the GCSE re-sit course show that one-third of those entered did not achieve the intended outcome for this course.

248. The standards of work seen during the inspection were very good and the achievement of the students was very good. The work demonstrated clearly the students are able to apply written routines and standard procedures with understanding, and use previously learned techniques, for example, algebra to good effect in new situations. The students' written work is very well presented and well organised which means that their files can be used as a very good tool for revision purposes. The Year 13 students and, in particular, those studying Further Mathematics develop a fluency in the subject that allows them to enter into real discussions with their teachers about the subject, for example, what happens to a mass when under tension. There were no obvious differences in standards between students of differing genders or ethnic backgrounds.

249. The teaching is very good. The genuine enthusiasm of the teachers for their subject is very much in evidence. The lessons are all very well planned with clear objectives, and taught at a fast pace. The teachers have high expectations of their students and as a consequence they use perceptive questioning to constantly challenge them, for example, when integrating by parts – 'does it matter which values we take for u and v?' – which demonstrated well that awkward integrations could result. The students are

presented with over-views of the lesson at the start and this technique serves not only to inform the students about the lesson but is a great time-saver in preventing loss of time through note taking. Learning is very good because the students show great interest in their work and sustain concentration. Due to their homework being well marked they know where they are up to in relation to national standards and what they have to do to improve. The students are learning effectively because of the very good teaching.

250. The management of the subject is very good, having recently considered the difficult issues surrounding the AS level course nationally and then making the positive decision to switch examination boards for the future in order to make even better provision for the students. The curriculum is well-ordered so that the topics are being covered in such a way as to provide continuity and progression. The students' own views of the subject are very positive of the provision and support on offer by the department. The improvement since the last inspection is good despite the changes to the curriculum nationally; the attainment of the students in external examinations has been maintained and the number of girls taking the subject at these levels has been significantly increased.
251. Although during the inspection it was not possible to observe a lesson in the GCSE re-sit course it was noted that this course is not timetabled as such and more often than not is taken in twilight sessions. The group attending the sessions do not always comprise the same students. The attainment in the GCSE examinations might well improve if the school gives consideration to its timetabling arrangements for this group; and if the department were to identify the individual needs of these students when planning the course.

Sciences

252. The focus was on biology and chemistry. Physics was sampled. One full Year 13 physics lesson was observed. The quality of teaching and learning in this lesson was good. The teacher had good subject knowledge and supported the students well so that they made good progress and reached average standards in their understanding of work on the half-life of radioactive isotopes. Support was particularly effective for the students who are not doing Advanced Level mathematics.

Biology

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

Strengths:

- Quality of teaching and subject knowledge of staff.
- Engagement of students with the content of the subject.
- High recruitment and retention rates.
- Above average results.

Areas for improvement:

- Range of teaching and learning styles to develop the skills of independent and active approach to learning.
- The extent of use of information and communication technology.
- Accommodation and resources including the time given for access to the laboratory within the allocated schedule.

253. Standards at GCE Advanced and Advanced Subsidiary Level compare well with national averages with good numbers of students gaining higher grades this year and

for the four preceding years. These results now compare very well in relation to both chemistry and physics and have improved considerably since the last inspection. Students' levels of attainment in lessons were good. Students were able to handle concepts with confidence and apply prior knowledge with accuracy. For example, they were able to explain the processes occurring in the production of adenosine triphosphat and apply them to a discussion of the place of aerobic and anaerobic respiration.

254. The quality of teaching in biology was good. This was as a result of careful planning, clear learning objectives, challenging expectations and a brisk pace. Students responded well to the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. They are confident in examining their understanding of genetic markers, how they are used in gene cloning experiments and the use of replica plating. They were able to apply this to a practical situation. They are encouraged to question and a wide range of opportunities for discussions were observed. This aspect of teaching has improved since the time of the last inspection. Teachers are well qualified and enthusiastic about their subject and this is projected well into the teaching of the best lessons.
255. The head of department provides effective leadership, and the delegation of responsibilities of others in the department for subject aspects is effective as evidenced by the production of schemes of work and good coordination of work between staff teaching the same group. More needs to be done to ensure students have effective opportunities for using appropriate software and related equipment and to have more of their teaching time in laboratory situations. This will allow for short, well-focused practical activities to enhance, explore and consolidate learning.
256. Procedures for assessing and monitoring students are established and relate closely to examination board requirements. They use GCSE data to inform departmental, teacher and student targets, which are negotiated with the students. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms relating to teaching and learning need to be developed alongside the good performance management that already takes place to enhance the variety of teaching strategies used.
257. Accommodation and resources are not adequate. The lack of a coordinated approach to ICT is still unsatisfactory and is of concern. This is a particular issue at this level as students have to rely on the use of ICT at times other than during lessons, often at home.

Chemistry

Overall the provision for chemistry is **good**.

Strengths:

- The proportion of high A level grades gained is above average.
- The teachers have very good subject knowledge and are committed to their work.
- The students work hard and are well motivated.
- Relationships between students and teachers and between the students themselves are very good.

Areas for improvement:

- There is a shortage of laboratory space and this restricts the range of teaching methods and the amount of routine practical work that can be done.
- There are not enough opportunities for students to use computers in their practical work because access to suitable equipment is limited.
- The students' work is regularly assessed, but they are not always given sufficient advice on how to improve it or on the short-term targets they need to achieve.

