

INSPECTION REPORT

ARCHBISHOP TENISON'S CE HIGH SCHOOL

Croydon

LEA area: Croydon

Unique reference number: 101811

Headteacher: Richard Ford

Reporting inspector: Paul Sadler
No: 1611

Dates of inspection: 4 – 6 November 2002

Inspection number: 249813

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided (Church of England)
Age range of pupils:	11-18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Selborne Road Croydon
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Timothy Godfrey
Date of previous inspection:	20 – 24 March 1995

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1611	P Sadler	Registered inspector	Chemistry	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards? – the school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are students taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p> <p>The standards and quality of teaching in subjects and courses</p>
1165	P Dannheiser	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards? – students' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its students?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
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22958	T Bailess	Team inspector	English	
19267	P Gibson	Team inspector	Biology	
27666	J Dockerell	Team inspector	French	
12475	S Johnson	Team inspector	Music	
22590	R Castle	Team inspector	Geography Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
32230	W Alexander	Team inspector	Computer studies	
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REPORT CONTENTS	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM	11
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	14
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	16
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19
PART D: THE SIXTH FORM	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	25
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?	26
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO STUDENTS?	26
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?	27
Assessment	
Advice, support and guidance	
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND STUDENTS?	28
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	28
Leadership and management	
Resources	
PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Archbishop Tenison's High School is a Voluntary Aided Church of England comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11-18, situated in the London Borough of Croydon. It has 364 boys and 343 girls on roll, making a total of 707, of which 218 are in the Sixth Form. It is of below average size overall, although the size of the Sixth Form is above average. 28.6 per cent of the pupils are of minority ethnic heritage, which is above the national average. The majority of these pupils are of black heritage. There is a small number of asylum seekers on the school roll. Thirty pupils (4.2 per cent) have special educational needs of which two (0.3 per cent) have statements. Both of these figures are very low in comparison with national averages. Seventeen pupils (2.4 per cent) have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals, 2.5 per cent, is very low compared to the national average of 15.3 per cent.

The school admits pupils from Christian families in the archdeaconry of Croydon, which includes the London Borough of Sutton and parts of Bromley, as well as the whole of Croydon. These pupils come from up to 40 primary schools. There are about three applicants for each place. On the basis of National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the attainment of pupils on entry is above average. The school's last inspection was in March 1995. Since then the school has expanded from two to three forms of entry – numbers have grown from 509 to the current 707. This enlargement has yet to have its full impact on the Sixth Form. There has been a slight increase in the numbers on the special educational needs register and in free school meals entitlement.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with a good Sixth Form. It has a number of very good and excellent features. Pupils aged 14 and 16 achieve very well in their work and results in national tests in English, mathematics and science at age 14 are well above the national average. At age 16, results in GCSE are well above the national average, although in 2001 the achievement of pupils since age 14 was less strong; a position that, on limited available evidence, has been rectified in 2002. Teaching is consistently very good throughout the school, with examples of excellent teaching. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of their subjects and high expectations of what pupils and students can achieve. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils and students are excellent and are a particular strength of the school. Leadership and management are good. Strengths include the monitoring and evaluation of performance and the setting of educational direction, which are good. However, strategic planning is weak, reflected in the school's unsatisfactory accommodation. The school, including the Sixth Form, provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils and students have excellent attitudes and behaviour, based on the high expectations of teachers.
- Teaching and learning throughout the school are consistently very good.
- The standard of pupils' work is well above average, as are many aspects of their attainment in external tests and examinations.
- Pupils' and students' personal development and their relationships with staff and each other are very good.
- Attendance is excellent.

What could be improved

- The accommodation is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient specialist accommodation for physical education, art, science, design and technology and the Sixth Form.
- The quality of strategic planning is unsatisfactory. A more focused long-term plan is needed.
- Some aspects of the school's communications with parents.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1995. Since that time the school has maintained its high standards at age 16 and has improved standards at age 14 and in the Sixth Form. High attendance has been maintained and behaviour has improved beyond the good standard then seen. Teaching has also improved.

Most of the key issues at that time have been dealt with. These included providing improved opportunities for independent study, raising standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and making assessment more consistent. The quality of the school development plan remains weak. The school has expanded in numbers by nearly 50 per cent since the last inspection. Some improvements have been made to the resources and accommodation in that time, including a new classroom block with a very good library and research centre, an all-weather playing surface and improved facilities for ICT. Accommodation, however, is inadequate for the current curriculum, number of pupils and standards.

Overall, because of the improvements in teaching and standards of attainment, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

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
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	C
A-levels/AS-levels	D	C	B	

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

Standards attained by pupils at age 14 have been consistently well above national averages. For instance, in 2001, 91 per cent achieved the national standard of Level 5 in both English and mathematics compared with the national averages of 64 and 66 per cent respectively. In science, 89 per cent of the school's pupils achieved this level compared with 66 per cent nationally. The difference between the performance of boys and girls is similar to that found nationally. There are no significant differences in the performance of pupils from different ethnic groups. Similarly at age 16 pupils' standards are well above national averages with 68 per cent achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-C in 2001, compared with 48 per cent nationally. Pupils' performance in earlier years exceeded this figure and preliminary figures for 2002 suggest that higher figures have again been attained, with 83 per cent achieving five or more good passes. In 2001 all pupils achieved GCSE passes, which is in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally.

In lessons pupils show high standards of oral and written work. They give extended and accurate answers to questions and their written work is suitably detailed and accurate. ICT is widely used for research and to present work. Pupils achieve very well between starting at the school and age 14; between 14 and 16 their achievement is good. In 2001 it fell below this level, but there is evidence of an improvement in 2002. The school sets appropriate and challenging targets that were missed narrowly in 2001, but were achieved in 2002.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils are very positive about the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils behave sensibly and with mutual respect at all times.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils develop excellent attitudes to learning and get on well with each other and their teachers.
Attendance	Excellent. Authorised absence is very low and there is virtually no unauthorised absence.

Pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour are a particular strength of the school. Pupils are polite and respond very well to teachers' requests. They respect each other's point of view; for instance, in class discussion. They concentrate very well on their work. Relationships with teachers are respectful, but relaxed. Attendance, at 94.9 per cent in 2001, is very high compared with the national average of 90.8 per cent. There was no unauthorised absence in 2001.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is consistently very good across the school. Particular strengths are teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects, their expectations and their management of the pupils. All these features are very good. Teachers use homework well. These features are common across all subjects, including the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and with pupils of all ages. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is good.

In response to this teaching, pupils learn well. They make very good gains in skills, knowledge and understanding, and work hard, producing a high quantity of good quality work. They work with much interest and sustained concentration. The teaching meets the needs of all pupils very well; for instance, pupils with English as an additional language learn very well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, but is constrained by the accommodation.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. There are only a small number of such pupils, but their needs are met well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Again there are only a few such pupils, but their skills of English are soon brought up to those of their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The inspection gathered limited evidence on spiritual development. Provision for moral and social development is very good; that for cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has good procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare.

The curriculum meets legal requirements, although the accommodation available limits pupils' choices; for instance, in physical education and design and technology. There are limited opportunities to pursue vocational courses to GCSE. Most pupils study two modern foreign languages to age 14, although few currently continue to pursue both to GCSE.

The school cares for its pupils well. In particular, behaviour is monitored rigorously and occasional instances of bullying and other oppressive behaviour are dealt with quickly and effectively. The school's ethos and policies effectively promote racial harmony.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Monitoring and evaluation are good, but strategic planning is weak.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body has effective practices for monitoring progress.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Available resources are used well, but the unsatisfactory accommodation limits the overall impact.

Strengths in leadership and management include monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance, the development of teaching including the induction of new staff and their match to the needs of the curriculum. Governors are developing their role and are beginning to have an impact on shaping the future of the school. All these features are good.

Weaknesses remain in strategic planning. Priorities are too wide ranging and general; success criteria do not always focus on the quality of what is planned. This, in part, has slowed progress in remedying the unsatisfactory aspects of the accommodation.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents receive good information on pupils' progress The school gives good individual care to pupils There is a positive ethos that encourages good working habits Teaching is good and has improved over time There are good opportunities for pupils to develop self-confidence and independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some aspects of the school's communication with parents could be improved There is an assumption that pupils have internet access at home Arrangements to cover long-term staff absence could be improved

The inspection team agrees with those points that parents find to be positive about the school. It also agrees that aspects of the school's communication with parents could be improved; this applies to general matters rather than communication about individual pupils, which is good. Although pupils are often asked to make use of the Internet, they have reasonable access through the school's computers after school. In the recent past the achievement of some Sixth Form students has been affected by staff absence and inadequate cover.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The Sixth Form currently has 218 students; 109 of each gender. A significant number are of ethnic minority heritage. Approximately one half have come into the Sixth Form from other schools, most significantly from St Andrew's CE School, an 11-16 school with which a formal arrangement exists for pupils to continue their education in the Sixth Form at Archbishop Tenison's. The ethnic and religious backgrounds of the students are wider than that of the main school and include a significantly higher proportion of students of Asian heritage. A very small proportion of students have special educational needs.

