

INSPECTION REPORT

TRINITY HIGH SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

Redditch

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 132819

Headteacher: Mrs M Barton

Reporting inspector: Mr J Bald
17932

Dates of inspection: 17th to 20th March 2003

Inspection number: 249834

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of students: 13 to 18

Gender of students: Mixed

School address: Easemore Road
Redditch

Postcode: B98 8HB

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs P Witherspoon

Date of previous inspection: This is the school's first inspection

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17932	John Bald	Registered inspector	English as an additional language	The school's results and students' achievements How well are the students taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9756	Ken Parsons	Lay inspector		Students' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22958	Terry Bailess	Team inspector	English	
23528	Andrew Bird	Team inspector	Mathematics	
2711	Alan Jarvis	Team inspector	Science	
21806	Pat Swinnerton	Team inspector	Design and technology	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to students?
13122	Stephanie Matthews	Team inspector	Business studies Law	
20119	Tony Bell	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)	
27666	John Dockrell	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
4223	Garth Collard	Team inspector	History	
23324	Syliva Greenland	Team inspector	Geography	
30518	Michael Johnson	Team inspector	Art and design	
27662	Elizabeth Schofield	Team inspector	Religious education	
31660	Marianne Young	Team inspector	Music	

1172	Philip Winch	Team inspector	Special educational needs Educational inclusion, including race equality	
32400	Maureen Champness	Team inspector	Psychology Citizenship	
25748	Roger Moyle	Team inspector	Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Trinity High School is a mixed comprehensive school for students aged 13 to 18. It is of average size, with 862 students, including 139 in the sixth form. Four-fifths of students are white, and a fifth have minority ethnic backgrounds. Most of these students are Asian, and have English as an additional language, but very few are in the early stages of learning English. An above average proportion of students has special educational needs, including a significant minority who have serious difficulties with learning and behaviour. The standards reached by students joining the school in Year 9 are, overall, well below average. Some students come from favourable backgrounds, but their social and economic circumstances are below average overall, and some have disturbed lives outside school. The school has operated on its present site, with its permanently appointed staff, since September 2002.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Trinity High School provides good education. It enables students with very diverse learning needs to make satisfactory, and at times good, progress, and makes good provision for their personal development. The overall quality of teaching is good. The best is very good, and most is well adapted to students' learning needs. Very good leadership and management have built a strong sense of teamwork and common purpose in a short time, and the school has established a successful sixth form. The cost per student is well below average. Trinity High School provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Very good leadership, management and teamwork have set up the new school very well.
- There is much good teaching, particularly in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form.
- Relationships among students are good, and all are involved in the school's work.
- Provision for students with special educational needs is good, with some excellent features.
- There is very good additional provision for learning in sport, art, music and work with computers.
- The school has built good relationships with all sections of the community.
- The sixth form is well organised and provides good education.

What could be improved

- Some teaching is not fully adapted to the needs of the students.
- Most students behave well, but some do not behave properly and have poor attitudes to work.
- Some aspects of the curriculum, timetable and grouping of students are not fully effective.
- The use of computers to promote learning needs further development.
- Some students have very poor attendance, and there is significant lateness in the morning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the school's first inspection.

STANDARDS

No students from the fully re-organised school have yet taken GCSE or A-level examinations. Some, but not all, Year 13 students took Advanced Subsidiary (AS) examinations in the school in 2002. The school's analysis of these results shows good achievement in relation to the students' results at GCSE, but it is not yet possible to compare them with results of other schools. Standards in the sixth

form during the inspection were broadly average overall, and above average in law, business studies, psychology and ICT in Year 13, and English. Overall, standards in the sixth form represent good achievement.

Standards in Year 11 during the inspection were below average, but varied considerably between subjects, with average and sometimes better standards in response to the strongest teaching. In English, students reach close to average standards in their understanding of texts, but some have weaknesses in grammatical skills, spelling and vocabulary. Standards in Year 11 are well below average in mathematics and science. Some higher-attaining students reach good standards in mathematics and science, but many average and lower-attaining students have only a basic understanding of these subjects, and some coursework is not completed properly. Overall, standards in Year 11 represent satisfactory achievement. During the inspection, standards in Year 10, the first year group to join the school at the normal time of transfer, were higher than those in Year 11.

Results in Year 9 tests in 2002 were below average in English, mathematics and science, but represented good achievement in relation to these students' test results in Year 6. Standards in work seen during the inspection were below average in mathematics and English, but well below average in science. However, students were reaching average standards in several subjects, including geography, religious education, music, physical education and citizenship. Standards in Year 9 overall represent satisfactory achievement from students' starting points.

Students with learning difficulties achieve well in relation to their learning needs, and sometimes very well in vocational work. The achievement of students with English as an additional language is satisfactory overall, with good achievement from higher-attaining students, but some weakness in science where older students have problems with specialist language. The achievement of some other students with minority ethnic backgrounds is held back by poor attitudes. By Year 11, the achievements of gifted and talented students are satisfactory. They do very well in some subjects, such as physical education and music, but are sometimes under-extended. There is as yet no trend in the school's results over time, but it has set suitable targets for future examination and test results. Overall, achievement is satisfactory, and the school has good plans to improve it.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Most students want to come to school, and are willing to work and accept responsibility. A minority have negative attitudes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most students behave well, in and out of lessons. There is little bullying, but some students misbehave, and show disrespect to staff.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Teachers have good relationships with students, and the school provides satisfactory opportunities for them to take responsibility.
Attendance	Most students attend regularly, but a significant minority have poor attendance, and much time is lost to holidays taken in term time. Many students are late for morning registration. Attendance is therefore unsatisfactory, despite the school's extensive efforts to improve it.

Students understand each other's points of view, and racial harmony is very good. The community tutor promotes positive attitudes from all students. Many students do not use their planners effectively.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students in:	Year 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

Teaching in English is satisfactory in Year 9, and good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers enable students to understand a broad range of texts, particularly in GCSE coursework, but some teaching does not put enough emphasis on accuracy. Teaching in mathematics and science is satisfactory overall throughout the school, with good teaching in some lessons, but a lack of challenge and variety in others. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, but is not consistently planned across all subjects. Teaching in the sixth form is good overall, and often very good. It meets students' needs well.

Very good teaching in geography, religious education and business studies lead to enthusiastic and effective learning, and rising standards. Good teaching in ICT and modern languages is helping students to make good progress from low starting points. The good overall quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 has an impact on standards in several subjects, including design and technology, physical education, art and design, and history. Where teaching is satisfactory, it leads to sound basic learning, but is not matched to the needs of all students in the class. Teaching in a very small number of lessons is unsatisfactory, due to a lack of challenge and weak management of students. There are some gaps in homework, and some teachers allow work to be left unfinished.

Most students work well, but some students' learning is held back by their poor attitudes and behaviour. There is, however, very good specialist teaching for students with behavioural as well as learning difficulties. Gifted and talented students are fully stretched in some subjects, but not in others. Overall, teaching is meeting the very wide range of needs of the students in the main school to a satisfactory standard. Its significant strengths give it a good capacity for further improvement.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum includes all National Curriculum subjects. It has good features, but teaching time for some subjects is short.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Good. Specialist teaching is very good, and organisation is excellent. Support and teaching are good in most subjects, but not in all.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Good. Students have good opportunities to develop their first language as well as English. They make good progress, though some technical aspects of their English could be improved further.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Students have good opportunities to reflect on key issues in the modern world. They are encouraged to become mature and responsible, and to develop a sense of social responsibility. Students develop good understanding of the range of cultures in modern society.
How well the school cares for its students	Good. Care for students' safety and well-being is good, with very good features. Guidance on progress in students' work is satisfactory.

The school has formed an effective partnership with parents, who have a positive view of its work. However, a minority of parents do not support their children's education effectively. Careers education is very good, and there are good opportunities for learning outside lessons, particularly in sports, performance and ICT. Guidance for students with learning and behavioural difficulties is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and manage-	Very good. Strong personal leadership, backed up by effective

ment by the headteacher and other key staff	management systems, set up the new school very well and gained the confidence of all sections of the community.
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How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors have appointed all of the staff. They are in touch with all aspects of the school's work, and contribute fully to its direction.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school uses all available data to track and evaluate the progress and performance of all groups of students.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school uses all resources well to promote high standards and the involvement of all students.

The school is well staffed with teachers, teaching assistants and other educational support staff. It has adequate accommodation and learning resources, including computer suites.

Performance management, financial management, and arrangements for the professional development of all staff are particular strengths. The management of provision for special educational needs is excellent, and there is very good subject management in physical education, design and technology, geography and religious education. Governors apply the principles of providing as well as obtaining best value for money effectively, although their freedom of action in this area remains limited by the demands of re-organisation.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are expected to work hard and do their best. • They enjoy school and make good progress. • The school is approachable. • The school is led and managed well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework. • Information for parents. • Co-operation with parents.

There was a high proportion of positive views from all sections of the community. Inspectors strongly agree with most of the positive views, though they share the headteacher's view that there is scope for improving standards and progress. Inspectors found homework to be satisfactory overall during the inspection, but with some gaps. They consider that most information for parents is very good, but that there should be more detail on what has been achieved and what needs to be improved in students' annual reports. They consider that the school does everything in its power to co-operate with parents, but that a minority of parents do not do enough to co-operate with the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form has 139 students. It offers a broad range of AS, A-level and intermediate and advanced vocational courses. There is no minimum entry requirement, but students are guided towards courses that meet their learning needs and give them a reasonable chance of success. A high proportion of students have minority ethnic backgrounds. Many have English as an additional language, though all have appropriate English skills for their courses. Overall, standards reached by students joining the sixth form are below average, and a few have special educational needs. The social and economic circumstances of sixth form students are less favourable than in most schools, and the proportion entitled to free school meals is well above average. It is too early to detect any trends in the size of the sixth form or in the numbers choosing to stay on. Early indications are that the drop-out rate is low, and over a third of students joined from other schools as part of re-organisation. At the time of the inspection, the school was bound by a local authority pledge to allow all students to continue with the courses that they had started before the re-organisation, and some teaching groups are very small. There are few collaborative arrangements with other schools.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

Trinity High School sixth form provides good education. Its academic and vocational courses meet the needs of all students who wish to continue with their education after the age of 16, and there is effective commitment to equal opportunities for all. While there is as yet no clear evidence from A-level examinations, students did well in AS examinations in 2002, and standards during the inspection represented good progress from their starting points at GCSE. Teaching and learning are good, and very good in several subjects, including vocational courses. Very good leadership and management ensure consistency in teaching, and development planning is well balanced and perceptive. However, the range of courses places much heavier demands on staffing than are met by its funding. As a result, despite its many strengths, the sixth form is not yet cost-effective.