258. The standards attained by the students in the 2001 A level examinations were in line with national averages overall and slightly better than the results they obtained in their other subjects. The proportion of students attaining the highest grades (A and B) was above average, whereas the proportion gaining grades A to E was slightly below average. The number of A level points scored per entry was average. Since 1998, the average points score has fluctuated somewhat but has been in line with or above the national results during this period. The standards attained by Year 12 students at the end of 2001 were above the national average for AS level. However, it is not possible to make an accurate comparison with the national figures since most students at this school chose to continue on to A level, rather than stopping at AS level.
259. The overall A level results for 2002 were improved on the previous year, with an increase in the proportion of students gaining grades A-E, although there was a decrease in the proportion of A and B grades. National results are not yet available for comparison. Students at the end of Year 12 in 2002 gained results that were in line with expectations, when compared with their previous results. National AS level results are not yet available for comparison.
260. The standards of work seen during the inspection are average overall, in both Years 12 and 13. In both years, the majority of students have quite good recall of earlier work and a sound understanding of the topics they are now studying. The highest attaining students in Year 13 reach above average standards in their work on transition metals and alkanes and they can carry out chemical calculations with the required degree of accuracy. In their work on oxidation states they are able to handle half-equations and add them correctly. They carry out experimental work effectively, following instructions carefully and paying due attention to safety considerations. They measure accurately and appreciate the importance of repeating measurements in order to achieve reliable results. Lower and middle attaining students reach average standards overall. Generally they cope well with work at this level although some have difficulties in applying earlier work on reactivity and displacement reactions. Most students in Year 12 have reasonable recall of work they have done earlier and some have a good understanding of structural isomerism and reaction mechanisms. However, some students are confused about their work on Hess's Law and make basic mistakes in, for example, the symbols for chemical elements. Year 12 students have appropriate practical skills when given the opportunity to carry out experimental work. However, in both Years 12 and 13 there are not enough opportunities for students to carry out routine practical work because too many lessons take place in ordinary classrooms at some distance from the science department.
261. In both years, most of the students are achieving the standards that would be expected on the basis of their GCSE results and other test data, with some achieving better than this. They achieve satisfactory progress despite the lack of laboratory accommodation because they are well taught, work hard and are well motivated.
262. For example, in one Year 12 lesson, the students made good progress in their understanding of structural isomerism in alkanes because the teacher had planned the lesson well and modified his approach when he realised that the students' recall of earlier work was not as good as he had expected. In another Year 12 lesson, practical work on the preparation of halo-alkanes was well planned and well managed, building effectively on the students' existing knowledge so that they made good progress in their understanding of the topic. The lessons seen in Year 13 were appropriately challenging and well focused on the A level examination requirements. One lesson on oxidation states was well planned to meet the students' needs, with clear, logical explanations of the key ideas so that all the students achieved a sound understanding of the work. In

another lesson, the teacher built skilfully on previous work, conducting the lesson at a lively pace so that all the students participated with interest and achieved a sound grasp of their work on transition metals.

263. Overall, the quality of teaching seen during the inspection was consistently good, with no unsatisfactory lessons. The teachers have very good subject knowledge and a good understanding of examination requirements, so that they can explain clearly to students how to achieve high standards in their work. They generally plan their lessons effectively but the range of teaching methods is rather limited because many lessons take part in ordinary classrooms where practical work is not possible. There is also insufficient access to suitable computer equipment for Advanced Level work. In order to further improve the teaching and learning, there is a need to build in more opportunities for the students to use computers in their lessons and to carry out routine practical work as well as formally assessed practical.
264. The key skills of numeracy and literacy are satisfactorily developed in this subject and the students are not held back by weaknesses in these areas. The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted satisfactorily through discussion, collaborative practical work and through identified topics in the schemes of work.
265. The head of chemistry provides good leadership for the team of chemistry teachers. They work well together and are clearly committed to raising standards even further. Courses are well planned and sufficient equipment and materials, including textbooks, are available, although the deficiencies in computer equipment need to be given attention. The students' work is assessed regularly but there are some inconsistencies in standards of marking. There is a need to use the information gained from assessments more effectively, so that the students' progress can be more closely tracked and targets for improvement set.
266. The students have positive views of the subject and most are intending to go on to university. They are able to get access to advice about university courses linked to the subject and they can get support and guidance on their work from the staff. There are satisfactory arrangements within the science department for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning but these could be improved by introducing more systematic monitoring of marking and the quality of students' work. The subject has increased in popularity since the last inspection and examination pass rates have been maintained.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

Design and Technology

267. The focus was on Advanced Level and Advanced Subsidiary Level food technology (home economics). Product Design was also sampled at Advanced Level. Standards were average and the teaching and learning in the lesson seen was good. Students made good gains in their understanding of properties of metals and how to apply the learning to individual projects.

Food Technology

Overall, the quality of provision in food technology is **good**.

Strengths:

- Good teaching.
- Above average standards.
- Good teacher-student relationships.

- Individual tutorial sessions linked to improvement.

Areas for improvement:

- Wider use of ICT in the subject.
- Training of staff in the use of new technologies.
- Encouragement for students to choose the subject.

268. The 2001 Advanced Level examination results were in line with the national average for students achieving A-B grades and well above average with all students being successful at A-E grades. In 2002, Advanced Level results were similar. Students achieve well in this subject. The AS results for 2002 are above expectation at this stage, and fifty per cent of students achieved A-B grades. However, there are usually low numbers taking the subject and retention rates are variable.
269. Standards of work seen in Year 13 are above average. Students are achieving well in relation to predictions based on their GCSE results. Good standards are seen in their AS work, for example, the case study work which the examination board judged as very good. A project looking at gluten in bread was very well presented with good use of information and communication technology in the research. A further project looking at the nutritional needs of young children used good evidence from relevant literature and research into dietary requirements. A current project compares eating trends during the Second World War and the twenty first century. This project considered changes of lifestyle and the impact of technology. Where the work is weaker it is mainly due to lack of depth in research and quality of presentation.
270. In Year 12 standards seen are average. A project looking at a range of children's yoghurts used the digital camera in presenting information and there was good evaluation of the evidence. Visits to local supermarkets supported the project on vitamin C content in drinks, which also used reference material in the research.
271. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lesson objectives are shared with the students and opportunities are given for students to engage in the lesson throughout. Relationships are always good and the individual attention afforded the students contributes to the good learning achieved.
272. A Year 12 lesson increased students' learning about the criteria required when considering a design specification for a food product. Students looked at health issues, target audience, costs, storage and sensory characteristics and students contributed in a mature manner to the discussion. A Year 13 home economics lesson looking at vitamin supplements increased the students' learning about the vitamin requirements of different age groups and the importance of a healthy diet and lifestyle. During the lesson students developed oral skills and spoke confidently about the research they had undertaken from newspaper articles and other reference material. The teaching strategies employed engaged the students directly in their learning and contributed to the good progress made.
273. The subject is well managed and documentation is thorough. The wider use of information and communication technology in students' work would support the learning further, and training in the new technologies would benefit the teaching. The accommodation is good and offers a stimulating environment for learning. The department is attempting to attract more students to take the subject.
274. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. New syllabuses have been introduced and the department now uses more outside visits to support the learning.