The Sixth Form offers almost exclusively A-level courses and requires students to have a satisfactory range of GCSE passes. In doing this it complements other provision for Post-16 education in the Croydon area, most notably in colleges of further education. The Sixth Form is growing in popularity and numbers.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

This is a good Sixth Form that provides good value for money. Standards achieved at A level have improved continually over the last four years and in 2001 were above the national average. The results are consistent across the subjects offered. Students show good achievement in relation to their GCSE results and they work hard and produce high quality work throughout the two years.

Teaching is very good. It was consistently good or very good in all the subjects inspected, so students go to lessons in the expectation of working hard and receiving good teaching. As a result, they learn well and develop good independent learning skills.

Leadership and management are good. The school gives the Sixth Form an appropriately high priority and has developed an ethos that promotes high standards and in which students develop pride in being members of the school. Students are given very good support and guidance and are provided with a curriculum that meets their needs. They have good opportunities to widen their experience outside the curriculum. Other enrichment, for instance, in drama and music, takes place in A-level courses; other courses extending the curriculum are limited in number. As with the whole school, limitations in the accommodation and facilities place some restrictions on the breadth of what is offered.

Students are offered a very good level of personal support and guidance and have an excellent range of opportunities to develop self-confidence and independence. All students feel comfortable in the school including those of all backgrounds who have come from other schools.

Strengths

- Students have excellent attitudes to their studies. Their attendance is very high.
- Teaching is very good.
- The development of students' personal and learning skills is excellent.
- Personal support and guidance are very good, together with advice offered on careers and higher education.

What could be improved

- The accommodation places limitations on the breadth of the curriculum and in the case of PE, on standards.

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. Teaching and learning are good and students achieve well.
Chemistry	Good. Good teaching is founded on good subject knowledge and students are enthusiastic. Achievement is good.
Biology	Very good. Teaching is very good and students are able to work independently. They achieve well.
Computing	Good. Teaching and assessment are very good and achievement is good. The department is well managed.
Physical Education	Good. Teaching and achievement are good and teachers have high expectations. The accommodation and facilities are poor and limit the standards that students can achieve.
Music	Very good. Teaching, learning, leadership and management are very good. Students achieve well.
Geography	Good. Teaching and achievement are good and the department works well as a team.
English	Very good. Attainment is high and teaching is good. Students work hard and achieve well.
French	Good. Teaching is very good and students have the capacity for independent learning and research. Achievement is satisfactory.

Other work seen in the Sixth Form was of a good standard, with similar features to the A-level subjects inspected. There was very limited evidence in courses for teaching the key skills of communication, numeracy and ICT, due to the small number of students attending these voluntary lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Personal support and guidance are very good. Students get good personal support from the head of Sixth Form and their tutors and are given very good advice concerning careers and higher education, including personal support in making applications.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Leadership and management are good. There is a strong focus on monitoring and improving teaching and creating an ethos in which students feel valued and have equality of opportunity. Students are encouraged to develop independence and achieve high standards. A significant weakness is the unsatisfactory accommodation and in the strategic planning needed to improve it.

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 positive ethos for learning• Good teachers who are willing to help them to improve• Social and cultural opportunities• The opportunities to take and develop responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The limited facilities of the school• The limited range of enrichment courses

The inspection team agrees that students' views are a fair reflection of the strengths and weaknesses of the Sixth Form.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils and students have excellent attitudes and behaviour, based on the high expectations of teachers

1. Pupils are enthusiastic about the school and speak positively about the opportunities it offers. In spite of crowded and sometimes narrow corridors they move about sensibly. They are proud of their achievements in the many responsibilities offered by the school, such as in sport, drama and helping in the library. Sixth Form students help younger pupils with their work and take this responsibility seriously. The staff support this by celebrating pupils' achievements; for instance, in assembly and in newsletters to parents.
2. In lessons, pupils settle quickly to their work and work in sustained silence when required. In questioning and discussion, they do not interrupt each other and wait to be asked by the teacher to join in. They display mature attitudes. For instance, a class of 11-year-old pupils, in discussing human reproduction, gave sensible answers without embarrassment or silly behaviour.
3. This success is due to the dedication of the teaching staff and the promotion of a strong work ethic in the school. Pupils aged 11, 14 and 16, and in the Sixth Form were interviewed by inspectors. All agreed that staff were available to help them with their work. Sixteen-year-olds in particular felt that the meetings at which they discussed their progress with tutors, and at which they discussed the grades they were capable of achieving in public examinations, were particularly helpful. Work was marked regularly with helpful comments pointing the way to improvement. Crucially, pupils of all ages saw the value of working hard to achieve success and did not feel that they were deflected from this by pressure from their peers.
4. Younger pupils agreed that the work was harder than they had experienced at primary school and that the expectations of teachers were higher. They enjoy the challenge that this presents.

Teaching and learning throughout the school are consistently very good.

5. Teaching is consistently very good in all subjects and to pupils and students of all ages. This consistency means that pupils go from lesson to lesson with an expectation that they will be taught well and expected to work hard. This creates an ethos for learning that is a major contributory factor in the high standards that pupils achieve in their work and in national tests and examinations.
6. In lessons, 85 per cent of the lessons observed were at least of a good standard. Thirty-four per cent were very good or excellent. For pupils aged 11-16 the teaching is overwhelmingly good. In the Sixth Form there is a slightly broader range, with more very good teaching, but also more that is only satisfactory. Similarly, in all subjects teaching was at least good in more than three-quarters of the lessons seen.
7. The strongest features of the teaching are teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subject, their expectations and management of their pupils, and the use of homework. This extends to pupils of all abilities. For example, in a mathematics lesson with a lower set of 16-year-old pupils, the lesson began with a very challenging exercise on simultaneous equations, which prepared pupils well for the subsequent work and enabled them to achieve at GCSE grade C and above. In a German lesson with higher attaining pupils of the same age, pupils were required to organise their own learning and to assess their own and each other's achievement. This developed skills of self-confidence, as well as making them aware of the importance of using vocabulary accurately in context. In a Year 7 English lesson, the teacher used ideas from the National Literacy Strategy to structure a lesson on techniques used to write the introduction of stories. These included teaching of the whole class and the use of group and individual work, with a concluding plenary session to ensure that all pupils understood the work.

8. Homework is well structured to ensure that it builds on what has been learned in the lesson. In a number of subjects, such as GCSE drama, journals or diaries are used to enable pupils to build on their learning. Some pupils feel the demands of homework to be onerous, but all understand its necessity in enabling high standards to be achieved.
9. In response to this high quality teaching, pupils learn very well. For instance, a lower Year 11 science group rapidly developed understanding of the action of catalysts in chemical reactions, drawing on previous knowledge of factors affecting the rate at which a reaction takes place. In a Year 7 ICT lesson in which an interactive whiteboard was used, pupils were keen to learn how the relevant software worked and the teacher explained this. In a Year 9 English lesson on the novel 'Skellig' pupils were able to develop and justify their own opinions through skilful challenge from the teacher.

The standard of pupils' work is well above average, as are many aspects of their attainment in external tests and examinations.

10. At age 14 pupils' results in national tests are well above average and compare favourably with similar schools. For instance, in 2001 the proportions achieving the higher Level 6 were 54 per cent in English, 68 per cent in mathematics and 65 per cent in science. These compare with national figures of 31 per cent, 43 per cent and 34 per cent respectively. Early evidence is that this performance has been improved upon in 2002 with 78 per cent achieving this level in English, 70 per cent in mathematics and 64 per cent in science. Other subjects also show high standards of attainment at this age with only ICT giving a slightly lower level, with 55 per cent attaining Level 6 in 2002. Evidence shows that these high levels have been sustained over a considerable period of time.
11. In lessons and in the scrutiny of pupils' work these very good levels were also evident. For instance, in mathematics pupils understood the writing of numbers in standard form, including the use of negative indices and the ability to solve equations using these forms. In science they understand the structure and function of the lungs including sophisticated concepts such as the importance of maintaining a high active surface area within the alveoli. In English, extended personal and imaginative writing is well developed and expressive.
12. At age 16, pupils sustain this high level of performance. In 2001, 68 per cent attained five or more GCSE passes at grade C and above, compared with a national figure of 48 per cent, and all pupils attained at least one pass. In fact, this was a weaker performance than in other years. In Year 2000 78 per cent achieved five good passes compared with 47 per cent nationally, and in 2002 84 per cent achieved this level. Although achievement between ages 14 and 16 is lower than between 11 and 14, it remains good and the very rapid rates achieved at the earlier stage are consolidated so that the vast majority of pupils achieve their potential at age sixteen. Variations in performance between subjects and between groups of pupils are relatively small. When comparisons are made across the school, in 2001 pupils attained the best results in art and design, religious studies and mathematics; their results were weaker in English literature and history, although current evidence suggest that in these subjects too achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and there is little difference in achievement among the majority of ethnic groups represented in the school, which has itself identified small groups of underachieving pupils and is taking action to address this.
13. In lessons and work seen, high attainment is sustained at age 16. For instance, in English pupils can use words expressively to illuminate colour and texture when writing poetry. In science, pupils planned and carried out an experiment meeting the requirements of the highest GCSE grades.

Pupils' and students' personal development and their relationships with staff and each other are very good.

14. The pupils show a high level of maturity in their interactions with each other, their teachers and other adults. This is because they enjoy school and are highly motivated to do well. In lessons, they settle quickly to their work and follow the teachers' instructions. In questioning and

discussion they listen to each other's point of view with respect and interest. Even when the conditions for learning are less than ideal; for instance, when doing PE in the dining hall and foyer, they work hard and without complaint.

15. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson; for instance, pupils with special educational needs persevered with a task they found difficult and were eventually successful. In this lesson the teacher used humour well to create enthusiasm. In a Year 11 German lesson pupils co-operated well to produce presentations that were given to the whole group with enthusiasm and skill. On appropriate occasions pupils applaud each other; for instance, in drama, or give other appropriate forms of encouragement. Inspectors commented on similar behaviour across the range of subjects and ages.
16. Out of lessons, pupils behave sensibly in spite of narrow corridors and limited outdoor play space. They respect their classrooms and other facilities. They wait patiently when queuing for lunch. They move quickly and sensibly from place to place; there is little pushing or boisterous behaviour.
17. Pupils are proud of opportunities they are given to take responsibility or to represent the school; for instance, in sport and theatrical productions. They take the wide range of opportunities offered to develop into responsible adults. They are well supported by their parents and carers, both in these activities and the more formal work. They also have a mature and objective view of the school's strengths, particularly in terms of good teaching, high standards and its ethos for learning, and also of its limitations; for instance, in its accommodation and facilities.

Attendance is excellent.

18. In 2001 authorised absence was 5.1 per cent and unauthorised absence was zero, and was very low compared with national figures of 8.1 per cent and 1.1 per cent respectively. The school encourages punctuality and registers are taken promptly at the beginning of sessions. They are also taken in most lessons. Teachers know their classes well and often make enquiries of other pupils about those who are absent. The school is considering electronic methods of registration that should add further to the importance of good attendance in pupils' minds.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The accommodation is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient specialist accommodation for physical education, art, science, design and technology and the Sixth Form.

19. In 1996 the school began a programme of expansion from two forms of entry to three. This had the potential to increase the size of the school by 50 per cent. Some additional accommodation was planned, but that which was actually built was subject to tight budgetary constraints. The main additions have been a classroom block, a good library and resource base, and very good specialist accommodation for music, which had been criticised in the previous inspection report. More recently an all-weather playing surface has been added, partly through a self-help scheme involving contributions from parents and students. In addition, some necessary updating to science laboratories and improvement to ICT rooms have taken place. Although the school had significant financial reserve in the 2001-2002 financial year, this has been reduced by commitments in the current year.
20. In spite of these improvements it is the inspection team's judgement that the accommodation and facilities overall are unsatisfactory and inadequate for the increased numbers on the school's roll. The weakest provision is for physical education where there is no specialist provision for indoor activity. Most indoor teaching of the subject takes place in the school hall, the dining hall and even in the school entrance foyer, which is undignified for pupils and slightly alarming for visitors. The changing facilities are old and of poor quality, in spite of attempts to improve them through self-help. Outdoor space is also very limited. There is no playing field in the school grounds. Apart from the all-weather surface there is a tarmac area used mostly for netball and tennis, although this is also one of the few outdoor spaces where pupils can play or relax. The school makes use of off-site facilities for PE, but these are of varying success and involve wasted time in travel.

21. Art was not inspected on this occasion, but there is evidence that standards are very high. There are two art rooms, one of which is very small. These were built some 13 years ago through a scheme financed by the school. These specialist facilities are suitable only for drawing and painting. It is not possible for the subject to be taught through the range of media normally encountered, especially in a school with a successful record of teaching the subject to A level.
22. In a number of other subjects requiring specialist facilities, there is a shortage, although the quality of what exists is generally good. These include design and technology, where there are no facilities to teach textiles or graphics work, and science where the laboratories are almost constantly in use and some teaching takes place in general classrooms. These factors have an impact on the breadth of the curriculum and in some cases on the quality of teaching.
23. In addition, some general teaching rooms are small and airless. The Sixth Form common room is small and of poor quality and space for students to undertake private study within the school is limited.

The quality of strategic planning is unsatisfactory. A more focused long-term plan is needed.

24. The quality of strategic planning was raised as a key issue in the last inspection and, although there is evidence that improvement has taken place, this aspect of the school's work remains unsatisfactory. The school improvement plan is reviewed on a three year cycle and includes the key strategic objectives. However, in the accompanying annual action plan major objectives such as improving the accommodation are grouped with far more trivial matters without obvious prioritisation. Success criteria are insufficiently focused on intended outcomes and the impact on raising standards. In some cases, the identification of resources is weak.
25. In recent years the school, with external help, has prepared a number of other plans to improve the accommodation for submission to external funding bodies. Unfortunately, these have not always been successful.
26. It should, however, be acknowledged that the school has had considerable success in sustaining and further improving its already high standards of attainment, teaching quality and pupils' behaviour. This has been achieved through the successful implementation of performance management, professional development and monitoring of pupils' performance and behaviour. There is, therefore, evidence that the impact of informal planning has been better than documentation would suggest. This gives the school added scope to turn its attentions to the current priorities.

Improve some aspects of the school's communication with parents.

27. Parents praise the school's knowledge of, and concern for, pupils' achievements and their individual concerns. The school responds well to these individual issues, including keeping parents informed of their children's academic targets and progress, and issues relating to their welfare such as occasional occurrences of bullying.
28. However, parents complain that communication on some wider issues such as the curriculum, the impact of staff absence and some other school policies, lacks sensitivity and discourages some parents from becoming more fully involved with the school. The inspectors, having spoken to parents, pupils, staff and governors and scrutinised relevant documents, agree that the school needs to review some aspects of its practice in this area.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

29. In order to maintain the already high standards achieved and to improve the quality of education the school provides, the headteacher and governing body should:

(1) improve the school's specialist and other accommodation by:

- reviewing the audit that identifies current and future accommodation needs, taking into account increased numbers and impending curriculum changes;
- drawing up a focused strategic plan that identifies appropriate timescales, success criteria and possible funding streams;
- promoting this plan with support of the community in order to maximise access to available funding agencies.

(paragraphs 19-23, 60, 72, 93)

(2) improve the quality of strategic planning by: (links to (1) above)

- identifying a limited set of key strategic objectives to take the school forward;
- creating a plan that identifies actions, resources and success criteria linked to the impact of each objective on raising standards, and which makes clear the roles of the governing body, local education authority, learning and skills council and diocesan board of education in securing high quality.

(paragraphs 24-26)

(3) improve the quality of some communication with parents by:

- reviewing documents for tone, language and impact on the recipient;
- seeking the views of parents on the quality of communication;
- seeking models of effective practice from other schools and organisations.

(paragraphs 27-28)

Sixth Form

30. The key issues described in paragraph 29 above apply to the Sixth Form as well. There are no other key issues relating specifically to the Sixth Form.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7-11	30
	Sixth form	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

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

Number	3	7	16	3	1	0	0
Percentage	10	23	53	10	3	0	0

Sixth form

Number	1	13	17	7	0	0	0
Percentage	3	34	45	18	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for Years 7-11 and the sixth form as each lesson represents more than three percentage points and less than two percentage points, respectively.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	489	218
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	18	

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	29	1

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	17

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	per cent
School data	5.1
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	per cent
School data	0.0
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	49	46	95

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	43	48	46
	Girls	43	38	38
	Total	86	86	84
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	91(98)	91(95)	89(86)
	National	64(63)	66(65)	66(59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	54(64)	68(80)	65(560)
	National	31(28)	43(42)	34(30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	45	47	46
	Girls	44	45	38
	Total	89	92	84
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	95(95)	98(97)	89(84)
	National	65(64)	68(66)	64(62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	49(58)	70(78)	54(59)
	National	31(31)	42(39)	33(29)

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
	2001	33	35	68

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	18	32	33
	Girls	28	35	35
	Total	46	67	68
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	68(77)	99(99)	100(99)
	National	48(47)	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	46.2
	National	39.0

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	per cent 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	N/A

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

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	39	54	93
	Average point score per candidate	15.0(15.3)	19.6(19.6)	17.9(18.0)
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	39	54	93	2	0	2
	Average point score per candidate	15.0	19.6	17.7	9.0	N/A	9.0
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.9	17.4	9.8	11.4	10.6

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

International Baccalaureate		Number	per cent success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0	N/A
	National		81.0

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	475	6	
White – Irish	0		
White – any other White background	6	1	
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0		
Mixed – White and Black African	0		
Mixed – White and Asian	0		
Mixed – any other mixed background	0		
Asian or Asian British - Indian	21		
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	60	12	
Black or Black British – African	53	2	
Black or Black British – any other Black background	20		
Chinese	3	2	
Any other ethnic group	27		
No ethnic group recorded	0		

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	47.64
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.8

Financial year	2001-2002
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Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	241.5

	£
Total income	2,369,023
Total expenditure	2,342,238
Expenditure per pupil	3,517
Balance brought forward from previous year	123,783

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	73.2
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	23.9
Key Stage 4	21.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Balance carried forward to next year	150,568
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Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	14.9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	16.44

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	707
Number of questionnaires returned	221

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	34	9	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	40	4	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	50	2	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	50	7	3	2
The teaching is good.	50	46	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	52	9	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	33	10	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	41	6	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	39	46	9	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	43	46	6	3	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	52	5	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	31	18	5	11