Strengths

- Very effective leadership and management have set up a good sixth form.
- There is a good range of courses that meets the needs of students well.
- Teaching and learning are good, and often very good.
- Students receive effective and regular feedback on standards and progress.
- Standards are above average in several subjects, including law, business studies and English.
- A high proportion of students complete their courses successfully.

What could be improved

- A small minority of students do not attend regularly, and do not work hard enough.
- The use of ICT is underdeveloped in some subjects.
- Some teaching groups are too small to provide value for money.
- Below average teaching time in Year 12 is affecting learning in mathematics.

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	Satisfactory. Students work hard and achieve broadly average standards. The range of teaching and learning is rather narrow.
Biology	Satisfactory. By Year 13, standards are below average but achievement is satisfactory. Some students in Year 12 do not work hard enough, and some teaching is narrowly based.
Business studies	Very good. Above average standards stem from very good teaching and students' hard work. Leadership and management are very good.
Information and communication technology	Good. Standards in Year 13 are broadly average. All students achieve well as a result of good teaching and their own consistent work.
Health and social care	Very good. The course and its teaching are very well adapted to students' needs. Standards are average, and sometimes better.
Geography	Very good. Imaginative and challenging teaching enables students to reach average standards. Achievement is very good.
Law	Very good. Standards are above average and the subject is taught very well. There is a very clear focus on legal language and literacy.
Psychology	Very good. Well-planned and effective teaching results in above average standards and very good achievement by Year 13.
English	Good. Teaching is good, with some very good features. Most students work hard, and reach above average standards. Achievement is good.

The standard of other work seen was similar to that in focus subjects. It was broadly average overall, but above average in several subjects, including French, history and religious education. These standards show good, and sometimes very good, achievement.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Very good. Guidance and support are well informed and closely related to students' needs. Careers guidance is very effective.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Very good. Strong personal leadership and well-designed and consistent management systems keep the head of the sixth form and headteacher in close touch with all areas of the sixth form, and ensure a high level of consistency in its work. The range of courses and additional activities are very effective in promoting equal opportunities.

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"> Teaching is good, and students are challenged to do their best. Teachers are accessible to students and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Careers advice. Information on their progress. Activities outside lessons.

willing to help them. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are helped settle in to the sixth form and adapt to new patterns of work. Students enjoy being in the sixth form. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's response to students' views.
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A substantial majority of students expressed positive views about the sixth form. Inspectors agree with them, though they think that a small minority of students need still more support when they start their courses. Inspectors found that most students receive very good information on their progress, and that careers advice was good over the course of their sixth form career. Inspectors found activities outside lessons to be good overall, and that the school listened to students' views and took account of them.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

1. The standards reached by students joining the school range from well above average to very low. Overall they are well below average, and at the time of the inspection some students had had their education disrupted by recent re-organisation of their middle schools as well as their secondary schools. The proportion of students with English as an additional language is much higher than in most schools. However, few are in the early stages of learning English, and they begin with broadly similar standards to other students. Other students with minority ethnic backgrounds have similar patterns of standards when they join the school. The proportion of students with special educational needs is above average, and some have considerable difficulty with managing their behaviour. Students joining Year 9 have particular weaknesses in writing, chiefly in vocabulary and constructing sentences. There are also significant weaknesses in speaking and listening skills, and well below average standards in ICT.
2. No students have taken GCSE since the school was fully established, with its full complement of permanent staff, on its present site. Students currently in Year 11 joined the school in Year 10. It is, therefore, not yet possible to assess fully the impact of the school's work on students' achievement over time. The overall standard of work seen in Year 11 during the inspection was below average. It was well below average in mathematics and science, particularly among lower-attaining students. Some higher-attaining students were achieving good standards in these subjects, but many others had not developed their skills and understanding of key concepts beyond a basic level, and in some cases progress was held up by poor attitudes from students. Overall standards in English, including those in speaking and listening, are below average. Standards in English coursework were close to national average levels, though there were few high grades. Students are good at grasping the main ideas of texts they read, but have weaknesses in vocabulary in constructing sentences. Standards in Year 11 are above average in physical education, religious education and business studies, and broadly average in art and design, geography and history. Effective teaching in other subjects was leading to standards that were below average rather than well below average. Achievement in Year 11 is satisfactory, overall, in view of the standards with which students join the school, with good features in some subjects. Standards in Year 10, where students had started at the school at the normal time, were better than in Year 11. These students had built on the standards they had achieved in Year 9 national tests, and were continuing to achieve well.
3. Results in Year 9 national tests in 2002 were below average in all subjects, but represented good achievement from the standards these students had reached in Year 6, particularly in mathematics. The standard of work during the inspection was below average overall, but there were significant variations between subjects. Standards in English are below average in Year 9, chiefly because of weaknesses in writing. Standards in mathematics are below, but not well below average. Higher-attaining students often reach good standards, but average and lower-attaining students have significant weaknesses in their number work. Standards in science are well below average. Students understand the principles of investigation, but their work lacks precision. Higher-attaining students do not reach above average standards, and those with English as an additional language are held back by weaknesses in understanding technical language. Standards in other subjects are below average, except for geography, religious education and physical education, where they are broadly average as a result of very effective teaching. Standards in music are also just within the average range in Year 9, but there is a very wide range of attainment between students. Students are also reaching broadly average standards in citizenship. Overall, the standard of work in Year 9 during the inspection represented satisfactory achievement after the short time students had spent in the school.
4. Students with special educational needs make good overall progress. They do very well in response to specialist teaching in the learning support department, where they make significant progress in their social skills as well as in their work. Their progress in other lessons ranges from satisfactory to good, depending on the degree to which work matches their needs, and, to a lesser extent, on the amount of support available for students with behavioural difficulties. The

achievements of gifted and talented students are satisfactory overall. In some subjects, notably music, art and design, ICT and physical education, they have scope to develop their skills and talents well. In others, including English, mathematics and science, they make satisfactory progress, but are not always given work that extends them fully.

5. The achievements of students with English as an additional language are similar overall to those of other students, and are satisfactory. Some higher-attaining students produce work of high quality, particularly when they have a particular interest in a subject. However, many, particularly girls, rarely contribute to discussion. A significant number have weak literacy skills, mostly in vocabulary and sentence construction, that prevent them from reaching high grades in most subjects, and particularly in science. The achievement of other students with minority ethnic backgrounds is satisfactory overall. Some do very well, but a minority of older students with minority ethnic backgrounds do not do themselves justice because of poor behaviour and attitudes to work.
6. The very wide range of skills, talents and learning and social needs among the students poses a difficult challenge to the staff of the new school. In her evidence to the inspection team, the headteacher described overall achievement in the school as satisfactory. Inspectors share this view. The school has set realistic targets for raising standards in Year 9 tests and at GCSE, and is well placed to meet them.

Sixth form

7. There are as yet no A-level results from the re-organised school, and AS results from only a limited range of subjects. National comparative data were not available for these at the time of the inspection. Standards in work seen during the inspection were broadly average overall, and represent good achievement from students' GCSE results, which are generally below average. Standards in law, business studies, English literature and psychology and ICT in Year 13 were above average. Students were reaching broadly average standards in geography, psychology in Year 12, and health and social care. There were below average standards, however, in biology, and in Year 12 in ICT.
8. Achievement in the sixth form is good; it is best among higher-attaining students and those taking vocational courses. These courses attract significant numbers of students who have lower GCSE results, and are very well adapted to develop these students' key learning skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. The small number of students with special educational needs in the sixth form achieve well, sometimes gaining high grades in vocational courses. Achievement among students with minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, is good overall. They are often among the highest-attaining students, but some find difficulty with technical aspects of English at advanced levels.
9. A small minority of lower-attaining students do not attend regularly, and do not work as they should outside lessons. This is seriously jeopardising these students' chances of examination success. Overall, achievement in the sixth form is boosted by most students' very good attitudes to work. The standard of work seen during the inspection indicates that the sixth form has got off to a very good start, and is in a strong position to build future success.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Overall, students' behaviour and attitudes to school are satisfactory. Students behave well in most lessons, because most teachers manage students well, so that they do not have to spend too much time maintaining order. Where the teaching is very good, teachers plan in advance to deal with minor misbehaviour, and students behave very well. For example, in a Year 10 food technology lesson, the teacher's very good relationship with the students, combined with work that was well matched to their abilities, enabled them to enjoy the practical work and get a sense of achievement from it. However, in a minority of lessons, the uncooperative behaviour of some students hinders teaching and learning. Students in these lessons talk while the teacher is talking, and interfere with the course of the lesson by calling out. Examples were seen in mathematics, music, drama and personal, social and health education.