BUSINESS

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

Strengths:

- Clear explanations of key business terms.
- Compiling revision notes to aid subject confidence.
- Classroom activities designed to engage and stimulate.
- Illustrative examples from local businesses.
- Good procedures for assessment and effective task setting.

Areas For Improvement:

- Sustained critical line of student argument.
- Attendance and punctuality of submitted assignments.
- Monitoring of key skills particularly essay planning skills.
- Use of a dictionary to aid precision in language.

275. Standards of work seen in business studies are average. These standards are achieved because teaching is good. Students' achievements are good by the end of Year 13 in relation to standards on entry to the sixth form. Students' attitudes also cause the quality of their learning to be good. Students make good progress as they move through the sixth form. There is value added at the end of Years 12 and 13 and it continues to be monitored. Retention rates are good. Some students gain their highest grades in business studies.
276. The standards of students' work in the current Years 12 and 13 generally reflect the recent examination results. Students have a secure knowledge and understanding of business and economics. The high attainers produce coursework of a high standard, combining thorough research into, for example, workforce planning. A good example was used. Tesco in 2000 wanted to treble its Internet home shopping. Students worked out this development on work-force planning. All students have access to learning facilities on the Internet. This access is causing the quality of student work to rise. The number of textbooks is varied as the nature of existing business studies courses encourages an experimental approach to learning.
277. Standards in Year 12 are average. Students can use numbers in market analysis to break down the whole demand for a product or service by splitting it into parts. Female students write more succinctly than males. Liquidity ratios appear to mean more to males and they understand that they measure a firm's ability to pay its short-term debt. All students show good knowledge and they demonstrate an ability to work hard at a good pace. Students make considerable efforts to understand the work they are doing. The higher attainers plan their work and take care with grammar and spelling. These students make few mistakes with the specialist vocabulary. All students need to sustain a critical line of argument and justify their point of view relating it to evidence. The average attainers, with careful guidance, produce some imaginative reports and engage in meaningful debate in class. However, spelling and grammar cause problems. Few students use a dictionary.

278. Standards in Year 13 are average. The use of research is more developed. Students are acquiring new knowledge. They can describe fiscal policy accurately as a change in taxation to affect economic variables. Male and female students can relate theory to practical application in their use of statistics. The majority of students can show thinking skills rather than simple regurgitation of text book theory. A Year 13 class examined the issues surrounding the single European currency. The background to entry was explored in depth. Another class looked at the Marks & Spencer decision to sack William Baird putting over 4000 jobs at risk after the company's thirty years of supplying quality clothes. The high attainers can present their ideas and facts to their peers independently of their teacher using the well resourced materials provided. Most students speak fluently and in detail in response to questions posed by the teacher. The quality of writing is not as high. Errors of grammar and spelling divert a reader's attention.
279. Results in the 2001 A level examinations were average over the whole grade range. The course attained a higher-grade rate which was above the national average. The overall pass rate exceeded the target for the year. There is value added in the results. Retention rates are improving all the time. Boys and girls are attaining equally over the whole grade range. The 2002 results are higher than previous years. The higher grades in both years were above average. Students out-performed their targets.
280. The quality of teaching in Years 12 and 13 is good, resulting in good learning. The strength of the teaching lies in the teachers' professionalism; commercial experience and understanding of the way the subject should be taught. Teachers have a technical competency in teaching number, writing and the use of electronic sources. Lessons are well planned and each lesson has a clear learning aim for all levels of attainment. The more able students are given more demanding tasks to match their ability. Students are acquiring new knowledge and skills. The higher attainers can develop their own ideas on the theories of motivation (Maslow, McGregor) and they can explain that mutuality means the term used to describe the principles of the mutual societies. Students make confident, thoughtful use of primary and secondary sources. Male and female students communicate in appropriate depth and in a variety of ways. Use of a dictionary would aid precision in language. Teachers enhance students' skills and knowledge to answer question purposefully and develop independent, reasoned argument through discussion, extended writing and use of electronic data sources. However, not all students can sustain a critical line of argument.
281. Leadership and management are good. Students receive expert and timely advice about careers in business and higher education. The teachers have good contacts with commerce and industry. There are visits and speakers arranged to aid learning. The subject has stated aims, which are appropriate. There are developed schemes of work, which effectively meet the new specifications of the AS/A2 examinations. Key skills are carefully planned to aid inclusiveness.
282. There has been improvement made each year to the subject's provision. The quality of teaching is having a positive influence upon students' progress and the standards they achieve. When learning problems arise teachers know when and how to intervene to extend students' work. The teachers' role is to provide a suitable learning environment, present knowledge and act as a resource to the students, to give ideas for areas of investigation and give a guide to students in their use of ICT. Attendance and the prompt submission of work remain as issues to be improved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths:

- Well above average standards.
- Quality of teaching at advanced level.
- Management of the subject.
- Assessment and guidance of students.
- Use of networked resources.

Areas for improvement:

- Strategies to attract more female students to ICT courses.