PART D: THE SIXTH FORM

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

31. Students attain above average standards in the Sixth Form. In 1999 and Year 2000 standards attained at A level were in line with the national average, but in 2001 they exceeded this average. Male students' attainment was above average and that of female students was well above average. In 2002 early indications are that this level of success has been maintained in Year 13, although the results at AS level, taken at the end of Year 12, were somewhat lower. Almost all students achieve well in comparison with their results in GCSE at age 16. In 2001, results were well above average in art and design, chemistry, biology, English and mathematics; some subjects such as music had insufficient candidates to make this comparison. In 2002 at A2 level, the best results were obtained in art and design, business studies, economics, geography, history, and sociology. In each of these subjects there were more than ten candidates, of which at least one half gained grades A or B. Smaller groups obtained similar results in computer studies, German, government and politics, music (where all five candidates achieved A or B grades) and physical education. In Year 12 AS level in the same year the results in many subjects were again high, although those in English, government and politics and physics were disappointing as were those in the Intermediate General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) for business studies.
32. In lessons and through scrutiny of students' work it was also evident that pupils attained above average standards and showed good achievement. In English writing was well developed with good use of detail to support argument; for instance, in exploring comparisons between '1984' and 'Brave New World'. In computer studies Year 13 students can analyse, design and program a solution to a software problem very effectively. In mathematics, good achievement was shown in increasingly sophisticated use of binomial theorem and in mechanics; for instance, in analysing the forces acting on a rigid rod.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

33. Students' attitudes to school are excellent. Enthusiasm for school is apparent in the very high levels of attendance and the interest students show in lessons and other activities within and outside the school. Students are highly motivated and speak well of the school. Those students who have joined the Sixth Form from other schools say that they are pleased with their choice.
34. The school's programme for promoting students' personal development is very good and is one of the reasons why attitudes are so very positive. The school encourages students to be considerate and respectful of others. As a result, students' personal development is excellent. From the time they start in the Sixth Form, students are encouraged to be independent and take responsibility for themselves, others and their school. This builds so that in their final year, students are free to come to school for lessons only. They are trusted and respected by staff, and this approach is reciprocated by the students who take responsibility for much of their own learning. They use the common room and the library facilities, which they feel have improved recently, for independent learning, and they work at home. They are courteous and have attitudes towards learning that will stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives. In lessons, students actively participate and respond well to questions. They take a pride in the presentation of their work, concentrate well and take relevant notes. They demonstrate their ability to work independently and collaborate successfully in pairs or groups. They are impressively mature. In a language lesson for Year 12, the students formed a cohesive group, had an excellent relationship with their teacher and, therefore, enjoyed a productive and successful learning experience. In a biology lesson there was a very high level of concentration and all students applied themselves fully investigating proteins and enzymes. Their attitudes were excellent and this had a marked impact on their learning. A French lesson was very successful – not least because the students had prepared relevant homework of very high quality using independent research.

35. Relationships between staff and students are very good and, together with the strong partnership between home and school, they form the basis of students' positive attitudes to learning. The students care about each other, and their actions display moral and spiritual dimensions. This is a result of the way in which assemblies address their concerns, and personal and social education emphasise people's responsibility for each other. Many students enjoy helping the younger pupils learn to read and spell, taking part in work for Sixth Form charities, and participating in the work of the Sixth Form council.
36. Levels of attendance are excellent and are very high relative to the national average. The figure for unauthorised absences is below national levels. Students are punctual and arrive at school looking forward to the day.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

37. Teaching in the Sixth Form is very good. In almost all lessons seen it was either good or very good. This consistency across subjects adds to the overall quality as there is an expectation among students that they will be taught well. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use a range of techniques to help students to learn. They encourage and develop independent learning skills; for instance, by promoting the use of the Internet as a research tool. They teach practical skills with accuracy and care; for instance, in determining the end point in a chemical titration. In music, compositional techniques were developed by the use of a wide range of strategies including piano, overhead projector and question and answer. Such variety maintains students' interest and motivation, and the widespread use of such strategies means that teachers' management of students' learning is excellent.
38. Teachers have high expectations of the students, which is reflected in the pace of lessons and demand of the work. Teachers know the students very well – including those who entered the Sixth Form from other schools. They have a very good understanding of their previous attainment, their strengths and weaknesses and of what the student needs to do in order to improve. This is reflected in detailed, individualised marking of work and regular reviews of progress, identifying what students need to do in order to improve further.
39. Homework is used well to support learning. Meaningful tasks are set and are carefully explained. Students are set reasonable deadlines in order to plan the work across their studies, further developing independent learning skills.
40. Individual lessons and tasks are very well planned, but are not always documented. As many subjects are taught almost exclusively by one teacher, this creates difficulties when there is lengthy staff absence or an unexpected staff change.

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

41. The school offers a range of AS and A-level subjects including all the subjects of the National Curriculum. In the last few years, the range has been expanded to include design and technology, sociology, business studies and PE. There are plans to introduce further A levels including theatre arts and psychology. A vocational qualification in business is offered at intermediate level. Most of the recent expansion is in response to requests from students and parents. The school offers a limited range of enrichment courses within the curriculum including PE and games and opportunities to do community service. Each term there is a day devoted to religious and spiritual education, at which attendance is compulsory. Students also have opportunities to develop their key skills of communication, numeracy and ICT. Although these classes are voluntary, all subjects have agreed assignments to assess key skills.
42. Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory. There is a good range of A-level courses on offer and it is laudable that the school has responded to demand. The small number of vocational courses is explained by the fact that the school has made a conscious decision to complement other provision in the area, at colleges of further education and other schools. However, the curriculum is limited by the accommodation and facilities. For instance, it is not possible to pursue courses in

art and design, other than in drawing and painting. The accommodation also places restrictions on the teaching of other subjects including PE and chemistry. The range of enrichment courses is also limited, although what is provided is of good quality. Students are given opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the compulsory days and through opportunities to take responsibility, such as helping younger pupils to develop their basic skills. Other opportunities include cultural trips to the theatre, musical events and overseas, and taking part in and organising dramatic and social events such as the Sixth Form dinner and dance.

43. Students have equal access to the curriculum; most courses are studied by both male and female students, students from all ethnic backgrounds and by those who are new to the school. Parts of the school have restricted access for disabled students, although every assistance is given to those who are in this position.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

Assessment

44. The use of assessment in the Sixth Form is good. Teachers have very good knowledge of their students, including those who entered the Sixth Form from other schools. Tutors monitor and discuss students' progress with them on a regular basis. Teaching builds on previous attainment at age 16 years. The school responds well to students' individual needs; for instance, in developing practical skills in science with students with limited previous experience.
45. Students are set individual targets in Year 13 for their attainment in the A2 examinations, based on their success in Year 12. There is less use of individual targets in Year 12 itself, possibly because of uncertainty over the standards of the AS examination. Nevertheless, this is an area that needs development.

Advice, support and guidance

46. The quality of care and support students receive in school was satisfactory during the previous inspection and is now very good. The only issue identified by the previous inspection was that registers in Year 13 were completed retrospectively. This is no longer the case.
47. Health and safety procedures include risk assessments regularly undertaken by staff such as checks before all out-of-school activities. Professional checks of fire prevention, physical education and electrical equipment are undertaken annually. Some minor outstanding health and safety matters have been discussed with the staff. Good procedures for child protection are now in place and the high level of understanding and experience of staff with designated responsibility for this area of the school's work ensures their effectiveness. Staff are trained in first aid and take appropriate care of students who need it. The school has not developed a policy for students who are not living with their families, but, at present, no students are in this position.
48. The school monitors and promotes attendance very well. Registers conform to requirements, and they are marked quickly and promptly at the start of each session.
49. The ethos of the school fosters self-esteem and self-reliance through the very good programme for promoting students' personal development. Teachers throughout the school have a positive approach, and set good examples to students through their own behaviour and relationships. Their standards are clear and consistent, so that students know what to expect. Volunteers read with younger pupils who need extra help. Students are involved in regular events at which they discuss and learn about social and controversial issues. For one week each year students take part in the 'enrichment week', which includes a range of personal, social and educational experiences and is supported by a range of outside speakers and activities.
50. Students are confident that the staff are always there for them and willing to help. As an example, a student was grateful that he was able to e-mail his teacher during a half-term holiday and receive support with his work.

51. There is a well-structured pastoral support system. Students meet once each week in Year 12 and once every fortnight in Year 13. Much of this time is devoted to their futures. There are evenings about higher education for parents with their children, and guest speakers from universities and the local education authority.
52. Careers and personal advice is available, but not compulsory, and there is plenty of help for students preparing their UCAS forms and accompanying personal statements. There is time available for the use of the careers library and computer programs designed to take students through all the career and higher education options in which they may be interested. All students now have the opportunity of being seen individually by external expert advisers through the 'Connexions' service, although in 2001/2 this support was patchy. All the many students spoken with during this inspection felt well supported and advised when it came to making decisions about their future careers and education. The school follows up all leavers and invites former students to come to advise.