11. Students generally behave well moving between classes and at breaktimes. They treat each other with respect, with little friction between year groups. No bullying or harassment was seen during the inspection and such incidents are relatively rare. Students and their parents are confident that the school deals effectively with any such problems brought to its attention. In the last school year, there were 72 fixed term and 8 permanent exclusions. This school year to date, there have been 63 fixed term and just one permanent exclusion. The high rate of permanent exclusion in the year prior to the inspection was justified by the seriousness of the issues raised by these students' behaviour. Most of the exclusions are of boys, and no ethnic group is disproportionately represented. The school has a few students on a college-based course designed for students at risk of permanent exclusion. In general, the students look after the school reasonably well and there are no graffiti, although there is significant litter. Students find it safe to leave possessions in lockers within the school.
12. There are good relationships among students of all backgrounds and beliefs. This is the outcome of careful and highly skilled work by the headteacher, community tutor and all teachers. Most students understand the impact of their actions on others, and reflect this in their behaviour. Where there are opportunities to take initiative students do so, for example through the year councils. However, there are rather fewer such opportunities than in most schools, and councils do not meet frequently. Some students, often the highest-attaining, show very good initiative in using the school's facilities, including library computers, for research and individual study. Others depend too heavily on the teacher, expecting to be closely guided to complete a task. In a Year 9 English lesson, for example, some students found it very difficult to get started on a piece of descriptive writing without very explicit guidelines from the teacher. Students in all years are prepared to help teachers, for example by sorting out textbooks, collecting in books, or clearing up after a practical session.
13. Most students like coming to Trinity High School. They want to see it develop a good reputation within Redditch, and to feel pride in being part of the school community. Overall, students' attitudes to school are satisfactory. Most are prepared to participate in lessons, and this makes a positive contribution to their learning. Many take advantage of the good range of lunchtime and after-school clubs on offer. A small group of girls was keen to provide the introductory music for a Year 9 assembly, for example. However, some students lack enthusiasm and a minority have negative attitudes. These students are chiefly responsible for the above average levels of absence and lateness. For example, in the current school year, an eighth of students have attendance rates of below 80 per cent, and in one Year 11 science lesson, only 13 out of 24 students attended. This level of non-attendance clearly affects progress. Most students have high levels of attendance, and most parents support their children by ensuring that they arrive on time and explaining absences. However, some parents do not provide explanations for absence, and some condone truancy. A significant proportion of absence is caused by holidays taken in term time. A large number of students arrive late during morning registration, although most are in school by the start of the first lesson. There is some lateness to lessons during the day, although some of this is caused by the time taken to move across the site. Most students, however, move quickly and sensibly between lessons.

Sixth form

14. Almost all sixth form students have good attitudes to learning and to other activities. They are happy and enjoy being a valued part of the school community. Relationships are good overall, and often very good, both amongst the students and with their teachers and tutors. Students show respect for the views of others and participate maturely in debate. For example, in a Year 13 philosophy lesson they worked diligently and with considerable respect for the views of the few Muslim girls and the lone boy in the class. This creates an atmosphere in which they help and learn from each other.
15. Most students participate keenly in lessons, demonstrating a clear interest in understanding new concepts and in solving problems. In almost all lessons, they show sustained concentration and a willingness to persevere, and most take a pride in their coursework. Some students, however, do not take an active enough part in discussions, and depend too much on the teacher's lead in their learning. A few told inspectors that they expected teachers to do even more for them, a view that inspectors did not share. A very small number of students do not attend regularly or

work as they should. Their number is significant in Year 12 biology. Overall, however, attendance in the sixth form is satisfactory, and significantly better than in the main school.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. In most lessons, teachers use good knowledge and understanding of their subject to plan interesting activities, with clear learning goals that students understand. Teachers manage classes well, foster good relationships, sustain a good pace of work and adapt work effectively to the range of learning needs in the class. Except where teaching is very good, however, they do not refer consistently to the National Curriculum level descriptions or equivalent measures to ensure that work is matched closely to what students already know, understand and can do. A quarter of teaching in the main school is very good. Teaching in these lessons is very well managed, with potential problems identified in advance and, where necessary, dealt with at an early stage. Topics are presented in an interesting form, often based on relevant problems that most students want to solve. The work often focuses on involve ethical and moral issues, such as deciding who is responsible for the problems of high-rise flats. The overall quality of teaching during the inspection was very good in geography and in religious education. In both subjects, it was having a significant impact on standards as well as on the quality of learning.
17. Where the teaching is satisfactory rather than good, work enables students to make reasonable progress, but does not meet the needs of some students in the class. Some work does not extend higher-attaining students sufficiently, and some lower-attaining students do not receive work that offers a suitable balance of challenge and support. The range of learning resources in these lessons is narrow, and tasks for students do not contain the focus and interest provided elsewhere by problem solving. Some well-planned lessons are less effective than they should be because teachers tolerate minor misbehaviour, such as calling out. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, unchallenging work leads students to lose interest, and behaviour is not managed effectively. Students told inspectors that learning in a minority of lessons was held back by some students' poor behaviour, even when the teaching was good and most students wanted to work. Teachers set suitable homework in most classes, but there are some gaps in Years 9 and 10. Work is regularly marked, but some marking identifies weaknesses without showing students how to improve on them.
18. Teaching in English is satisfactory in Year 9, and good in Years 10 and 11. It enables all students to come to grips with major issues and ideas. However, the balance of work is focused on developing their understanding of texts rather than on extending the range of students' sentence structures and vocabulary, and some basic errors are not picked up in marking. Teaching in mathematics and science is satisfactory overall. There is a significant amount of good teaching, which challenges and engages pupils, but there are some weaknesses in the range of resources and in the management of classes. In a small minority of lessons, work is set at too low a level to permit satisfactory progress. Teaching in physical education and art and design is good, with very good teaching in some lessons in art and design and in Year 9 in physical education. Teaching is good throughout the school in design and technology, ICT and modern languages. In the last two subjects, it is helping students improve from well below average starting points in Year 9, and in design and technology it is leading to good achievement by Year 11 . Teaching in other subjects is satisfactory, but there is a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching in personal, social and health education. There was very good teaching in business studies in lessons sampled in Years 10 and 11. The community tutor makes an effective contribution to teaching and learning by working with students and their families to ensure that students attend regularly and complete their work, particularly their GCSE coursework.
19. Across the school, the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory. There is very effective teaching of basic skills to students with learning difficulties in the learning support department, and work in some subjects, notably geography and religious education, is carefully planned to develop literacy skills and the range of students' vocabulary. Most teachers make satisfactory provision for literacy, for example, by emphasising and using technical vocabulary. However, teachers in most subjects have not developed a clear and effective approach to deal with the broad range of students' learning needs in this area. Numeracy skills are promoted effectively through mental arithmetic sessions at the start of mathematics lessons. A number of

other subjects make a good contribution, and there is very good use of statistics in religious education and geography. Teachers in some subjects use ICT well in presenting work, but the use of computers to promote learning across the school is underdeveloped. The school has plans to deal with this by extending its ICT facilities.

20. The teaching of students with special educational needs is good overall. It is very good, and at times excellent, in the learning support unit. Teaching assistants make a very effective contribution to teaching, but some work in lessons does not take full account of students' needs. Gifted and talented students are well taught in music, art and design and physical education. Their learning is satisfactory overall, and they are reaching appropriate standards by Year 11. Overall, teaching meets the needs of students with English as an additional language well, and their learning benefits from generally good attitudes to work.
21. The very wide range of starting points and learning needs among the students, with the behavioural difficulties and poor attitudes of a significant minority, make teaching more difficult than in most schools. Overall, the school's teachers are meeting this challenge effectively, though not in all lessons. The school is well placed to improve its teaching further.

Sixth form

22. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are good overall, and often very good. Teachers know their subjects very well, and plan interesting lessons that are well matched to students' needs. Throughout the sixth form, teachers use assessment well to set work at a suitable level for students, mark work well, and foster good relationships. The small number of sixth form students with special educational needs are taught very well, and sometimes achieve high grades. Higher-attaining students are challenged well, with a clear focus on the requirements of higher grades.
23. Where the teaching is very good, teachers present work in an interesting and challenging way, encourage students to think for themselves, and develop their key learning skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT effectively. This is particularly helpful to students with English as an additional language, and to those who begin vocational courses with below average GCSE results. There were examples of excellent teaching during the inspection in law and religious education. In these lessons, teachers combined excellent understanding of the subject with well-planned and demanding learning tasks and questioning that required students to consider issues well beyond the topic being considered. They followed this up with particularly well-planned coursework. Where sixth form teaching is satisfactory, most often in mathematics and science subjects, teachers know the subject well, but use a rather narrow range of teaching techniques that provides too little scope for students to discuss issues and develop their learning skills. ICT is used effectively in some sixth form subjects, but its place in the teaching of many, including mathematics, has not been clearly established. This restricts the scope of teaching and learning in lessons, and of independent study.
24. Most sixth form students are committed to their courses and work very hard, in and out of lessons. A small minority, however, do not make the change from GCSE to AS level effectively. These students do not attend all of their lessons, and do not work hard enough outside lessons to make progress in advanced work. This problem is anticipated well in vocational courses, but teaching in some others is not adapted sufficiently to detecting and dealing with it in the early stages.

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

25. The quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory throughout the main school, with some very good features in Years 10 and 11. All subjects of the National Curriculum are provided, and there is appropriate provision for health education, sex education and education against the misuse of drugs. The new subject of citizenship has been effectively introduced, and vocational courses in science and ICT are successful in Years 10 and 11. Alternative vocational provision in Years 10 and 11 is helping a significant number of students at risk of exclusion to continue with their education, and is opening up valuable careers opportunities for them. Very

good provision for business studies is attractive to higher-attaining students, and prepares them well for sixth-form work.