283. The focus of the report is on GCE Advanced Level and Advanced Subsidiary Level Information and communication technology.
284. Standards in Years 12 and 13 are well above average. ICT is a very popular course in the sixth form. Results were above the national average for the higher A and B grades and for A to E grades in 2001. In 2002, results were even higher showing a further notable improvement with a significant increase in A and B grades. The AS course was taken by 63 students in 2002 and results for A and B grades were good and the pass rate was high. These results represent good achievement for the students who have taken the A level and AS courses. The number of female students taking the courses has been notably much smaller than the number of males but female students have tended to achieve higher grades overall.
285. The work of students seen in lessons, and in their portfolios and conversations with students, reinforces the picture presented by examination results. Overall standards seen in both AS lessons in Year 12 and A level in Year 13 were never less than good and often very good. Theory lessons have very good pace: students are continually engaged through frequent question and answer sessions in which teachers try to ensure that all are included. Students are well trained to make summary notes directly into a word processor as the lesson progresses. Coursework has been researched in depth and students are able to take advantage of excellent guidance, which is available from teachers and from the school computer network. In conversations it was clear that the majority of students have a very good understanding of the requirements of their chosen "clients" and a knowledge of the software, which enable them to tackle challenging systems designs. Systems are planned with care and in detail; they are rigorously tested and regularly discussed and evaluated with clients during the development stage.
286. In Year 12 students use a spreadsheet and in Year 13 a database is used. In a Year 13 group the more advanced features of databases were being used to very good effect to serve the needs of a wide range of identified clients. Students had integrated "Visual Basic" modules into the database in a very effective manner to enable fast searches to be made. Very useful links were also made with other software applications, for example, a word processor and spreadsheet to generate automatic communication, including invoices, with customers.
287. Attitudes are very good; almost all students show a keen interest in and enthusiasm for the subject. They are very responsive during whole-class theory sessions, answering questions in a well-informed, articulate manner. They are not afraid to intervene, offering their own comments and suggestions, which are usually well supported with facts and appropriate theory. In practical sessions they apply themselves diligently to their tasks and when working at computers there is often effective peer support. Discussions about work are conducted in a mature manner, usually using a high level of appropriate subject specific terminology. Their ability to discuss their practical work

is impressive. Students are able to continue their work at home; they can transfer large files between home and school electronically. They also have good access to ICT facilities in school throughout the day and after school. In addition they can frequently be found working quietly in ICT rooms during other lessons.

288. Teaching seen in the sixth form was very good. The school is well staffed with ICT specialists, most of whom are very experienced at this level. Teachers have a very good command of the subject and some bring first hand practical experience from previous careers. Links with examination boards are well maintained and subject knowledge and requirements are kept up to date. Schemes of work are thorough, work is planned in detail and good practice and resources are shared throughout the department. During practical sessions teacher support is well targeted, providing guidance and encouragement where it is needed. Despite the large numbers in some teaching groups, teachers know their students well. Conscious of the smaller numbers of female students in classes, teachers usually try to ensure they take a full part in whole-class sessions.
289. The subject is very well led and managed. A sophisticated computer based system has been designed within the department for assessment and monitoring purposes. Students' progress and performance are tracked very carefully to ensure that they are meeting their full potential and to identify under-achievement. This helps to ensure consistency between teachers and groups. Data is used well to inform planning and to ensure that standards continue to rise as the number of students increases.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus of the inspection was on GCE Advanced level physical education.

Physical education and sports studies

Strengths

- Attainment in AS and A level examinations is above average.
- The quality of teaching is excellent.
- Students' attitudes to their learning are excellent.
- The provision to support students' learning and that to support gifted and talented students is excellent.

Areas for development

- Students do not have enough opportunities to use information and communication technology to enhance their learning, particularly in relation to fitness and fitness testing.

290. Attainment in AS and A level examinations is above average. Inspection findings also judge attainment in examination courses to be above average. Standards also exceed those expected in non-examination courses. Students following examination courses make excellent progress. This is because they have excellent attitudes towards their learning and benefit from excellent teaching. The school has recently introduced an examination course for dance in Year 10. Indications suggest that standards are likely to be above average.
291. An advanced skills teacher, who makes excellent provision to support students' learning, teaches the AS and A level courses. Students respond very well to this, for example, by producing detailed personal performance portfolios of a very high standard. Discussions with students reveal that they feel very well supported and

guided in their learning. The revision guides developed by teachers on behalf of the students are greatly appreciated and very helpful. The teacher plans lessons very thoroughly and ensures that very good resources are available to support students. These include resources to support students in their study of contemporary issues, such as the development of sport in emergent nations, sports psychology, and the observation and analysis of performance. Students attain above average standards in all these areas and learn very well. Excellent use is made of questioning to challenge students' thinking and understanding of the aspects they study. There are excellent relationships between students and their teacher. These help to ensure that students become confident and independent learners who present their points of view thoughtfully and show consideration when listening to others. In practical lessons, such as badminton and netball, students show skills that reach a very high level.

292. In addition to examination courses provision for all students to take part in physical and sporting activities is very good and levels of participation are high. The provision made to enhance the learning of gifted and talented students is excellent and the school's arrangements to liaise with outside clubs and with the governing bodies of sport are excellent. This enables gifted and talented students to attain very high standards in their practical performance and considerably enhances their understanding of their chosen sports. Many students, in addition to representing the school in a wide range of sports, have representative honours at area, county, national and international level. For example, the current sixth form netball team contains three England internationals for their age groups. Students achieve considerable success in competitions against other schools, for example, in Association Football, netball and swimming.

293. The leadership and management of physical education and sports studies are excellent. Students are supported very well in their learning. The only shortfall in provision is in the access that students have to information and communication technology. Very good use is made of the available resources, for example, the use of video cameras to support students in their performance observation and analysis. Students use computers very well for research purposes. However, they do not have access to an appropriate range of fitness testing equipment. Whilst pupils show good knowledge of fitness activities their learning and participation is limited by the lack of access to a fitness suite on the school site.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

294. This is a strong area of the curriculum in this media arts college. Art and music were inspected as a focus. Two lessons and work files of students of media studies were also sampled. Standards were seen to be above average, teaching very good, resulting in very positive student attitudes, and the programmes of study well managed.