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

53. Overall the school works well with parents and students. Information about progress is good and any concerns about the students are quickly followed up. The school is less good at providing information on general matters; for instance, the long-term absence of a key member of staff was not handled well as parents and students did not feel informed of steps taken to ensure their continued teaching, which in any case were inadequate.
54. However, parents and students value the high standards promoted by the school, its positive ethos for learning and the opportunities provided to develop responsibility such as in helping younger pupils with special educational needs. They feel that staff are helpful and accessible; for instance, in providing extra tuition in the school holidays and in communicating by e-mail at times outside school hours.
55. Parents provide excellent support for their children and work well in partnership with the school in order to maintain high standards and develop independence in readiness for higher education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

56. Leadership and management of the Sixth Form are good. Development has been a high priority for the school and good recruitment and performance management strategies have led to very good teaching and high standards. The head of Sixth Form knows the students well and provides good co-ordination for the work. The Sixth Form has been included in the life of the whole school; this is reflected in the positive views of students, including those new to the school. Heads of subject departments also give a high priority to the work. The Sixth Form is generously funded, but generally resources are used efficiently and effectively to promote high standards. Most subjects are well resourced for teaching and learning.
57. There are, however, a few weaknesses. Many subjects are highly dependent on the work of an individual. This has led to problems during the absence of key staff and has implications for sustaining high standards; for instance, on the departure of a member of staff. Parents and students commented on the former point and there is evidence that occasionally this has had an impact on standards.
58. Evidence that there has been insufficiently rigorous strategic planning, in particular linked to the expansion of the school and the need to improve the currently unsatisfactory accommodation and facilities, is reported on in paragraphs 19-26. These deficiencies have an impact on standards in the Sixth Form, as elsewhere throughout the school.

Resources

59. Sixth Form courses have good resources for learning. They have adequate textbooks and access to other resources in the library. Access to ICT is generally good, although it could be put to better use in some subjects such as mathematics and English. There is a good range of practical equipment for science, and students are able to carry out experiments individually when appropriate. Good use has been made of access to external resources; for instance, at the University of Kent in chemistry. The proximity of the school to London is used well; for instance, by English and music in theatrical and orchestral events.
60. The main weaknesses are in the accommodation and facilities. These have a negative impact on standards in PE and affect the range of the curriculum in art and design and technology and, to some extent, chemistry. The Sixth Form social area is small and of poor quality and there is a lack of space for students to carry out private study in school.

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

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

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

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	per cent gaining grades A-E		per cent gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	9	100	62	-	15	2.11	1.15
Chemistry	1	-	43	-	5	-	0.77
Physics	1	-	52	-	4	-	0.90

Nb: This table refers to AS examinations taken at the end of Year 13 only.

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	per cent gaining grades A-E		per cent gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	27	93	87	56	43	6.8	5.8
Chemistry	12	100	90	50	43	7.0	5.9
Biology	10	100	88	50	34	7.2	5.3
Physics	12	100	88	25	40	5.7	5.7
Business V	2	-	-	-	-	9.0	10.5
Economics	28	86	89	36	36	5.3	5.5
Computer Studies	5	80	86	20	23	4.8	4.6
Sports / PE Studies	7	100	92	14	25	4.6	5.1
Art and Design	23	96	96	91	46	8.8	6.6
Music	3	100	93	33	35	6.7	5.7
Geography	20	100	92	50	38	6.5	5.7
History	23	91	88	48	35	6.2	5.5
Religious Studies	22	100	92	23	38	5.5	5.8
Sociology	12	100	86	25	35	6.0	5.3
Other Social Studies	13	77	87	8	34	3.7	5.3
English Literature	24	100	95	63	37	6.9	5.9
French	10	100	89	60	38	6.5	5.7
German	7	100	91	14	40	6.0	5.8

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	per cent gaining qualification		per cent gaining merit		Number gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England

Business	8	38	-	38	-	0	-
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SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

61. The school offers A-level courses in mathematics, chemistry and biology, which were inspected, and physics, which was not. These subjects are popular and standards are above average. It is also possible for students to study further mathematics, which requires some teaching outside the normal curriculum. Students can prepare for the key skills assessment in numeracy. This is a voluntary course and few are currently attending the lessons.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The leadership of the department is very good, effecting a good improvement since the last inspection.
- Standards in Year 13 are well above average.
- Students have very good attitudes to their work.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and students achieve well.

Areas for improvement

- The use of computers in the teaching of mathematics.
- Teaching methods need a sharper focus on oral contributions from all students to challenge intellectual learning more effectively in some lessons.

62. The inspection covered modules in pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics. The curriculum is good, offering two courses to AS and A level, with the opportunity for some students to study further mathematics modules. The resit GCSE course and the numeracy course in Key Skills were not inspected.
63. Standards at GCSE A level in 2001 were well above average for students earning the higher grades A and B and for those earning a grade. The take-up of mathematics is lower by female than male students, but their results overall are similar. The trend in standards over the last four years varies with the number of students completing the course; at no time was it below average. Results in 2002 dipped significantly following the introduction of the new AS levels, in common with other schools nationally. In 2001, nine Year 13 students completed their AS-level course with above average results. In 2002, thirty-five students from Year 12 completed their AS level with nearly three-quarters of them earning the higher grades A to C. Achievement by Sixth Form students is good compared to their above average standards at the start of their course.
64. The standard of work seen in the inspection is well above average for those students due to complete their course in 2003. Male, female and ethnic minority students do equally well. They are developing a good understanding of curve sketching in pure mathematics, but need further access to computers to complete their learning, particularly the idea of a limit, as a variable gets very large, for example. In statistics calculations show very good levels of understanding of basic parameters. In mechanics the concept of conservation of energy is secure. A particular strength is the very good attitude of students in lessons, which results in very good learning skills in private study. The standard of work seen in the inspection in Year 12 is above average as students have made a good start to their course, in learning new statistical techniques, for example. New formulae in pure mathematics are not yet secure. Standards have improved since the last inspection.
65. The quality of teaching and learning is good; an improvement on the last inspection. None of the teaching is unsatisfactory. In the very good teaching seen the methods of whole-group discussion interleave with direct and open-ended questions and short appropriate notes for students. This

combination produces a good productive rate of learning and a good acquisition of new knowledge and skills, in the change of scale in statistical calculations, for example. Humour is used very well and students enjoy their work. Teaching methods that are satisfactory overall lack a sharper focus in the challenge to students' intellectual learning to be any better. This inhibits some students' oral contributions in these lessons and reduces the rate at which they learn.

66. The leadership of the department is very good, seen by example in the teaching and the team spirit among the teachers. There is a good and clear commitment to maintain the well above average standards of the department. The monitoring of students' subject performance is very good, as is the diagnosis and provision for their individual learning needs. The professional development of staff is good and relevant. The sharing of good practice within the department will enhance it further. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection.

CHEMISTRY

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

Strengths

- Good teaching is founded on good subject knowledge and a thorough understanding of the course requirements.
- Students are enthusiastic about the subject and have very good attitudes towards it.
- Assessment of pupils and the guidance they are given in order to improve is good.
- There are very good links with external agencies that are well used to enhance students' achievements.
- There are good resources to support students' learning.

Areas for development

- Forward planning is needed to sustain the leadership and management of the subject.
- The accommodation for chemistry needs improvement.

67. Examination results at A level have consistently been above average. In Year 2000 and 2001 they were well above average. In 2001, 75 per cent attained grades A or B compared with a national figure of 43 per cent. In the 2002 A2 results, the figure dropped to 22 per cent, but this was based on a small group of nine candidates. In the AS examination taken by Year 12 in 2002, 27 per cent gained grades A or B, from a group of fifteen. Most students achieve A-level grades that show good achievement from the grades they attained in GCSE science double award.
68. In lessons, students also show high levels of attainment; for instance, in a Year 13 lesson they had a clear understanding of dissociation constants and of the principles that control reversible reactions and chemical equilibria. Year 12 students only two months into the course could carry out a titration with accuracy and understood the underlying quantitative chemistry. They were also able to prepare accurate volumetric solutions of known strength; a technique requiring considerable skill in practical chemistry. Scrutiny of their written work showed accurate note taking and research, with sample examination questions marked with helpful comments showing how students can improve. Their work also showed good achievement between Years 12 and 13, with developing understanding of the more sophisticated concepts such as the use of electrode potential as a predictor of redox reactions.
69. A number of students have entered the Sixth Form from other schools and the teacher had very good knowledge of their previous attainment and weaknesses in their earlier science education; for instance, some students had very little previous experience of practical work. Steps have been taken to rectify these weaknesses so that by Year 13 there is no significant difference in the achievement of different groups, male or female, by ethnicity or by previous school.
70. Teaching is good as the teacher has good knowledge of the subject, the students and the examination syllabus. Clear explanations are given using examples that enable students to relate their learning of the subject to the real world; for instance, in studying the relative reactivity of metals. Students are given good individual support in their practical work, which is aided by the

preparations made by the effective and efficient team of laboratory technicians. Questioning is used well to link students' previous knowledge and experience to their learning; for instance, when relating the electron orbital structure of elements to their position within the periodic table. The teacher's experience means that sometimes problematic experiments such as the combustion of aluminium powder in oxygen always work well, although at times some current health and safety requirements are overlooked.