26. The curriculum is well adapted to the needs of students with English as an additional language, and makes good provision for those wishing to study Urdu. Good provision for students with special educational needs is based on very good specialist teaching and support which is excellently organised and managed by the co-ordinator for special educational needs. The provision is also effective where students receive support in lessons from teaching assistants, although work in other lessons does not always take account of provisions in individual education plans. Gifted and talented students are identified and receive suitable provision over the course of their school career, with good opportunities for competition and performance. They are not, however, consistently challenged and extended in their work in all subjects. The school promotes equal opportunities effectively, and monitors the progress of different groups of students.
27. The present timetable has been arranged to provide continuity during re-organisation, and the school has plans to amend it. It has significant weaknesses. Some subjects have only one hour per week of teaching time in Year 9, and two hours per week for option groups in Years 10 and 11. This makes it difficult for teachers to plan effective, continuous learning. The grouping of students in some subjects is not effective, because it is not based on their needs in that subject. This creates some teaching groups whose composition makes them difficult to teach, and the school does not ensure that planning for mixed-ability groups consistently matches work to the needs of all students in the class. This is a particular problem in modern languages, where the very broad range of learning needs in each class makes it very difficult for teachers to provide for the highest-attaining students. Provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall, but careful planning for these skills in some subjects, notably geography, is not reflected consistently across the school. The school is taking energetic steps to improve provision for ICT skills, but the introduction of new vocational courses in Years 10 and 11 is restricting access to computer rooms for teachers in other subjects.
28. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. There are coursework and catch-up clubs in many subjects, as well as clubs to cater for wider interests. In music there is a broad range of clubs, including a music theory club, orchestra, dance band, pop choir and school choir. Over half of all boys and girls take part in extra-curricular sport, including hockey, netball, basketball, cricket, rugby and use of the fitness room. The school has recently been awarded Sports Mark gold for this work. There are various activities attached to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, a Trinity Groundforce club working on the school grounds and a well-supported chess club. School trips include a recent visit to Disneyland Paris to study their use of ICT in management.
29. Careers education is very good. It is based on a well-organised programme of teaching, liaison with Connexions, individual interviews, and effective use of ICT. Work experience is well planned, and has a positive impact, with excellent provision for students with special educational needs, some of whom have been offered responsible jobs following their placements. The GNVQ courses in business and health & social care have good links with local industry. Guest speakers are also invited to the school. Through these links, the community makes a good contribution to learning. There has been local support for the school's bid for specialist school status. There are particularly good links with the local Pakistani community, helped considerably by the efforts of the school's community tutor. The local police beat manager comes into school regularly.
30. There are close links with middle schools. The director of studies for Year 9 visits all middle schools and establishes a clear profile of each student's strengths and weaknesses before they join. This helps to ensure that they are placed in suitable classes, and academic data are passed to faculties. There are half-termly meetings with middle schools to discuss continuity in the curriculum, and there is some joint training, for example, on managing behaviour. For the most part, these links are effective, but there is still much variation in the standards reached by students joining the school, particularly in ICT.

Sixth form

31. The sixth form curriculum is good, and offers a wide range of courses that meet the needs of all students wishing to continue their education after GCSE. Most courses are well planned to enable students to make the transition from GCSE to sixth-form work. The vocational strand is particularly effective, and many courses, including business studies, law, French, English, psychology and drama, offer well-planned challenge to higher-attaining students. The school is quick to identify courses that are attractive to students, and is building good links between the curriculum in the sixth form and the main school. However, the present curriculum in the sixth form reflects the commitment made by the local education authority to provide continuity in all courses from schools that were re-organised, and some teaching groups are too small to offer value for money in the longer term. The school realises this, and has good development plans for the sixth-form curriculum. In mathematics and music, teaching time during the school day is below average. Teachers make up for this by providing extra lessons in music after school, but in mathematics the lack of teaching time is making it difficult for pupils to establish and consolidate new skills.
32. Provision for general studies is well planned and makes a good contribution to students' personal development by allowing detailed consideration of moral and ethical issues. It includes an effective strand of religious education that meets legal requirements. The Wednesday activity period allows students to follow a wide range of worthwhile activities. The sixth form elect a head boy and girl and deputies, who organise social activities. Examples include a party at the start of the year, a charity coffee morning, and the 'prom' at the end of the year.

Personal development

33. Provision for spiritual development is good. Assemblies are well organised, and usually focus on moral and social issues. However, there are missed opportunities for reflection in some assemblies, and there is no daily act of collective worship. In lessons, notably in RE, art, music, dance and English, time is given for students to reflect on aspects of personal belief and for sensitive analysis of emotions and issues. Displays around the school and the attractive school grounds enhance the learning environment, are aesthetically pleasing and add to the spiritual development of the school community.
34. Overall, provision for students' moral development is good. The aims and positive ethos of the school provide a very good basis. The prospectus and newsletters emphasise personal development as the central part of the school's mission statement, that 'everybody should be treated fairly, equitably and justly'. The behaviour policy clearly outlines what is acceptable. It is applied well in most lessons, and very well when teaching is good or better. Students are expected to accept responsibility for their actions and be considerate, respectful and tolerant of others. Teachers give a strong lead in encouraging sound interpersonal relationships and in distinguishing right from wrong behaviour. Most departments encourage students to reflect on moral issues, such as attitudes to war and conflict in history, environmental issues in geography and accepting the rules of sport in PE. Students contribute extensively to local, national and international charities and students contributed a mosaic to a new centre in Redditch.
35. Provision for social development is good. There are a number of occasions when students come together as part of the wider school community, including assemblies and gatherings of the school council. However, it is through the arts, especially in drama productions and music making, that students are given the best opportunities to work with one another and to enjoy each other's company. Students have good scope to interact with others in lessons through the use of group work, especially in drama, history, DT, geography and modern foreign languages. There is good social harmony in the school. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with English as an additional language are fully involved in all aspects of the work of the school. The school's extensive provision for sport makes an important contribution to students' personal development and to its harmonious atmosphere.
36. Cultural development is good. There is an emphasis on the richness and diversity of other cultures in many subjects, and particularly in RE. Christian and Muslim festivals are celebrated in school and there is an awareness of religious beliefs and practice. For example, Muslim

students are not required to taste test in food technology during Ramadan, and sixth-form Muslim students are encouraged to develop foods that are attractive to teenagers, but respect dietary rules. Work in art, music and dance introduces students to forms of expression from a wide range of cultures. In history, students understand that Christians as well as Jews were among the victims of Nazism. The school provides a wide range of opportunities to participate in social and cultural activity, including day trips to the theatre, museums, residential visits and holidays abroad. An exchange programme to Japan and music tour to Italy has given valuable enrichment opportunities. The European Day of Language involved all students and provided an effective opportunity to learn about others and at the official opening of the school the welcome was given in eleven languages. Students develop good understanding of the range of cultures in modern British society and are well prepared to take part in it.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

37. The school provides a caring environment in which students feel safe and valued, allowing them to concentrate on learning. Procedures for child protection are good, and action is quickly taken when required. Health and safety procedures are good. Risk assessments are carried out, and there are suitable procedures to ensure safety on school trips. Governors are involved appropriately. There is sound provision in the PSHE programme to help students take responsibility for their own safety. The school has suitable procedures to protect students from harmful material on the Internet.
38. All teachers are active in the care of their students. Directors of studies and the school leadership group monitor personal development effectively, and this is reflected in students' annual reports. All adults work hard to help students with personal difficulties. Students believe that the staff are approachable and will do their best to give help if needed. The school helps students become mature and responsible individuals, assisting them to face the challenges of their everyday lives. There is effective liaison with external specialist services.
39. The school has good procedures to monitor and support attendance. Good attendance is encouraged by certificates for 100 per cent attendance, and there are thorough internal checks against truancy during the day. The school contacts parents of absent students by telephone on the first day. The educational welfare officer provides support for particular problems, up to and including prosecution of parents. The school has made some impact on the attendance of lower-attaining students and those at risk of exclusion by adjusting the curriculum, and has plans to develop this further.
40. Procedures for improving appropriate behaviour are good. They have some outstanding features, but some aspects could be made more consistent. The school has a clear set of rules backed up by a system of rewards and sanctions that are well known to students. Students told inspectors that the merit mark system is helpful, but that detentions lack impact for some students. Teachers and teaching assistants responsible for special educational needs work effectively with students who have behavioural difficulties. There are good channels of communication between teachers and form tutors. However, these are not always used quickly enough to deal with behaviour that is not serious enough to involve senior staff, but which nevertheless disrupts learning, for example, in mathematics. Tutorial periods at the end of the school day are only sometimes used effectively, and tutors do not provide enough guidance to students on use of their planners to promote good personal organisation. Procedures for dealing with oppressive behaviour, however, are swift and effective, and involve very good co-operation between senior staff and the community tutor.
41. The school has adequate arrangements to assess and track students' progress, and very good arrangements to do so for students with special educational needs, in geography, and in ICT in Years 10 and 11. Where the arrangements are very good, teachers also make very effective use of the information from assessment to plan work, and this is a key contribution to the effectiveness of the school's best teaching. There are some examples of good involvement of students in their own assessment, for example, in geography and in the evaluation of English coursework. Across the school, however, the use of this information to pitch work at the right level for students is often weak, even when other aspects of teaching are good. In many lessons, all students are given the same work, even though their existing knowledge, skills and

understanding may range from very high to well below average, and this limits the effectiveness of teaching, for students whose skills are significantly above or below those of the rest of the class. Annual reviews for students with Statements of Special Educational Needs are carried out to an excellent standard, and lead to individual education plans of high quality. These are used very effectively by specialist teachers and teaching assistants to pitch work at the right level for students, though not always by teachers in classes where there is no special educational needs support.

Sixth form

Assessment

42. The arrangements for assessing the students' work, and the use made of this information, are good. Sixth form students receive target grades based on their GCSE results at an early stage in their course. The school has developed a very effective system of assessing their progress towards these. Students' assessments of their standards, commitment, attendance and respect for deadlines are regularly assessed against their teachers' judgements on the same issues on a single sheet for each subject that runs for the whole school year. Teachers often use the comparison between their own grades and the students' grades to boost confidence, particularly when a student has under-estimated their achievement over several units of work. Similarly, when a student grades his or her work highly, comparison with the teacher's grade confirms the student's judgement and encourages him or her to greater efforts. This is a compact and effective system, and most teachers use it well to detect strengths and weaknesses in students' work and to plan lessons. Some weaknesses that are identified are dealt with effectively in co-operation with the community tutor. In a small minority of cases, mostly among lower-attaining students taking AS courses, identification of weaknesses at an early stage in courses is not followed up closely enough, so that weak habits of work that might have been anticipated have time to take root. Assessment is, by contrast, very effective in driving up the standards reached by lower-attaining students taking vocational courses.