Art

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

Strengths:

- The very good and often excellent teaching, in particular the very high expectations of teachers, that lead to very high achievement and very good progress over the two years of Advanced level work.
- The excellent attitudes and high level of commitment that students bring to their work, enabling them to make the best use of the very good provision offered to them; the maturity of approach to their work is exemplary.

- The independence that students enjoy, which enables them to research and develop their work along very creative lines, using the influence of many lesser-known artists that they discover in the process of personal research.
- The very good leadership given by the head of department, who has raised Advanced level standards year on year.

Areas for improvement:

- The management of assessment data is not sufficiently rigorous to enable a clear picture of the attainment and progress of students over time to be readily available for monitoring purposes.
- The studio area for sixth form work is small and does not allow individual space for students to set out and retain their work in process; there is too little control over available light.
- Resources for learning are inadequate in the areas of printmaking and digital imaging.
- The lack of technician support creates pressure on the preparation and management of resources.
- The standard of cleaning in the ceramics area is unsatisfactory and poses a health hazard.

295. The proportion of students gaining the higher grades A-B in Advanced level examinations in 2002 was above national averages and a significant improvement on the previous year. Most AS level grades are carried through to A2 and final results at the AS level are too few to make fair comparisons with other subjects or schools. The majority of students meet or exceed the targets set for them from GCSE results. The very good and often excellent teaching, when coupled to the exemplary attitudes and maturity of students, who give a lot of free time to their artwork, leads to very good achievements during the Advanced level courses. They further indicate a department that is well placed to improve standards in future years.
296. In work seen during the inspection, standards by the end of Year 13 are above national averages. From GCSE examination results that are usually above national averages, students continue to make good progress towards the Advanced level examinations. The very good personal studies show the high level of intellectual and creative effort put into the research for their work. Students use many well-known artists, such as Klimt, Kandinsky and O'Keefe, as well as many lesser-known artists, to inspire their work. Higher attaining students use well developed drawing skills to work to a high standard of illustration and graphics. One student, having studied the architecture of Pevsner, builds a most interesting abstract sculptural form in plastic, based on the Lowry exhibition building. The textiles and ceramics work is very strong, resulting from the skilful and well-informed teaching in those areas.
297. The quality of teaching is very good and often excellent. Teachers have an excellent knowledge and understanding of their subject areas and they teach confidently, using excellent relationships to create a positive, industrious and enjoyable environment for learning. They have very high expectations and students rise to them well, producing well-researched and well-finished pieces of work. Excellent personal and professional skills were evident in a lesson on graphics, a lesson in which teaching and learning were very effectively blended to enable students to make excellent progress through the lesson. Very good use is made of time in lessons as teachers work to ensure that students have the information and resources they need to carry out their work, giving them quality time to evaluate their progress and keep them on target. They treat the students as mature and independent learners encouraging them to broaden their

research and further develop their skills. The standard of written work and the critical exposition required of students, ensure that the development of their literacy skills is well supported in the subject.

298. The head of department provides very good leadership and direction for both students and his professional colleagues. This has enabled the department to make a good improvement since the last inspection. His very good links with higher education enable students to take advantage of visits to foundation and graduate exhibitions of art in local colleges. The majority of students go on to foundation or undergraduate courses related to art when they leave Turton School. An area for development lies in the gathering and analysis of data on students' performance that would enable the department to hold an effective record of the progress made by students as they grow through the school. Although the curriculum is very broad, there is a need to develop digital art within the resources of the department, resources that are unsatisfactory at present. Printmaking is on the curriculum, but resources are inadequate for the high standard of achievement that students could reach in that area. The standard of cleaning in the ceramics area falls well short of the very high standards of work carried out there; it poses a health risk to those who work with clay and plaster. The accommodation lacks control over natural light and is very cramped for students working in a wide range of different media, although they use it very well.

Music

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

Strengths:

- Standards of instrumental performance and composition are well above average.
- Teaching is very good: teachers are knowledgeable and have high expectations.
- Students are motivated and show commitment to their course and other musical activities.
- Opportunities for students to work with professional musicians.

Areas for Improvement:

- Quality of accommodation for class lessons and individual practice.

299. The music department has a good record of examination results. In 2002 students attained A grades at both AS and A2 level. This mirrored the results in 2001. Currently students in Year 13 are expected to attain A grades; this indicates very good achievement from Year 12. The observation of lessons and of other work during the inspection confirms that standards in music are above average. Students are helped to build upon good results at GCSE examination; this means that progress is very good. Students have good knowledge and understanding of a range of music and are able to apply their knowledge to new work. They are able and keen to direct ensembles, using these opportunities to rehearse their own compositions. Students' compositions are sophisticated, and show clear understanding of instrumentation and ensemble. They are able to reflect critically on their work and make improvements as they hear their work performed by their peers. Students are very fortunate to be able to work with professional musicians through regular workshops.
300. Students learn very well because teaching is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. They expose students to a broad and varied musical repertoire, both in lessons and within the many extra-curricular ensembles. Strengths of teaching are the challenge and expectations of the teachers. In a lesson for Year 12 students, they were guided to use their knowledge and understanding of Mahler's early symphonies to analyse his 9th Symphony. Students

were given carefully designed prompt sheets to help focus their thoughts. Paired work then enabled individual challenges to be set so the more able students completed a more detailed study of the opening movement. Questioning was fast, focused and facilitated very good musical dialogue.

301. The department is well organised and managed. All students are well motivated and enthusiastic about the music they play and study. They direct and play in ensembles, but are restricted in their individual studies by the lack of practice rooms.
302. Students receive comprehensive feedback and guidance about their essays and compositions, which result in clear challenges for individuals. Students have access to good information and communication technology facilities and their work is impeccably presented. However, on several occasions lessons have to be taught in the music office; this is an unsatisfactory situation due to the cramped nature of the room.