71. Students learn well as they concentrate throughout lessons paying good attention to the teacher and to each other's responses to questions. They are diligent about their written work, including homework. They demonstrate good research skills; for instance, in the selective use of material from the Internet. In practical work they collaborate well; for instance, in sharing ideas to obtain an accurate end point in a titration using starch as an indicator. They need to work carefully, especially in Year 12 where a group of 21 does independent practical work in a relatively small laboratory, and do so. They have excellent attitudes to their work and are keen to do well, many aspiring to work in the medical and other scientific professions.
72. The department has strong links with partners in higher education, commerce and industry. These include the University of Kent, colleges at Oxford and Cambridge and The Royal Society. These links have been used well to develop ongoing research projects at undergraduate level, which are continued by subsequent year groups; for instance, on the scientific applications of the form of chemiluminescence found in fireflies. This is an especially strong feature of the department's work.
73. In spite of the recent good quality refurbishment of some of the school's science laboratories, the accommodation for A-level chemistry is unsatisfactory. The laboratory is of inadequate size for the large Year 12 group and the services are arranged in a way that makes some A-level practical work difficult or impossible. Some teaching takes place in ordinary classrooms; this is undesirable.
74. The department is well led and managed by the head of science who is solely responsible for all the teaching and development of A-level chemistry. He is an enthusiastic and capable teacher who keeps up to date with the latest developments in the subject, both scientifically and concerning new syllabuses and forms of assessment, having restructured the courses in line with the requirements of AS and A2 examinations. The department is well resourced and is well supported by the technician team. However, the teacher is approaching the end of a long and distinguished career and the management of the school needs to consider how the current high standards will be maintained in the long term. On limited evidence there appears to have been good improvement since the last inspection.

BIOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Results show broad improvement over time with results in 2001 well above average in GCSE A and AS levels.
- Learning experiences are well planned and teaching is very good.
- Students' attitudes are good overall with excellent response shown to the demands of planning practical investigations.
- Students are able to work independently taking increased responsibility for their own learning.

Areas for development

- Analysis of student performance data needs to be taken further to enable both students and teachers to be able to track progress.
- Build good practice across the team through professional development to help teachers to maximise students' learning experiences.
- The department should review current accommodation to look at the likely impact of increased student numbers in future years

75. GCSE AS and A-levels results for 2001 show improvement on previous years with all A-level candidates achieving a pass grade. One half of these were grades A or B; well above average. In 2002 GCSE A level all students achieved a pass grade, but those achieving grades A or B fell to just above one quarter of candidates. All higher grades achieved in the last two years have been by female students. Ninety-five per cent of the GCSE AS candidates in 2001 achieved a pass grade with nearly one quarter of these being at grades A or B. In 2002 all GCSE AS candidates achieved a pass grade with nearly one third of these being at grades A or B. The current Year 13 group consists of 13 students from the 16 who were entered for GCSE AS in 2002.
76. The standard of work seen in lessons and in students' files is above average. In Year 13 students are generally progressing well, although analysis of their performance in the GCSE AS identifies work examined in Unit 2 of the specification as a weakness. In lessons observed students work enthusiastically discussing ideas and developing skills of critical analysis. For example, students in a Year 12 class used exemplar coursework samples and examination board marking criteria to discuss and grade two samples of work. In this way they are developing greater awareness of how to plan their own investigations, the need to justify the apparatus used and to consider health and safety factors controlling risks wherever necessary. In a later practical session these students applied their own developing skills to plan and carry out individual pilot studies to investigate the effects of enzymes on a substrate. They manipulated apparatus and refined techniques in order to identify the optimum controlled conditions prior to changing the independent variable. Lower attaining students have made limited links between protein structure and enzyme function whilst higher attaining students can explain how changes in pH affect the 3D configuration of an enzyme changing the alignment between the active site and substrate bonds.
77. Teaching is very good overall, and students' learning is, consequently, also very good. The main features seen in lessons are clear objectives, good planning, brisk pace and a range of methods to bring about effective learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and this, coupled with effective use of resources, means that learning gains are made. For instance, in a double lesson on 'muscle structure and function', very good use of the overhead projector helped students to review prior learning about the detailed structure of a sarcomere. Students are all involved through effective use of a range of questions that helped them and their teacher to identify their knowledge and understanding of this basic structure before moving on to look at differences between slow and fast muscle fibres. New learning about the structure of the neuromuscular junction enables students to start making links between prior learning about the structure and function of neurones, and relating this to more recent learning about the structure and function of muscles. A useful plenary session helps students to review their own learning and reminds them of tasks that need completing before their next taught session.
78. Students' files and notebooks are largely unchecked with marking focused on past examination questions, which help students to develop examination techniques, as well as monitoring their learning. Some Year 13 students suggest that regular assessments would help them to monitor their acquisition of new knowledge and understanding.
79. Students learn very well. They demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning. They are attentive and listen well to teacher instruction and ideas from their peers. They answer confidently, although some teacher intervention is needed to keep all students involved in such question and answer or discussion sessions. Students ask perceptive questions and are confident enough to check teaching points when they recognise conflicts in the information they are given. In practical tasks they co-operate well to make key decisions about usage of shared resources. They sustain high levels of concentration, applying themselves fully throughout lessons.
80. Independent learning skills are well developed, particularly in students in Year 13. They are able to extract relevant information from a variety of sources, although some female students are less confident in the use of the Internet to search for and retrieve information. Students find synoptic essay questions challenging, but are making some progress with these. They would benefit from increased opportunities to attempt these types of questions, perhaps on occasions without access to textbooks or notes.

81. The head of department is relatively new in post, but has already had a significant impact on teaching and learning of the subject. Two relatively new members of the department are well led and managed. There is some analysis of student performance, but this requires further development in order to provide diagnostic feedback to students about their strengths and areas for further development. The new head of department has been successful in recruiting increased student numbers for GCSE AS level in 2002.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

82. The school introduced a course in A-level design and technology in 2001. This was not inspected, but limited evidence suggests that a good start has been made, with above average standards being achieved and a high level of student enthusiasm for the course.

BUSINESS

83. The school offers courses in business studies leading to A level and the intermediate GNVQ. A-level economics is also offered. These courses were not inspected, but evidence suggests that standards are above average and that provision is of good quality. In 2002, results in the intermediate GNVQ were disappointing and the school is examining the causes of this.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

84. The school offers A-level computing, which was inspected. Students can also study for the key skills certificate in ICT. This is voluntary and includes the opportunity for distance learning.

COMPUTING

Overall the quality of provision for computing is **good**

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good and this results in students achieving well.
- The department is well managed and this helps to increase the confidence of students to develop their skills.
- Good assessment procedures keep students well informed of their achievements.
- Attitudes of students are very good.

Areas for Improvement

- Provide further opportunities for students to be involved in discussion.
- Continue the development of schemes of work to enhance teaching and learning.
- Develop formal targets for students in order that they become more aware of their potential.

85. Computing is offered at both AS and A levels. All students complete the course with the majority choosing A2. Results in the 2001 A-level computing examination were in line with the national average with 80 per cent of students passing. The results have improved since the last inspection.
86. The work of students seen in lessons, their projects and in conversations confirms that standards are above average overall and achievement is good. In Year 13 computing, students are able to write algorithms and use PASCAL effectively in their coursework. Teachers provide appropriate examples to develop the knowledge of students. Students work co-operatively in order to solve problems.
87. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In all the lessons observed, teaching was at least satisfactory with a significant proportion being good or very good. Teachers are very supportive and do much to develop the confidence of students. Where lessons are very good they provide rigour and challenge for the students. Students use the assessment criteria to assess the progress of their coursework and teachers use the criteria to provide regular monitoring of their progress. A useful assessment sheet is provided for students and this is effective in providing guidance on their

achievements. In a Year 13 lesson focusing on coursework, challenging questions were asked of the students who were designing databases. The questions enabled the students to identify improvements that needed to be made on their assignments. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge and industrial expertise to provide relevant examples that provide clarification and help understanding of difficult ideas. More opportunity should be given to allow students to participate in discussion to enable them to share their knowledge and understanding. The setting of grade and related learning targets would benefit students as this would enable them to evaluate and monitor the progress that they make during the course.

88. Leadership and management of the department are good. Teaching is organised so that students benefit from teacher's individual expertise and strengths. Teachers have worked collaboratively to develop their personal computing skills through appropriate training and support. Progress has been good since the last inspection. The course is well resourced with appropriate hardware and software, but further development and planning of schemes of work are required to enhance the good teaching and learning. The department is well supported with technical staff, which allows teachers to focus on the curriculum and teaching.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

89. The school offers A-level physical education, which was inspected.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is good; teachers have very good knowledge and very high expectations of students.
- Achievement is good.
- Very good relationships and students' excellent attitudes contribute to a very purposeful learning atmosphere.
- The department work well as a team; leadership of the department is good.

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation and facilities for PE are poor and severely restrict curriculum breadth and they have a very negative impact upon teaching and learning.
- Improved access to computers is required in lessons in order to improve investigation and presentation.
- The department development plan needs to be improved showing costing in time and finance; criteria are needed that measure success in students' results.

90. The school's first A-level course in sports/physical education studies started in 1999 with a small cohort of students gaining results in 2001; they were average, but low numbers make statistical comparisons unreliable. However, these students achieved well in relation to their standards at GCSE. The provisional A2 results for 2002 indicate that standards are improving. The number recruited to take AS level in 2002/03 has more than doubled and there are indications that standards are improving. The standards of Sixth Form students' performance in physical recreation and sport are above average with school teams and individuals being successful at district level.
91. Work seen in lessons and in students' files shows standards to be above average, reflecting a good level of achievement. Students' coursework is well-presented showing good understanding. The above average work is also reflected during AS and A2 theory lessons. Both Years 12 and 13 students have excellent attitudes to their learning, although they find the courses challenging. Year 12 students studying the psychology module relate the theory and practice well. For instance, they understand how elite games players make space and time by selecting only the important outside elements they need to know about in order to execute their skill effectively. They use technical words like 'information processing', 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic feedback' in their correct context. Year 13 students use measurements, formulae and charts to work out fitness levels

successfully. Students exhibit a good level of skill; male students play football at a good level showing good use of width and space; similarly female students show a good order of passing and handling skills in netball. In table tennis skills are well developed; both genders serve successfully from their backhands and forehands with most students using spin successfully to control the ball. Most students play competitive table tennis games at a good level. High attaining students make good use of the top spin backhand in a competitive game. Overall, students in Years 12 and 13 achieve well.