Advice, support and guidance

43. Advice, support and guidance are good overall. Sixth form students receive close and effective advice, support and guidance in their work. All students use the sixth-form common room, which provides a pleasant environment, and is next to the office of the head of the sixth form. Students appreciate the ease with which they can raise academic and personal problems with members of the tutorial team.
44. Virtually all students believe that the school helped them to settle well into the sixth form and its way of working. The school organises effective induction arrangements at the time of transfer from the main school to the sixth form. A small number finds it difficult meeting the pattern of expectations in the sixth form, and for these students the school puts in place a pastoral support plan. Responsibility for coursework is seen to reside squarely with the students themselves. Students receive good guidance on careers and further study.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The proportion of parents who attended the pre-inspection and returned the questionnaire was below average. Nevertheless, parents' opinions on this evidence are very positive. Most parents believe that their children like school, that the teaching is good and that their children work hard and make good progress. They think the school helps their children to become mature and that it provides a good range of activities outside of lessons. They see the school working closely with them and keeping them informed about their child's progress, and feel comfortable about approaching the school with a question or problem. Behaviour is seen as good and most are happy with the amount of homework. They believe the school is well led and managed. There was a particularly positive response on the questionnaire from parents from minority ethnic backgrounds. Inspection findings generally support parents' positive views of the school, although inspectors did see significant misbehaviour from a minority of students, and found some gaps in homework.

46. Parents receive attractively produced newsletters that contain a very broad range of information, and celebrate students' achievements. Parents who speak Urdu are kept in touch very effectively by the community tutor. There are regular parents' evenings, and just over two-thirds of parents attended the most recent. Both the school and sixth-form prospectuses are well-produced documents. Students' annual reports, however, focus too much on their attitudes to work. They do not give parents enough information on what has been achieved, or provide students with sufficient guidance on what could be improved.
47. A significant number of parents have signed the home-school agreement. Many parents contribute to children's learning at home: for example, many students have access to computers at home. Most parents support the school, but many do not sign students' planners, and this makes it more difficult for the school to monitor homework. A small but significant minority of parents do not ensure that their children attend regularly and on time, and are undeterred by prosecution. A school parent teacher association is being set up to support the school with social and fundraising events.
48. Parents of sixth form students told inspectors that they were very pleased with their children's progress and the range of courses offered by the school. Sixth-form students shared these views. They enjoy their work and the social activities the school provides. They feel that they are taught well, receive good support, and are challenged to do their best. Inspectors share parents' and students' positive views of the sixth form.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The headteacher and governors have appointed the whole staff, established a strong sense of common purpose and teamwork, and developed a clear set of aims and values, based on commitment to high standards and achievement for all students. The headteacher and leadership group provide a clear and effective lead that embodies the school's aims and values. They teach to a high standard, establish very good working relationships with colleagues and students, and keep all aspects of the school's work under constant review. Excellent management of the school's relationships with all sections of the community creates a harmonious and co-operative atmosphere within the school that involves all students and keeps potential tensions to a minimum. Development planning is clear and well balanced, and the school's financial resources are effectively deployed. These qualities have enabled the headteacher, governors and senior staff to launch the new school successfully, and to establish clear goals for its development.
50. Effective systems for performance and financial management keep the headteacher and senior staff in close touch with strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, and enable them to direct the school's resources to support its educational aims. Additional grants are used well to supplement the school's low basic funding. They are applied to improving arrangements to involve all students, including those at risk of exclusion, in the school's work, and to improving facilities such as the resource centre and computer rooms. The school receives complete financial information at a very late stage in the financial year, and this makes forward planning very difficult. The governors are very well organised, with effective committee systems and good links with staff in all areas of the school. They analyse test and examination data closely in co-operation with the headteacher and senior staff, and take part in setting targets. They are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and apply principles of best value well within the limits that have been imposed by re-organisation – they have, for example, had to supply a broader range of sixth-form courses than they normally would in order to meet a pledge from the local education authority that all courses in closing schools would continue to be offered. Policies for race equality and for special educational needs are up-to-date and effectively reflected in practice.
51. The school is well staffed by qualified teachers and teaching assistants, though standards in some subjects, including modern languages, have suffered from staff shortages in the recent past. Teachers in the sixth form are very well qualified and experienced for their work, and staffing in the sixth form is very good. Great care is taken over the appointment and professional development of staff. The report confirming the school's award of Investors In People status emphasised the shared commitment to success among all staff. Teachers often teach the

classes of colleagues attending courses to save the cost of bringing in temporary supply teachers, and the school was praised in the report for having “no barriers between teaching and non-teaching staff”. Training for all staff is of a high standard, and is linked to school priorities as well as to individual needs. An accredited course for teaching assistants on language and communication during the inspection was of a very high standard, with a broad range of relevant information very clearly presented.

52. Resources for learning are adequate overall, and good in several subjects, including English, geography, science, art and design and modern languages. Physical education resources and facilities are very good overall. Five well-equipped computer rooms provide adequate resources for ICT courses, though the heavy demands on these rooms limit access to them for teachers in other subjects. The library and resource centre provides adequately for most subjects, with a good range of books for English and music. Its computers are used extensively throughout the day, but book resources are under-used, and under an eighth of students have a book out on loan. Accommodation is adequate overall. Most classrooms are of a good size, and there are good specialist rooms for special educational needs. Conditions for music teaching are cramped. Many classrooms are on the ground floor, but the layout of the school site creates some problems of access for people with disabilities.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

53. Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. There is a clear sense of direction, based on enabling all students to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable. Provision for equal opportunities is very good, and courses are well adapted to the needs of students with English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs. Effective monitoring systems keep the headteacher and head of the sixth form in close touch with teaching and learning, and there are good systems to consult students and provide them with support. The school is actively developing courses to meet the needs of all students in a cost-effective way.

Resources

54. In order to meet the local education authority's guarantee that all students would be able to continue courses they had started, the school has had to allocate substantially more of its budget to the sixth form than is justified by sixth-form funding. Cost-effectiveness cannot, therefore, be judged satisfactory. It is making suitable plans, in co-operation with other schools, to adjust this balance from next year.
55. Resources are adequate overall for sixth-form courses, and were good in a third of subjects that were fully inspected. There are, however, too few book resources in the library to support work in law, ICT and psychology. Sixth-form students have good access to computers in their workroom and the library, and most use these well.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. In order to build on the school's successful start, the headteacher and governors need to pay particular attention to the following points. Points 3 and 4 are addressed in part by its current development planning.

- (1) Adapt teaching more consistently to the needs of students, by:
 - using information from assessment to pitch work at the right level;
 - improving the range and variety of teaching techniques and resources for learning;
 - improving the consistency and quality of literacy and numeracy teaching across the school.

Paragraphs 1-5, 17-19, 26, 57, 60-61, 66, 68, 72-4, 151.

- (2) Take further steps to improve behaviour, by:
 - taking more consistent action to curb minor misbehaviour;
 - monitoring the management of classes, and teachers' use of the behavioural policy;
 - identifying trends in good and poor behaviour, and developing policies accordingly.

Paragraphs 10, 21, 69, 106

- (3) Improve the curriculum, timetable and the grouping of students, by:
 - providing sufficient teaching time to promote effective learning in all courses and subjects;
 - ensuring that the grouping of students promotes effective learning in each subject;
 - improving the range and quality of homework and of support for learning outside lessons.

Paragraphs 27, 45.

- (4) Make more consistent and effective use of ICT to promote learning, by:
 - continuing to develop ICT facilities;
 - drawing up a programme for the development of ICT in each subject;
 - analysing and monitoring the contribution of ICT to teaching and learning in each subject.

Paragraphs 1, 19, 27, 68, 70, 74, 79, 82, 95, 100, 114, 120, 125.

- (5) Take further steps to improve attendance and punctuality, by:
 - establishing a clear expectation that students will be in their tutorial groups for the beginning of registration;
 - allocating a reasonable time for students to move between classes;
 - taking further action to discourage parents from arranging holidays in term time.

Paragraphs 13, 40.

Sixth form

- (1) Take steps to improve the attendance and working practices of the small minority of students who do not attend and work as they should, by:
 - making the requirements of courses, and the importance of working outside lessons, clear to students at the beginning of the course;
 - identifying any lapses in attendance and study as early as possible in the course, and taking immediate action to deal with them;
 - providing additional support for study for lower-attaining students, with clear targets.

Paragraphs 9, 15, 24, 42, 158, 167.

- (2) Improve the use of ICT in teaching and learning, by:
 - continuing to develop ICT facilities, and, where appropriate, teachers' skills in using them;
 - identifying the contribution of ICT to teaching and learning in each subject, and developing a programme for its use;
 - monitoring the effectiveness of ICT and its contribution to learning and standards.

Paragraphs 7, 23, 130, 139, 161, 165.

- (3) Improve the cost-effectiveness of the sixth form, by:
- bringing its funding into balance with that of the main school as quickly as possible;
 - continuing to develop courses that attract good numbers of students;
 - improving co-operation with other schools in subjects where groups are very small.
- Paragraphs 31, 59, 54, 156*
- (4) Ensure that all courses have enough teaching time to promote effective learning, by:
- establishing the teaching time that is needed for success in each course;
 - making timetable allocations accordingly;
 - developing systematic programmes of independent study and allocating time to them.
- Paragraphs 23, 130*

Other issues to be included in the governors' action plan

- Improve the use of the resource centre and library. *Paragraph 52*
- Improve guidance to students on the use of their planners, and monitor its effectiveness. *Paragraphs 40, 47.*
- Improve the consistency of guidance in students' annual reports. *Paragraph 46*
- Provide a daily act of collective worship. *Paragraph 33*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 9 – 11	122
	Sixth form	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students		49

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 9 – 11							
Number	0	32	47	35	8	0	0
Percentage	0	26	39	29	7	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	2	18	19	7	0	0	0
Percentage	4	39	41	15	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for the sixth form as each lesson represents more than one percentage point[.]

Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll	Y9 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	723	139
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	161	23

Special educational needs	Y9 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	19	0
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	119	1

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	165

Student mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	29

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.0
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1
National comparative data	1.2

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	127	106	233

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	61	83	83
	Girls	63	60	55
	Total	124	143	138
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	53	62	59
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	22	39	27
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	53	81	81
	Girls	57	66	55
	Total	110	147	136
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	50	66	61
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	20	39	26
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

Ethnic background of students

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
658	44	6
1	0	0
5	0	0
9	0	0
0	0	2
2	0	0
3	0	0
3	0	0
143	18	0
9	0	0
4	0	0
21	4	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y9 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	55.7
Number of students per qualified teacher	15.5

Education support staff: Y9 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	24
Total aggregate hours worked per week	299

Deployment of teachers: Y9 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	80.2
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Average teaching group size: Y9 – Y13

Key Stage 3	27.5
Key Stage 4	22.8
Sixth form	10.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2
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	£
Total income	2,350,836
Total expenditure	2,199,871
Expenditure per student	2,209
Balance brought forward from previous year	-
Balance carried forward to next year	117,125

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	16
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	73.1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

862

Number of questionnaires returned

143

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	43	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	42	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	46	4	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	51	8	5	3
The teaching is good.	41	52	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	48	8	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	33	1	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	34	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	40	48	8	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	55	38	1	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	46	1	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	34	3	1	13

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Students make good progress and achieve well by Year 11.
- Students develop good understanding of a broad range of texts.
- Teaching is good, with constructive relationships between students and teachers.
- Students respond well in lessons. They make a good effort in their work.

Areas for improvement

- More attention needs to be paid to vocabulary and sentence construction in Years 10 and 11.
- Assessment and marking need to give more consistent guidance on ways of improving work.
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning should be developed further.

57. Overall, standards in English are below average in Year 9 and at GCSE. This represents good long-term progress and achievement, and some GCSE coursework is close to national average standards, though few students are reaching the highest grades. Students do best in their understanding of key ideas and themes in the texts they read. They make less progress in technical matters, particularly in grammar and the range of vocabulary they use. Girls do better than boys, but there is a narrower gap in Year 11 than in Year 9. Students with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are included well in lessons. The strengths and weaknesses in their learning are similar to those of other students.
58. In most lessons, students pay close attention to their teachers and are interested in their work. Teachers emphasise the need to respect others and to listen carefully to views expressed. As a result, students listen well throughout the school. Speaking skills are more limited. Students contribute well to paired and small group discussions, but their answers to questions are often brief and lacking in clarity, particularly in Year 9. Teachers could expect students to develop and justify their viewpoint more fully. This was done well in one Year 11 lesson seen, when speech was formally assessed as part of GCSE coursework. Students represented the four main characters in Shakespeare's 'Measure for Measure' as part of a class debate on the play. They had prepared speeches well, but were also able to argue and justify their opinions thoughtfully when challenged by questions from the rest of the class.
59. Standards of reading are higher than in other aspects of English, and achievement is good. Students of all abilities read a range of challenging literature, in preparation for national tests and examinations. Year 9 students in several classes showed a good understanding of events in 'Macbeth', and were beginning to come to grips with more detailed evaluation of character and action in key scenes. In Years 10 and 11, higher and middle-attaining students in particular respond well to texts studied. They make significant progress in developing analytical, close-reading skills, as demonstrated in detailed GCSE coursework essays. There are no strategies in place, however, to encourage wider personal reading. The learning resource centre is a well-managed and valuable resource, with a good range of fiction. It is little used by students.
60. Writing is the area of greatest weakness when students join the school. In Year 9, teachers' planning has been updated to take into account objectives in the National Literacy Strategy, with a greater focus on developing technical skills. This is beginning to improve standards of accuracy. Students write for a range of purposes with a growing understanding of appropriate style and awareness of audience, but there are not enough opportunities to produce more extended writing. In some classes, homework is not given regularly. By Year 11, students develop essays more fully, with good use of textual detail when writing about literature. They continue to make a range of errors in their work, however. This stops many middle-attaining students from achieving higher grade GCSE results. Teachers do not give sufficient emphasis to helping students not to repeat mistakes in written work, and to developing their skills in the use of words, correct punctuation and the control of sentence structure. Some boys also take insufficient trouble to present work neatly and carefully, especially in Year 9.

61. Teaching is satisfactory in Year 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. The subject is taught in mixed ability groups. Teachers manage students very well and form constructive working relationships. They have good subject knowledge and use a range of organisational strategies. One Year 11 lesson, on Sylvia Plath's short story, 'Superman and Paula Brown's New Snowsuit', was particularly well-paced and structured, with a mixture of whole class and small group discussions, individual reflection and writing. Students were clearly engaged by the work, and helped by the variety of approach. But these strengths were not seen consistently. In some lessons, the pace and nature of activities were not always well matched to the needs of the full range of students. Others were led too strongly by the teacher, so that students did not contribute enough. But good teaching overall helps to promote good learning in Years 10 and 11. Most students are conscientious and try hard to improve their work. Teachers help them further by ensuring that all understand the process of assessment as fully as possible. There is good practice in encouraging students' own evaluation of their work. In some marking, however, teachers do not give clear enough guidance on what needs to be improved. Teaching in some subjects, notably geography and religious education, makes a good contribution to developing students' literacy skills, but there are significant weaknesses in other subjects, particularly in science. Strengths in this area only just outweigh weaknesses. Teachers make good use of ICT to promote interest in writing, but do not have enough access to it in some classes.
62. Leadership and management of English are good. Team spirit is high in the newly established department. Teaching rooms and the range of resources available are good. Staff co-operate closely and sharing of best practice is encouraged in regular departmental meetings. Clear priorities for development have been identified. Monitoring and evaluation of standards of teaching and learning could be developed more systematically, however, to ensure that best practice is consistently applied.

Drama

63. Drama is taught as a separate, practical subject in Year 9, and offered as a GCSE option. Two lessons were observed. In Year 9, most students enjoy and appreciate drama work. In the lesson observed, however, poor behaviour from a small group of boys held back progress for the class as a whole. However, all students joined in improvised role-play, exploring the issue of peer group pressure, with enthusiasm. In Year 11, students are well motivated and go about their work with some commitment. They make good progress in developing a more structured insight to the subject and are able to reflect on and justify the use of specific dramatic techniques. Practical work for group presentations based on extracts from chosen plays demonstrated good standards. Students were able to evaluate their colleagues' work constructively against examination assessment criteria.
64. Specialist resources for the subject are good. The head of drama also makes an important contribution to school life through a range of extra-curricular activities, including productions and frequent visits to the theatre.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- There is some good teaching of higher-attaining students.
- Numeracy skills are well supported in some other subjects.
- Mental mathematics sessions at the start of lessons are successful.

Areas for improvement

- Average and lower-attaining students have weaknesses in their number work.
- Marking and assessment data are under-used in planning.
- Some students have poor attitudes, and some poor work goes unchallenged.
- There is too little use of ICT.

65. Standards in mathematics among students joining the school have been improving. While they are still below average, they are higher now than they were for students currently in Year 11. In 2002, standards in Year 9 national tests were just below average and broadly in line with similar schools. Boys performed slightly better than girls. The standard of work during the inspection was similar. Standards in Year 11 are overall well below average, though some higher-attaining students are reaching above average standards. Students with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make similar overall progress to other students. In view of students' starting points, overall achievement in mathematics is satisfactory, but strengths narrowly outweigh weaknesses.
66. There is a very wide range of standards among students in Year 9. The work of higher-attaining students is well organised, with many worked examples and a concern for accuracy and presentation. It shows good understanding of transformations, identifying combined translations of simple figures using vector notation. Higher-attaining students have good numerical skills and do not to rely on using the calculator. Average students lack confidence in mental mathematics and have difficulty, for example, combining numbers using various operations to arrive at a given answer. Current work on space, shape and measures is undermined by poor awareness of space when recording work. Lower-attaining students have weak number skills, but standards are improving through quick practice sessions at the start of lessons, 'booster' lessons and application of number skills during lessons. Standards are sometimes undermined by inconsistent presentation of work, incomplete work and poor quality work going unchallenged.
67. In Year 11, higher-attaining students have good computational skills and record written work accurately. They make good use of the rules of indices when reviewing standard index form. Average and lower-attaining students do not use their memory effectively, and their learning is limited by much work that does not require them to apply their skills to solving problems, and so does not engage their thinking sufficiently. Poor work, such as diagrams that are not labelled or inconsistent working out, sometimes goes unchallenged and students do not learn from their errors. Standards in Year 10 are overall better than in Year 11 and reflect a trend of rising standards among students starting the GCSE course at the normal time of transfer.
68. Some subjects make a good contribution to numeracy. For example, students produce accurate graphs and use statistics well in geography, and apply measuring techniques as part of a fitness-testing regime in physical education. This could, however, be made more consistent across the school. The poor standard of some work limits the contribution of mathematics to literacy skills, and there is much too little use of ICT.
69. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall throughout the school, and good in some lessons. Teachers know the subject well. The good lessons are well planned, with effective learning aims that are shared with students. These classes are well managed, and students work hard to the end of the lesson. Students are given challenging work, and good direct questions enable them to explain and clarify their thinking. Regular homework builds on classwork, though there is rarely extension work for the highest-attaining students. The department's satisfactory teaching enables students to make reasonable progress, but lacks variety and challenge, particularly for average and lower-attaining students. In some classes, teachers tolerate too much minor misbehaviour, including calling out, and there are some inconsistencies in marking. In a very small minority of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, work does not provide students with sufficient challenge.
70. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teachers work well together and are committed to raising standards. Assessment procedures are well established. Analysis of national and school data is good but assessment is not used consistently enough to set work at the right level for all students and to guide them on aspects of their work that need to be improved. Teaching is monitored regularly, but this has not ensured consistency in presentation and marking. Accommodation is adequate, though displays are limited, and teachers do not have enough access to computers in lessons.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- There is purposeful and effective learning in most classes.
- The GNVQ course appeals to students, motivates them and ensures they achieve well.
- New teaching strategies are improving teaching and learning.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment and guidance on improving standards need to be developed further.
- Some teaching is pitched too much at the needs of average students.
- Students' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT need further development.