HUMANITIES

Geography, history and religious education were inspected as a focus.

Geography

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

Strengths:

- Standards on the A level and AS courses are above average.
- Students achieve well, with both class work and homework of a high standard.
- Teaching and learning are good and very good in some cases. Departmental staff have good subject knowledge and experience, with lessons having a clearly planned structure, including the sharing of learning objectives with the students.
- The department is well led, with personnel strengths utilised fully, and evolving strategies in place for further development.

Areas for Improvement:

- The role of ICT in teaching and learning needs a greater transparency.
- Study techniques and note-taking techniques.

303. Standards on both courses are well above average. Results have been consistently high over recent years, with A level results in 2002 attaining a 100 per cent pass, including 10 A – C grades; and AS results at 94 per cent pass (including 26 A-C grades) There are no significant differences in the standards attained by students of different gender or ethnicity.
304. Lesson observations and an analysis of student work files confirm the standards achieved by students following the two courses are well above average. Much of the A2 work showed a positive progression over the two years of study, with the AS students exhibiting a more mixed standard, but still above average. Students show good knowledge and conceptual understanding of key issues and processes utilised both in physical and human geography, with sound cross match application illustrated by student work in class regarding outcomes of the interaction. A good balance is achieved between student research and teacher input. The students are well focused on task, applying newly acquired knowledge and skills to practical problems and case studies. Although IT skills were not openly apparent in the teaching and learning processes observed, a number of students obviously used IT skills to effect in their files.

305. Overall, teaching is at least good, often very good, with a strong subject knowledge apparent in the delivery of challenging lessons in positive and friendly learning environments. A positive element in all lessons is the sharing of learning objectives and intended outcomes with the students. Extended writing and course exercises are well marked, with students provided with clear supportive judgements on their work standards. Most students are able to synthesise information and facts, as well as talk authoritatively on aspects of the course work covered, and their reading is seemingly effective and supportive. The reflective use of previously acquired knowledge could be used more effectively, particularly with AS students, as some students tried to make too many notes, and thus find themselves less active in the on-going learning process. They could be taught more strategic and practical styles of learning.
306. The department is well led, but is subject to evolving strategies as the learning experiences of the AS course are assessed and applied to future work patterns. Target setting for the students will focus the learning processes even further. There are satisfactory stocks of appropriate resources and reference materials available to students both within the department and the school library. New ICT facilities about to come on-line will enhance this area. Teaching is undertaken in a range of rooms in the new media block and the older building; not all are fully equipped as specialist study areas.

History

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

Strengths:

- Enthusiastic, purposeful teaching, which conveys information with challenge and calls for individual response.
- Good analysis of examination techniques.
- Students build up well-reasoned answers based on evidence, good source evaluation and a wide range of resources.
- Students are well motivated.

Areas for improvement:

- Discussion between students so that they share ideas more.
- Encouragement of more student participation.

307. Advanced Level students in the sixth form achieved 100 per cent pass rate at grades A-E in 2002, many with the highest grades. Although there was a dip in those achieving the highest grades in 2002 there has been a trend over the last few years of results being well above the national average. At AS level, students achieved results above the national average in 2002. Students in the sixth form, roughly half of whom come from other schools, make good achievement and progress. The drop-out rate is low and it is a mark of the success of the department that some of the students want to study history at university level.
308. Work of Year 12 students seen in class and in files contained impressive notes and essays on the workings of the American Constitution, the New Deal, Votes for Women and in Year 13, studies in Chartism and the movements for representation and democracy. A strength of the learning is the way in which teachers and students discuss examination requirements and methods of tackling different types of essay questions so that students build up a reasoned, balanced answer firmly based on evidence and conveying the complexity of an historical interpretation but phrased in relatively clear and concise terms. The learning experiences make a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students, who form a harmonious multiracial group.

309. The teaching in the sixth form was good in the three lessons observed. The teachers seen had very good subject competence, very good relationships, good planning and a brisk, purposeful delivery, which conveyed information but also called for some challenge and individual response. The students were all very well motivated and contributed to the learning experience. In Year 13, there was good evaluation of a wide range of source material as in a lesson on the 1872 Ballot Act, and in Year 12, the Montgomery Boycott in the USA. One improvement that could be made, however, is that there was relatively little discussion between pupils; there was good learning from the teacher but not as much from each other.
310. Leadership and management of the subject in the sixth form are good and result in very good standards, very good relationships and the pursuit of continuous improvement.

Religious Education

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

Strengths:

- Well planned lessons provide good learning opportunities.
- Good relationship between teachers and students supports effective learning.
- High expectation and challenge promote independent learning.

Areas of improvement:

- Provision for RE, which is currently in breach of statutory requirements.
- Extra curricular experience to extend learning.

311. A small number of candidates have been entered for A level examinations in the recent past. In 2001 five of the six candidates gained grades A-E and in 2002 three students achieved grades B to D. In 2001 three students at AS level gained grades C to D and in 2002 thirteen candidates achieved grades A to D. Standards in examinations are broadly around the national average although caution is required as there are too few entries for comparisons to be statistically significant.
312. Standards of work seen in Years 12 and 13 are about average and show improvement over the last year. At present there are 11 students in each year group and predicted grades are A-D in the forthcoming examinations. In Year 12 students are able to criticise and evaluate ethical theory using more than one point of view and in their essays use appropriate quotations to support their argument. On occasion essays are superficial and betray a lack of research and often good points are stated but not developed. In Year 13 there is more evidence of extended, structured writing with some very good exposition of strengths and weaknesses in a philosophical position.
313. Sometimes relevant material is gathered well but not well used but there are other examples of original ideas developed by the students, which indicate their growing understanding and intellectual effort. Lower attaining students benefit from the paired/group work, which also allows the teacher to give more individual support and feedback. All students achieve well, being both interested in and stimulated by the ethical topics discussed and able to relate these to their own experience.
314. The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good examples. Teachers have good subject knowledge translated into well-planned lessons which provide good learning opportunities. Where lessons are very good much is expected of the students and they are challenged constantly by higher order questions, which force them to think