92. The quality of both teaching and learning in physical education is good. The majority of lessons seen were classroom based; due to the nature of the examination syllabus there is limited physical participation. Good teaching is usually characterised by very good subject knowledge. This was evident in the good explanations to students; for example, the development of the Welford Information Processing Model and how the theory and practice match one another. Teachers are very confident and enthusiastic about their subject and want their students to be successful. This was exemplified in a Year 13 lesson on the history of games development explored through the story of 'Tom Brown's Schooldays'; as a result, students begin to understand about athleticism and muscular Christianity and the beginning of games in schools. Teachers also have high expectations of students to get results from their research; for example, Year 13 students work at a good pace to measure skin thickness; this enables them to calculate fitness levels from a mathematical formula. Students are given opportunities for working individually or in groups as shown in a Year 13 lesson where three small groups operated independently with students making analysis of football and netball skills. Students engage in open debate with each other and, consequently, improve the depth of their learning as exemplified in a Year 13 fitness lesson. The good feature of the majority of lessons is the pace and demands made by teachers and, as a consequence, students take part with great zest and enthusiasm. This was well demonstrated in a Year 12 lesson on information processing. Student attitudes towards physical education are excellent. These contribute to their good learning and go some way to compensating for the poor physical education facilities. Students are very attentive in lessons and show a very keen interest in the subject. They develop a very good and confident working relationship with their teachers and, as a result, good learning takes place.
93. The Post-16 curriculum in physical education is well led and well managed. A strength of the department is the way staff operate as a team helping and supporting one another. Students' progress is successfully tracked through their AS and A2 courses and they are very aware of their achievement. Access to computers in lessons constrains some investigative work in school, although the majority of students have access at home. The department lacks a dedicated room for theory lessons, causing additional pressure for staff and students. The major constraint is the poor accommodation. The school site is very small and outdoor accommodation is very limited; in the absence of a school field an off site park is used for games and causes time loss. Changing rooms are cramped, dirty and unhygienic. The multipurpose hall/gym has limitations; it is used for daily assembly, examinations in autumn and early summer and school productions; these events all constrain use of the gym/hall. The foyer and dining area are used, but they are areas that are not conducive to learning as there are constant interruptions. The subject department development plan needs to be improved showing costing in time and finance and criteria that measure success in examinations.
94. Despite the poor accommodation good improvements have been made since the previous inspection; a consequence of good forethought and planning by the head of department to raise the profile and status of the subject. Many of the issues from the previous inspection have been addressed with the exception of improving the accommodation.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

95. No courses are offered in this curriculum area.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

96. A-level music is offered and was inspected. Art is also offered and evidence suggests that standards are very high, but the range of media that students can learn is limited by the accommodation and facilities. There are plans to offer a course in drama and theatre studies in the near future.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Students' attitudes are excellent.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The range and quality of extra-curricular activities are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Tasks given to students should be more carefully matched to individual needs.

97. The numbers of students entered for AS and A Levels are too small for valid statistical comparisons to be made, or for trends to be securely identified. However, results over the last three years indicate standards above the national average. Standards of work seen during the inspection indicate standards above the national average. This represents good achievement, taking into account the standards on entry to the Sixth Form. The students compose well-structured works with imaginative use of timbre and a good variety of texture. Their harmony work shows a good grasp of chord and key relationships, but some weaknesses in part writing. When listening to music the students are able to identify composition and instrumental techniques; they understand technical vocabulary and use it effectively. The students sing and play well and the groups contain some outstanding performers who play with great sensitivity and musicality. High standards are achieved in the wide range of extra-curricular activities.
98. The quality of teaching is very good and this ensures that the quality of the students' learning is also very good. The teachers have very good subject knowledge and this is well used to enhance the students' learning through illustration and demonstration. A particular strength is the wide range of specialist instrumental teaching available to the students. Planning is detailed and comprehensive with all lessons and homework carefully sequenced. This has a positive effect on the students' learning, which is well structured. Expectations are high and the students respond well to this, not just in lessons, but also in extra-curricular activities. There is very good use of resources including effective use of ICT both for presentation and as part of the composing process. This has a very positive effect on the quality of learning, particularly for students who do not play keyboard instruments. Attitudes to the subject are excellent. The students are keen and concentrate well and behaviour in lessons and extra-curricular work is outstanding with students showing very good rehearsal discipline. These attitudes mean that students also work well independently and acquire skills and knowledge both through research and practise. The teaching is lively and charismatic and is well supported by good relationships and management of students. Students are given a high level of individual attention, including additional tutorials outside lesson times. Tasks set are always relevant to the students' development, but sometimes could be better focused on individual student's particular needs.
99. There has been a good level of improvement since the last inspection. At that time the accommodation was described as poor; it has been significantly improved and is now very good. High standards have been maintained both in class and extra-curricular work and the quality of students' learning has improved. This results from very good leadership and management by an energetic and committed head of department. The department contributes strongly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students and is one of the strengths of the school.

HUMANITIES

100. A-level courses are offered in geography, which was inspected, and in history, religious studies, government and politics and sociology, which were not. Evidence suggests that standards are above average in these subjects and that provision is good. In government and politics at AS level in 2001 standards were lower.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Teachers have very good specialist knowledge and high expectations of their students.
- Students have very good and positive attitudes to the subject and teacher/student relationships are good; both enhance learning.
- Teaching is good so students achieve well.
- Teachers show great enthusiasm for geography, which is transmitted to students.
- The department work well as a team; leadership of the department is good.

Areas for improvement

- Extending good practice through more regular and consistent monitoring of teaching.
- In lessons there is not enough access to computers for research.
- The range of tasks is not wide enough to meet the needs of all students.
- An improved range of methods is needed to involve students in their learning.
- The development plan needs improving by linking it to students' examination success.

101. Over the last four years similar numbers of students have taken geography courses in the Sixth Form. It is very rare for a student not to complete the course; the A-level pass rate, over these four years, has been almost 100 per cent. Standards in the 2001 GCSE A level were above average with one half of the group gaining the higher A/B grades. However, there were some gender differences with better results gained by females. The recent 2002 A2 results show further improvement as students gained higher grades. Students' results in the 2002 AS examination included a high proportion of A/B grades. Students achieved well in terms of their transition from GCSE work. Improved support for students with target C to E grades would further enhance standards.
102. In work seen standards in both Years 12 and 13 are above average and students are achieving well in relation to their standards on starting the course. Years 12 and 13 are successfully building on the work and skills developed in Years 10 and 11. For example, in map work, they show a good understanding of coordinates, signs and symbols, which allows them to move quickly onto a village comparison. A Year 12 lesson on river erosion was able to progress rapidly as a consequence of good foundations developed in the GCSE course. In another Year 12 lesson the skills of observation, analysis and evaluation were well developed through comparing two Yorkshire settlements. Already Year 12 students, eight weeks into their course, clearly understand the extra demands of the new course; many are already starting to show a good level of maturity and are achieving well. In a Year 13 lesson on 'globalisation' students listened to each other and argued positively to reach a consensus. Students use numerical skills appropriately as seen in a lesson on global trade where students had to analyse global manufacturing. Geographical words like 'linear', 'aspect' and 'quaternary industries' are correctly used. Most students recall and apply knowledge well. Many Year 13 students show a secure knowledge of atmospheric circulation and the effect of the Hadley, Ferrel and Polar cells. Students' coursework is well presented and shows a good understanding of environmental and human issues.
103. The quality of both teaching and learning in geography is good. Very good subject knowledge is evident in the very good explanations which teachers give to students; for example, describing the process of rural decline and strategies to overcome the problems. The tasks provided for students also demonstrate a clear understanding of the needs of the different course modules. However, the range of tasks planned is, at times, not wide enough to meet the needs of all students; this was seen in a Year 12 lesson on 'valley erosion'. More active and visual learning is needed to involve students in the learning process. Teachers are very confident and enthusiastic about geography

and transmit this to their students. Lessons are well planned, but learning objectives are not always clear and are often not shared with the students. Opportunities are given to students to work individually, in small groups and to use their initiative. However, there is limited access to computers in lessons, although many get access in private study time in school and at home. Challenging and probing questions are a strong feature of the teaching, as observed in a Year 13 lesson on 'globalisation'. This engages students well in open debate with one another and contributes to the depth of their learning. Many students find the work challenging, as seen in a Year 12 lesson where they had to analyse reasons for rural decline. Lower attaining students find some of the concepts difficult. Students are very attentive in lessons and show a keen interest in the subject; their attitudes are very good. They respond very well to the relationships established by their teachers and behave in a very mature and committed manner. Male and female students are well integrated into the classes as committed equals; they co-operate with each other very well in group work, sharing responsibilities.