71. Results in Year 9 national tests were below average in 2002, and comparable to those of similar schools. Standards in Year 9 during the inspection were well below average, as they were among these students when they joined the school. Achievement is satisfactory, but girls are reaching higher standards than boys. Standards in the GCSE double award science course are well below average, and similar for girls and boys. Standards in the GNVQ intermediate science course are below average. By the end of Year 11 overall achievement is satisfactory for most groups of students, including those with special educational needs. The achievement of higher-attaining students with English as an additional language is satisfactory, and some are doing well. Some lower-attaining students with English as an additional language are achieving less than they should because of difficulties with understanding and using English in the context of science.
72. In Year 9, students gain new scientific facts and ideas at a suitable rate in view of their previous levels of knowledge and understanding. Standards are low because many students have difficulty in recalling key facts and using important ideas. Good levels of practical work are undertaken, and students carry it out safely. Their capacity to plan, carry out and make sense of whole investigations with the expected degree of precision and incisiveness is below average, but is improving as a result of better attention being paid to this aspect of work. However, too little attention is given to providing work that challenges the highest-attaining students.
73. In the Year 11 double science course, standards are similar in all aspects of science but work is better presented in biology. Higher attaining students are achieving satisfactorily because they are taught the right things at the right time in interesting ways. However, a significant proportion of lower-attaining students are underachieving. This is partly because they do not attend regularly, or work as they should. In addition, learning activities do not sufficiently engaged them or effectively build on their often very low scientific, language and numeracy skills. Their writing is narrow in range, with insufficient focus on key vocabulary and on the description and explanation of scientific ideas. GCSE coursework shows that students are better at planning and obtaining evidence in investigations than at analysing and evaluating it. Sound attention is given to highlighting how scientific theories have evolved over time, but students' books show too little use of scientific models to illustrate and explain key ideas. Students in the GNVQ course generally show higher levels of interest and are applying themselves well to challenging coursework and work in class. Examples of thorough, well-produced and often word-processed work help illustrate the good progress they are making. These students' achievements are the result of good teaching, coursework and the emphasis on ICT.
74. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers' good knowledge and understanding of their subject and effective class management are consistent strengths, and result in purposeful learning in most classes. An effective range of interesting teaching methods are used in the GNVQ course and with the higher-attaining students in double science; elsewhere there is scope to plan activities more carefully so that they better suit and challenge the students' learning needs. Staff are keen to improve their teaching. The quality of teaching is being improved by the introduction of nationally recommended practices, but these are not yet consistently working well. When these worked well the teachers ensured that students know what they are meant to be learning by making goals clear at the start of lessons, and sufficient

time was given to review and assess what different groups of students had learnt at the ends of lesson. Teachers make good use of computers to enliven their teaching but students' use of ICT to gather data in investigations, research information via the Internet and improve the presentation of work is limited. Teachers' planning sets out too few opportunities for students to emphasise key vocabulary and develop their writing and numeracy skills.

75. Leadership and management are satisfactory, and improving. Although an effective system monitors the teaching performance of individual teachers, this is not yet fully directed at raising the overall performance of science teaching. Regular testing helps to provide some information on how well individual students are doing. However, as yet this is not evaluated in sufficient detail and supplemented by other information, to allow staff to identify learning goals and provide guidance for each student on what precisely they need to do to raise their standards in science.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- There is good achievement in Years 10 and 11.
- Lessons are well planned with good integration of theory and practical work.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Assessment is thorough, and support matches students' needs.

Areas for improvement:

- There are weaknesses in the range of media and the allocation of time in Year 9.
- The lack of technical support limits the range of learning opportunities.

76. The below average standards in Year 9 represent good achievement from the low standards of students joining the school. Students make further good progress in Years 10 and 11, so that standards in Year 11 are broadly average. Overall, achievement is good. Lower-attaining students, including those with special educational needs, are supported well and make good progress. Little evidence was seen of the creative use of ICT, although students in Years 10 and 11 use it in research for historical information. Students are able to explore ideas and gain access to visual information, including images from different historical and cultural contexts. Evidence in sketchbooks shows that students successfully demonstrate skills involved in exploring and assessing information. Positive responses were seen when students were actively engaged in debate about their work and clear about their immediate learning objectives. The ability to use tone and texture effectively in their paintings was evident in a Year 9 lesson. Students were able to arrange shapes to distort images and experimented well with colour and use of line. On the theme of portraits, connections made with Picasso and Georges Braque were being considered effectively.

77. Students in Year 11 can develop and sustain a chosen theme in their work, and demonstrate personal interests, ideas and responses to their own and other cultures. Students enjoy their art lessons, and are well motivated by teachers' enthusiasm and good preparation of different levels of work, designed to cater for the levels of attainment found in the class. Sketchbooks are used effectively, and technical language develops well through annotation. Students' work shows some influence of important movements in art and design or of particular artists. In a Year 11 lesson, students spoke confidently about their work and demonstrated some good knowledge and understanding. They had researched figurative forms for the theme of metamorphosis and made good connections to the work of Giacometti.

78. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are committed and supportive of students in their charge. They use their knowledge and subject expertise to good effect, and prepare lessons well. The best teaching had a brisk pace of work, and learning was strongly reinforced by the teacher. Teachers make good use of questions to ensure students are actively involved. Occasionally, lessons were less well managed. When this occurred, students still learned at a satisfactory rate, but were less keenly involved. Clear introductions to lessons and time spent reviewing the work of the previous lesson enable students to build on earlier learning

and to recognise the continuity of topics. Teachers pay suitable attention to literacy: sketchbooks show active support for students' reading and writing skills. There is good integration of theory and practical work. In a Year 10 lesson students were developing three-dimensional studies and connections made with surrealism and the work of Salvador Dali were being considered effectively. All students are absorbed in their individual work. Homework is used well to support project work in Years 10 and 11. In Year 9, however, assessment and target setting for students are less effective.

79. The subject is well led by a newly appointed head of department. Teaching schemes and departmental policies are clear, and appropriate priorities have been established for the development of the subject. The department makes a good contribution to the moral, social and cultural development of students. Extra-curricular activities are good and teachers give freely of their time to students, which extends learning. Visits to galleries and museums and the use of an artist in residence have a positive effect on students' work. Department meetings are used well to share ideas and good practice. There is insufficient use of ICT, and of clay in three-dimensional work. The absence of technical support undermines the teaching of a range of media activities. There is a good range of books in the library.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Very good leadership and management are leading to rapid improvement.
- Good teaching is enabling students to achieve well.
- Students have a good attitude, behave well and make good progress.
- Students in Year 11 produce good coursework.

Areas for development

- Girls outperform boys by a wider margin than seen nationally.
- Standards are adversely affected by limited ICT provision.
- Students do not perform well in written examinations.

80. Students join Year 9 with well below average standards, and with different experiences from middle schools. The below average standards currently achieved in Year 9 therefore represent good achievement. By the end of Year 11, standards are still below average, but are significantly closer to average levels, and good achievement is maintained. Strong leadership is the driving force behind this good achievement, and it is backed up by good teaching, good attitudes and hard work from students.
81. In Year 9, work is very well structured to ensure that students of all abilities make good progress. Students develop an understanding of the design process through working safely with a wide range of tools and materials. Students work well individually, in pairs and in groups. Practical skills develop well, and products made are at least satisfactory and sometimes better than this. Students are less proficient in their design work. Drawing skills to show initial design ideas are generally weak. The presentation skills of a significant number of boys are below average. Students are equipped with the necessary skills and subject knowledge to enable them to make informed option choices at the end of the year.
82. Year 11 coursework seen during the inspection shows students achieving average standards. This is because students act on feedback from teachers, and continually improve their work by drafting and re-drafting. In test situations, such as mock examinations, they perform less well and weaknesses in literacy show through. Because of this, overall standards are below average. There is a difference in performance between the material areas and between girls and boys. Standards are higher in food and textiles, with groups comprising mainly girls, than in resistant materials and graphics, mostly taken by boys. The main reason for this is better attitudes to work on the part of girls, but the difference also reflects the quality of teaching and learning in girls' groups. Standards are affected by poor provision for ICT. This has the greatest impact in graphics because of limited facilities for Computer Aided Design/Computer Aided Manufacture

(CAD/CAM). The unsatisfactory workshops for resistant materials are scheduled for replacement. Numeracy skills are generally sufficient for the needs of the subject.

83. Teaching is good overall, and is often very good in food and textiles. These lessons contain a greater variety of activities, move at a faster pace, students are more productive and organise and present their work better. Teaching meets the needs of differing abilities, those who have special educational needs, the gifted and talented and those who have English as an additional language. Teachers give good feedback to students on what needs to improve and students act on this guidance. Extra help is available to students out of lessons and this has a positive effect on learning. Good work is rewarded and a special club is set up for this purpose.
84. The head of faculty has planned and organised the work of the department very well. All necessary systems are in place. She monitors teaching and learning well, and assessment is a strength.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Students develop positive attitudes to the subject.
- Standards and progress are closely assessed.
- Leadership and management are very effective.

Areas for improvement

- There are no significant weaknesses..