more deeply and produce that extra intellectual effort which drives the learning process. Strategies such as getting the students to mark real examination answers as though they were examiners taught them much about their own performance, affirming them in the knowledge they have and alerting them to their own strengths and weaknesses. Where a lesson is less demanding in intellectual rigour the pace is slower, material is not challenging enough, reflecting the lower expectations of the teacher and reflected in the passivity of the students. Coursework is marked regularly and the very helpful diagnostic teacher commentary on the students' work, as seen in the students' books is having a very positive impact on progress and learning, informing teaching and driving up standards of attainment. The subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the students.

315. Students respond enthusiastically to the demands made on them because they have a very good relationship with the teachers which is an important motivating factor and is evidenced by the growing popularity of RE as a post 16 option. Attendance and punctuality were good. Boys and girls achieve equally well although there is a preponderance of girls on this course, an imbalance that in time might be redressed. Students make full use of the Internet as well as a very good reference library housed in the department itself. There are attractive displays in the classrooms, which support literacy, in particular religious and philosophical key words, as well as artefacts from different religious traditions.
316. There is a very strong team spirit in this department with vision and a positive commitment to improvement, with a challenging development plan. There is, however, little extra-curricular provision to expand the students' experience either in visiting speakers or links with outside agencies to connect their essentially philosophical/ethical studies with real life.
317. Improvements since the last inspection include better accommodation, and the provision and use of IT is now satisfactory and having a positive impact on learning, particularly research.
318. Apart from students taking AS and A level RE, there is no timetabled provision post 16 for RE and this is in statutory breach of the regulations. A combined RE day with other sixth forms locally is planned as well as inclusion in a tutorial time carousel, but since the last inspection nothing has been put in place.

Psychology

Overall quality of provision for psychology is **good**.

Strengths:

- Well planned teaching leads to effective learning.
- Good assessment and monitoring support learning.
- Good working relationship between teacher and student.

Areas for improvement:

- Differentiation for lower attaining students.
- Subject development plan for improvement.

319. A growing number of candidates are entered for A level. In 2002 sixty four per cent of the students entered for the A2 examination achieved grades A to C, while at AS level sixty two per cent of students achieved grades A to E, doing as well as or better than in their other subjects.

320. Standards seen in Years 12 and 13 are average. Year 12 students are suitably matched to their course and working towards predicted grades A to D. They have a strengthening grasp of psychological terms and a good understanding of methodology in setting out an experiment or key study. The quality of essay writing is sometimes weak in detail and copied notes give no indication of attainment or being the result of independent learning. Students in Year 13 are working at or above average levels of attainment, producing more extended and evaluative writing with the ability to analyse critically, taking, for example, ethical considerations into account. Discussion in lessons can favour the higher attaining students who take the lead leaving others unchallenged and unable to explore a topic to any depth.
321. Progress in lessons is good and is the result of high expectations, which encourage self-learning through challenging questions, reinforced with homework, which encourages individual research. Together with frequent assessment of progress this recent drive to raise levels of achievement is meeting success, borne out by the higher than average predicted grades for AS and A2 levels in the coming examinations. All students achieve well because they are interested and stimulated by the subject and have a desire to do well.
322. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers' knowledge and command of the subject coupled with effective strategies to encourage independent learning, including paired/group work with self-evaluation, provide good learning opportunities. Students are constantly challenged to analyse evidence and make critical judgements although in some lessons the style of questioning is too generic and open. In the best lessons the teacher is not satisfied with the first answer but probes further, demanding more intellectual effort from the student. More differentiated material or strategies would support lower attaining students, especially in coming to an understanding of new and difficult concepts and psychological terminology. Coursework and homework are marked regularly and teachers' comments are considered very helpful by the students as they identify key issues, which are always discussed with the individual, and indicate ways to improve. This also informs teaching as weak areas in students' work can be identified and revisited.
323. Students respond well and make good progress as a result of the good relationships with their teachers. The quality of their personal development is good, especially their self-knowledge and the subject makes a positive contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They would benefit further from an extra curricular dimension, for example visiting speakers, or closer links with a university or college psychology department.
324. Boys and girls achieve equally well and higher attaining students extend their learning by attempting more demanding research. Students use the Internet with ease both for research and writing up their coursework. There is satisfactory computer access and a sufficient collection of reference books.
325. Accommodation is satisfactory. Classroom displays support literacy, especially in reinforcing key words and concepts.
326. Leadership in the department is good, committed to improving delivery of the subject through teacher appraisal and sharing of good practice. The effective monitoring of students' progress throughout the department has had a positive impact on their growing achievement and attainment. The department does not have, however, a written development plan to identify further improvement or give a clear vision for the future.

327. Improvements since the last inspection cannot be commented on as the subject was not in the curriculum at that time, but in its recent history it has made, and continues to make, good progress.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

328. The focus of the inspection was on English language but English literature was also sampled. In English literature, standards are well above average as indicated by recent examination results. Some work is outstanding. Students achieve very well because teaching is very good.

English Language

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

Strengths:

- The attainment of students is well above the national average.
- Students achieve well in both Years 12 and 13.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Students have very good attitudes.

Areas for improvement:

- The department does not make enough use of assessment data to improve standards.
- In some lessons students are not challenged rigorously enough.

329. The GCE A level results in 2002 showed a very marked improvement on those of the previous year, when they were below the national average. Half of the students gained the highest grades, A and B. Similarly, results at AS level in 2002 were better than those in 2001 with nearly half the students achieving grades A and B. Over the last three years female students have achieved better results than male students by a margin greater than in most schools and colleges.