104. Leadership and management are good. All teachers have a good knowledge of the Sixth Form examination courses, which positively impacts upon standards. Assessment, monitoring and tracking the progress of students is good and helps to drive up standards. However, improved targeting for students with projected C to E grades would enable improved support to further enhance standards. Teaching is monitored, but not with regularity or consistency. The department development plan needs improvement to include time and financial costs and, especially, links to examination results.
105. Good improvements have been made since the previous inspection. Examination results have continued to improve as a result of the improvements made in the quality of teaching and learning and demands and challenges made by teachers upon their students. Teachers are working very hard together as a team in order to improve the quality of geography; they show a capacity and enthusiasm for further raising standards.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

106. A-level courses are offered in English literature and French, which were inspected, and German, which was not. Evidence suggests that standards and teaching in German are good.

ENGLISH

The quality of provision for English in the Sixth Form is **very good**.

Strengths

- Levels of attainment are well above the national average.
- Teaching is good. Teachers know their subject very well and are able to communicate their enthusiasm for it.
- Students have very good attitudes to the subject. They work hard and achieve high standards in their written work.

Areas for improvement

- More systematic use of ICT resources, to support students' own learning.
- Teachers could create more opportunities for all students to explore ideas in open discussion.

107. The English department caters for some 53 students. This is slightly fewer than in the previous two years, but numbers have not varied greatly over time. GCSE A-level and AS-level courses are offered in English literature only. A small number of students in Year 12 also resit GCSE English each year. It is proposed to expand provision with the introduction of an AS-level theatre studies course from September 2003. Lessons for AS level and A level teaching groups were sampled during the inspection. Students are well motivated and very few leave their chosen course before the end.
108. Standards in English on entry to the Sixth Form are above average, reflecting the pattern of high attainment at GCSE in the subject. About one half of the students also join the course from other schools. They are normally expected to have at least a B grade pass in English literature at GCSE. In 2001, results at A level in English literature were well above the national average. All students passed at grades A-E, as they had done consistently over the previous four years. Over two-thirds of students gained passes at the highest grades of A-B. In 2002, all students again passed at grades A-E, but a lower proportion, just over one third, achieved the highest grades. Results in 2001 for the new AS-level course in English literature were also very good. At the end of Year 12, almost all students obtained a pass at grades A-E in the subject. Over 40 per cent gained the highest A or B grades. In 2002, whilst the overall pass rate was maintained, about one quarter of students achieved the highest grades.
109. Work seen during the inspection confirms that standards in English are above average. Oral work is less well developed than other aspects. Nevertheless, standards of speaking are good. Students are expected to research and prepare topics on a regular basis, in order to present considered opinions to the class, either individually or as part of a group. Most are able to put forward well-argued cases, justifying them relevantly when questioned. In one Year 13 class, students coped effectively with the challenge of a hot-seating exercise, when they were required to adopt the perspective of Shakespeare's 'Othello'. They had prepared well and showed a good understanding of the character's motivation. However, many students lack confidence in presenting their own thoughts more spontaneously. Wider discussion and exploration of ideas is limited as a consequence. Reading skills are well developed in the interpretation and evaluation of literature studied in both year groups. In one lesson observed, Year 12 students responded perceptively to their reading of the modern novel, 'Knowledge of Angels' by Jill Paton Walsh. They were able to use their knowledge of character, setting and style to define the treatment of major themes in the novel with some insight and understanding. Critical writing is also very good. Students are able to analyse novels, plays and poetry studied in some depth, justifying their ideas well with detailed reference to the text. The great majority plan their work carefully and produce well-structured essays, which show clear engagement with and personal response to the literature studied. One Year 13 coursework essay, comparing Orwell's '1984' with Huxley's 'Brave New World' was particularly impressive, showing considerable maturity and sophistication in its exploration of the texts. All work is presented to a high standard, with good levels of technical accuracy. Many students make effective use of ICT skills; for instance, when word-processing their coursework essays.
110. The achievement of individual students is good both at A level and at AS level. Students of all abilities work hard throughout their course, responding to the quality of teaching offered with effort and thought. The great majority reach or exceed their predicted grades in examinations.

Comparison with national analyses of examination results shows that overall progress is in line with students elsewhere who start their A-level course at broadly the same level of attainment.

111. Teaching in the Sixth Form is good. Teachers know their subject very well and are able to communicate their own enthusiasm for literature effectively. Planning and preparation for lessons is thorough and detailed. The lessons themselves are characterised by friendly and constructive relationships between staff and students. Teachers' expectations are high, especially in the range and development of written work. Assessment of students' work is very good. Teachers give prompt and helpful feedback, making full written comments on essays and evaluating strengths and weaknesses against the detailed assessment criteria laid down for the relevant course. They monitor students' work on a regular basis and are prepared to give additional personal help and guidance where it is needed. In some instances, there could be greater pace and variety in lessons, however. The basic pattern adopted gives time for students to prepare and present their ideas, followed by teacher-led questioning. This can create a somewhat deliberate and formal response. More opportunities to involve the full range of students could be created, to help them to explore ideas more fully by testing and challenging each other in open discussion.
112. The quality of teaching helps to promote good learning. Students have very good attitudes to the subject and show high levels of interest and concentration in lessons. The department encourages them to develop independent learning skills, through their own reading, note making and research. They are provided with study guidelines and information packs on specific topics at the beginning of each term, which help them to plan their time and develop wider reading. In addition, there are opportunities to attend in-depth study days, organised by external providers. Current plans include attendance at lectures on Keats for Year 13 students and on Chaucer for Year 12. Students also have a good knowledge of assessment criteria for their course, which helps to focus their efforts and improves evaluation of their own achievement. They have access to the Internet through the school library, and a range of CD-ROMs is available to aid research on Shakespeare. The department has, however, identified a need to develop more systematic use of ICT resources in order to further support students' own learning.
113. Leadership and management of English are good. The head of department sets a clear educational direction for work in the Sixth Form, with a strong emphasis on evaluating strategies for teaching and learning in order to maintain high levels of attainment. Planning is detailed and thorough. Staff as a whole are committed to continuing improvement. They collaborate closely to share good practice. Team teaching takes place in some lessons. Whilst all staff have specialist qualifications, opportunities for further training and development are taken up regularly. In particular, importance is attached to keeping up to date with changes in examination and assessment requirements at this level. Other factors are mostly positive. Teaching rooms are satisfactory for the purpose. The furniture may be arranged flexibly to suit seminar style discussions, and there is access to television, video and other equipment. Students feel well supported and value the staff's work, not least in giving substantially of their own time to provide additional help where needed, and through organising a range of curriculum enrichment activities including theatre trips and study days. The department also takes overall responsibility for producing the upper school play, this year a production of the musical 'Grease', and runs two debating societies for sixth formers.

FRENCH

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

Strengths

- There has been a 100 per cent pass rate at A level over the past five years.
- Teachers have very good personal language skills, which both challenge the students and set a good example.
- Students show the capacity for independent learning and research.

Areas for development

- The extension of target setting to include language-specific targets.
- The enrichment of the taught curriculum.

114. In the 2001 examination at A level, results in French were broadly in line with national averages. For the fifth consecutive year all students were awarded a grade. Results in 2002 matched the levels and pass rates of previous years and show satisfactory achievement over the two years of the course. Students' results in French are a good match to results in their other subjects.
115. The standards of work seen of current students are good. They have a sound foundation in grammar that underpins all their work. A few students from other schools who followed a different GCSE course are less secure. The teachers' sustained use of French accustoms students to the pace and intonation of the language. As a result, Year 13 students could pick out key information from the recording of a discussion about nuclear power. In Year 12 students can readily follow lessons delivered in French. In speaking, students have the confidence to offer answers in French and they communicate clearly even where there are simple language faults. In Year 12 students can express their opinions on diet and health and give their reasons. Oral work benefits from pair work and the availability of a French assistant. Oral work could be enhanced with specific tasks on pronunciation. In Year 13 students write at length for a variety of purposes, showing good planning and a breadth of phrase and vocabulary to improve the style. Students in both years show good achievement. Students on the AS level at the end of their second month in the Sixth Form have largely adjusted to the expectations of independent learning. In the preparation of topics they use the Internet for research. The learning of students in both years is enhanced by their excellent attitudes and capacity for independent learning.
116. Teaching is very good. A strength of the teaching is the level of challenge and expectation. The teachers' sustained use of French presents a constant challenge. Their insights into the requirements of the examination enable very specific guidance on the features that attract higher grades. To support this students are guided to useful phrases to add variety to the presentation of an argument. From the first topic in Year 12 students are directed to answer at length. In all the topics teachers expect the students to use the Internet for research. Good relationships and supportive attitudes create a good learning environment. Marking is thorough with helpful comments. Specific target setting to help students to focus on their individual areas for improvement would complement the already high expectations of the teaching.
117. The leadership and management of French are good. The head of department sets a good example through his own commitment and teaching. The variety that results from the shared teaching of groups enriches the students' learning. The monitoring of teaching is established. It is currently limited and could usefully be extended to include mutual observation both within the school and in other schools. This would help to identify and share good practice to further enhance standards. At the last inspection the only issue for the Sixth Form was some underachievement at A level. Results have now improved and the overall improvement is satisfactory.
118. The focus of the inspection in the Sixth Form was French, but one lesson of German in Year 12 was sampled. The group is making very good progress in bridging the gap from GCSE to the requirements of AS level. Students benefit from experienced teaching that is establishing a sound base of grammar for their further studies. They show positive attitudes and have a very good recall of the work covered. These factors give them confidence in speaking German. Results at A level for the last two years have been broadly in line with national averages.