330. Standards of work in Year 13 are well above average as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Students achieve well. In their original writing they make good use of drafting. Teachers support this process well by making suitable suggestions on early drafts but leaving the student to develop the work independently. Students are particularly good at writing commentaries explaining how they have approached a piece of writing. For example, they are aware of how writers or speakers adapt their style to suit the target audience. However, even the highest attaining students make technical errors in their own writing. Students show very good knowledge of how language is acquired. In a lesson in which they were analysing the writing of young children they knew what features to look for and drew apt inferences, for example, by taking contextual factors into account.

331. Year 12 students achieve well and attain above average standards. They have a good understanding of the basics of language analysis. Thus in one lesson they were able to analyse speech in terms of power relations. They showed good knowledge of the dynamics at work in a doctor-patient consultation. In a lesson on gender differences in language they drew valid inferences about the effects that sociological factors such as age, intelligence and social class have on language. The insistence by teachers that students should master the technical language of the subject has paid dividends: students speak confidently about features such as lexis, discourse structures and semantic fields.

332. As at the time of the previous inspection, teaching is good. As a result, students learn well. Teachers plan well, ensuring that they provide students with suitable texts for

study. Their very good subject knowledge is evident in the way they ask appropriate questions so that students increase their learning. On some occasions, however, teachers fall unnecessarily into a lecturing mode. Some lessons would benefit from more rigorous challenge. For example, sometimes students are allowed to identify linguistic features in a text but not asked to explain their effect. Teachers create an excellent climate for learning by conducting lessons in a friendly and purposeful way. Students value this and are grateful that teachers go out of their way to be helpful.

333. Marking is a very strong feature of teaching. Comments on students' work are aimed at explaining their strengths and weaknesses and suggesting ways they can improve their work. Comments are linked to examination grades so students know how well they are doing. Students' folders show they have a very good attitude to the subject. Teachers help them to extend their learning by setting a good quantity of relevant homework and students respond by taking care with it, often producing more than one draft before they are satisfied with their answer. They are willing to answer questions orally but sometimes have to be cajoled into whole-class discussions. Their high level of interest is shown by the fact that they nearly all continue with the A level course in Year 13.
334. The recently appointed head of department has shown a good sense of priority in concentrating first on English in the main school. There are, however, plans for developing teaching in the sixth form and there is a clear commitment among the teaching staff to raise standards even higher. At present the department does not fully analyse the data that exists about students' performance. Consequently there is not a systematic way in which students' progress is tracked and linked to targets which could then be incorporated into teaching.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The focus was on French, but Spanish and German were also sampled.

335. There have been few recent A level candidates in Spanish, but numbers are now increasing. The two students in Year 13 are producing work of high quality; the five in Year 12 are working well but their level of attainment is not so high. Teaching is lively and successful. There was a good sense of commitment and enthusiasm in both lessons observed.
336. A level candidates in German have varied between three and eight in recent years. Results overall have been broadly in line with national figures. There are at present three students in both Years 12 and 13. These small numbers are due in part to disappointing results at both AS Level and GCSE in 2002. Standards of written work range from good or very good to rather poor. In the lessons observed only two students were present in Year 12 and only one in Year 13. The Year 12 students showed a fair knowledge of grammar but were rather silent in discussion. The Year 13 student and her teacher had an excellent discussion in German on a literary text.

French

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

Strengths:

- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good.
- Teachers are hard working and teach well.
- Relations between teachers and students are very good.
- Overall standards of attainment are good.

Areas for improvement:

- Students must work to improve their confidence and fluency in spoken French.
 - Some students should aim to be more actively involved in lessons.
337. The number of candidates taking A level in French in 1998-2000 averaged nine per year, with results broadly in line with national averages. In 2001, the number rose to twenty, and as many candidates gained higher grades as previously but the results of less able candidates were very disappointing. The five candidates in 2002 achieved results similar to those of earlier years.
338. There are at present eight students in both Years 12 and 13. As in previous years almost all are girls. There is a considerable variation in the standards of their work, but overall they are above average in both years, with Year 13 perhaps a little stronger than Year 12. Students in Year 12 have built on the high standards achieved in GCSE. They have made the transition to the sixth form successfully and are now doing a variety of stimulating and challenging work, involving a wide range of language. Their written French has become more ambitious. They have made good progress in their understanding of grammar and syntax but their work can still be careless and inaccurate.
339. Students in Year 13 made good progress from GCSE to their AS level grades in 2002, and have continued to make progress since. The variation in the quality of their written French is greater than that seen in Year 12. The best work shows an excellent command of vocabulary and idiom and is careful and accurate; the very weakest is careless, inaccurate and poorly presented. There is a lot to do here before the summer examinations. Students have read or are reading a wide and demanding range of French texts. In both lessons observed they showed good understanding of both written and spoken French. In a lesson looking at issues of racism in France their spoken contributions in French were rather hesitant and lacking in confidence, though what they did say was usually accurate and to the point. They were much more at home in discussing "Bonjour Tristesse", written by Françoise Sagan when she was about their age. They showed a good understanding of the novel and the ideas behind it and responded well to questions from the teacher. When they read the text aloud their accents were mostly good.
340. Teaching is good overall. There is a sense of purpose and commitment. Teachers have a good command of French and use the language effectively in lessons. They have high expectations and give students challenging work to do. They know their students well and adjust their expectations accordingly. Relationships between students and their teachers are very good. There was a good sense of working together to achieve good results. In a short discussion with Year 13 students they said that they had been well taught and well looked after in the sixth form. They have enjoyed the course and in particular the opportunities to study literary texts as part of their work on set topics. The head of department manages the subject well. Students are given good opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding, with clear guidelines about the nature and requirements of the A level course. The difficulties experienced elsewhere in the department have not affected sixth form teaching and prospects for results at both AS and A level are good.