85. Standards in Years 9 and 11 are average. Standards on entry to the school are well below average, and some geographical skills are particularly weak, so this represents very good achievement. There are no differences between the overall standards of girls and boys, although more boys have opted for the subject in Years 10 and 11. Students with special educational needs are progressing in line with their classmates because lesson planning takes account of their needs and they are well supported in their work.
86. Year 9 students have a good knowledge of geographical processes such as natural hazards and weather systems. Higher-attaining students know about measures taken to control over-population, such as the 'one child' policy in China. They have made up for a weakness in map skills when they came into the school, and can use graphs and summary tables to present information. They use ICT very well to word-process their work, research information, and produce information displays and posters. Lower-attaining students can describe processes but not explain them well. The work of a small minority of students is poorly presented because of weak literacy skills.
87. Year 11 students are preparing well for their GCSE examinations. Higher-attaining students can analyse and explain data, for example the relationship between birth rate, death rate and population growth. Once again, the work of lower-attaining students suffers from weak literacy and presentation skills, which leads to an incomplete record of work for revision purposes. Very good fieldwork provision gives all students the opportunity to collect their own first-hand data for their examination coursework.
88. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons are very well planned and managed, with a series of interesting activities that engage students' interest and make them think for themselves. For example, in a lesson about birth control policies in China, students had to work in pairs to argue verbally the case for and against the State policies. This made them very aware of other points of view than their own, and also led to consideration of the moral issues involved in taking away people's human rights. Literacy skills are well taught through reading, key vocabulary and word displays. This emphasis also supports students whose first language is not English, though none of these students was seen to have any difficulty with their work. There is less emphasis on teaching numeracy though students' level of skill is sufficient for them

to construct climate graphs and deal with simple statistics. Work is very well assessed by marking, by questioning and also by regular tests and assessment tasks. Students have started to self-assess their work and set their own targets, and this is proving very effective in raising standards.

89. Very good leadership and management show a commitment to raising standards. Formal monitoring of teaching and learning is well established, so that teaching styles are consistent across the department. Recent professional development has been focused on raising standards in all areas of the department's work. There is too little teaching time in Year 9, but arrangements have already been made to increase this time. Because the quality of teaching is so high, the situation is not currently affecting standards. The department has a strong capacity for future improvement.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Teaching is well planned and effective in Years 10 and 11.
- Positive relationships create a good working atmosphere.
- Teachers know the subject well, and are committed to improvement.

Areas for improvement

- Arrangements to assess and track progress are not consistent enough.
- Some teaching is not matched closely enough to students' needs.
- There is too little access to ICT, and the library is under-used.
- There is too little teaching time for history.

90. Standards are below average in Year 9, but broadly average among students taking history as a GCSE option in Year 11. Standards are higher in Years 10 and 11 because teaching is more focused, assessment is used more effectively, and the subject tends to be chosen by more higher-attaining students. There is little difference in attainment between boys and girls, and gifted and talented students achieve as well as other students. Students with special educational needs and those with English as a second language make satisfactory progress in Year 9 and good progress in Year 11. Achievement is satisfactory overall, and good in the GCSE course.
91. In Year 9, students develop satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. Their listening skills are gradually developing, and they are beginning to acquire some of the skills and techniques required for the analysis and interpretation of simpler historical sources. Higher-attaining students can analyse more complex sources and write at good length about a wide variety of historical issues. The progress of other students is held back by weaker reading and writing skills, and they tend to describe what they have studied rather than analyse its significance. Teachers pay consistent attention to literacy skills, especially in the use of historical vocabulary. In a Year 9 lesson on Votes for Women, for example, lower-attaining students could analyse contemporary cartoons about the Suffragettes and discuss the reasons why some women sought martyrdom.
92. Year 10 and 11 students achieve well. They can organise and communicate their research findings in a variety of ways and have developed real strengths in the critical analysis and evaluation of historical sources. They are able to select and arrange evidence to enable them to write well-argued, extended essays. The quality of discussion is strong, and students are provided with opportunities to discuss and debate controversial historical problems. In a Year 10 lesson on Appeasement, for example, students could appreciate how horror of another world war and the threat of unrestricted aerial bombing limited Chamberlain's foreign policy opportunities. Good teaching is helping to improve writing skills by providing structured essay plans and ensuring that students understand key historical terminology.
93. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Year 9, and good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have a sound knowledge of their subject, plan very carefully, use lesson time well and set clear

learning targets. Work is assessed in relation to National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades and students are fully included in the process. In successful lessons, teachers use information from this assessment to match work to individual learning needs. This enables students to progress at an appropriate pace because they are sufficiently challenged by their work. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, students learn at a basic level, but work is not challenging enough for higher-attaining students, and the range of resources used is too limited. In most lessons, however, students have confidence in their teachers, and good relationships help to raise achievement.

94. History makes a strong contribution to personal development, especially in considering issues of right and wrong. As a result of good provision for literacy, students are keen to engage in discussion and writing activities which help to extend the range and depth of their historical skills. Specific opportunities for work in numeracy and citizenship need to be incorporated in the scheme of work.
95. Management and leadership are satisfactory. The head of department has a clear view of the priorities for history and is committed to the further improvement of standards. Resources are carefully managed, but there is too little access to computers, and the library is under-used. There are few opportunities for learning outside lessons. The school has plans to increase teaching time from next year, but the current allocation, and particularly the single hour per week in Year 9, is too low.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Good teaching and learning lead to good achievement.
- Students have positive attitudes and behave well.
- Monitoring and assessment systems are effective in Years 10 and 11.
- There are very good opportunities for learning in addition to lessons.
- The department is led and managed well.

Areas for improvement:

- The curriculum and assessment in Year 9 need further development.
- There is too little time for the GNVQ full course.
- Facilities and access to ICT in other subjects need further improvement.

96. Students joining the school have varying ICT skills but, overall, standards are well below average. Standards are below average in Years 9 and 11. However, students of all ages are making good progress and achieving well, improving on their predicted grades in the school's tests. Students with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are achieving well and making good progress as a result of effective monitoring and support in lessons. Higher-attaining students are extended by a good choice of activities, which allows them to develop and extend their skills. Provision for the needs of different groups of students could, however, usefully be planned in more detail in some lessons.
97. In Year 9, students consolidate and extend their skills using a good range of applications. They practise putting texts and pictures together to make multimedia presentations, including hyperlinks, and use the Internet effectively for research. They learn to look critically at their work and that of others when they produce draft plans on paper and appraise each other's work with consideration of content and audience.
98. In Years 10 and 11, students develop a good working knowledge and skills with industry standard software, as well as developing numeracy and literacy skills. They use their knowledge to solve real problems, for example when producing a design for a much needed additional ICT classroom. They can draw scale plans, to make shopping lists of hardware and software needed and to cost the project, justifying their choices. They modify and improve their work as a result of

ongoing effective support and monitoring by staff. As a result, in external assessments, many students have made good progress and improved on their predicted grades.

99. Teaching is good. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed and almost all lessons were good or better. In better lessons, teachers had good subject knowledge, giving clear explanations and demonstrations using interactive whiteboards and appropriate technical terms in context. As a result, students develop ICT skills and subject specific language well. Effective monitoring and support of students ensures any problems are resolved and students are kept focused, moving forward at a good pace. Lower-attaining students, those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language are given good extra support by the class teacher and learning support assistants, to make sure they understand the work and can progress at their own rate. Higher-attaining students are supported and extended. Any problems are quickly spotted and a short explanation resolves them. Work that stimulates and motivates students is often chosen. Good homework is regularly set.
100. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed effectively. Most lessons have a strong literacy element, for example using research skills via the Internet, drafting and re-drafting work with consideration for audience, and writing in different forms. Numeracy skills are well developed, for example through work on spreadsheets and when working out hardware and software costs for a particular project. However, library resources are mostly old and out-of-date. and well supported and extended. ICT is used well in some other subjects, notably geography, but the contribution of other subjects to work in ICT is underdeveloped.
101. Management of the subject is good. The department is working well as a team and staff give up their free time to help students wherever possible. For example, ICT rooms are open at lunchtime and after school. This very good provision is open to all students and is well supported. It is invaluable to students following the full GNVQ course, who find it impossible to complete the work within lesson time. Assessment systems are very good for older students and developing for Year 9 students. Students are involved in at all stages. Regular reviews and marking give clear guidelines to students on ways to improve their work and grades. Many have improved on their predicted grades in on-going external tests. The head of department has little opportunity to monitor the teaching and learning. Accommodation is inadequate for the demands places on the subject, and computer systems in the library have to be used for some lessons. The school has good plans to extend facilities.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Good teaching is leading to good progress, often from low levels, across the department.
- The department offers three foreign languages.
- Results in Urdu examinations are above average.
- The staff are working well as a team.
- Students have good attitudes.

Areas for development

- Day-to-day assessment does not make sufficient use of National Curriculum levels.
- Students are not involved enough in speaking.
- There is too little time for the subject in Years 10 and 11, and some grouping of students does not contribute to learning.
- Higher-attaining students could be better challenged.

102. Standards in Years 9 and 11 are below average. Standards in Year 9 show good improvement from the well below average standards of students joining the school. Standards in Year 11 are still affected by staffing problems, which had been resolved by the time of the inspection. These students are now learning well, and their overall achievement is satisfactory. There are no marked differences between boys' and girls' attainments. The achievement of lower-attaining students benefits from the way that teachers adapt lessons to enable them to succeed. Some

higher-attaining students are not achieving as well as they should, because they are not challenged regularly enough to work at higher levels than other students in groups that contain a very wide range of learning needs. Standards in Year 11 are also held back by limited teaching time. The school's records show good standards and achievement among students studying Urdu.

103. Students listen well to their teachers, who make good use of the foreign language for all their teaching. They are less good when listening to tape recordings and when speaking, because they do not use the language actively enough. For many their spoken language is limited to single word replies. This is reasonable for some lower-attaining students, but higher-attaining students need to be challenged to answer more fully with whole sentences. In writing, higher-attaining students in Year 9 can write to book a hotel and write about past events. They can express opinions and give their reasons. In Year 11 there is some lengthier writing, such as a report on work experience and a job application. At times the standard of writing of these students and of average-attaining students is spoilt by weaknesses in basic mistakes. The writing of lower-attaining students is more limited but shows better levels of accuracy and effort than is often found with this group.
104. Teaching in French and German was inspected, and is of good overall quality. The teaching of Urdu was not inspected on this occasion. Teachers have good personal language skills, and teach almost exclusively in the foreign language to challenge the students. Lessons are well planned, with a good range of activities, and there is good learning in pair and group work. Staff have good relationships with the students. However, students are not involved actively enough in speaking, and as a result do not have easy recall of vocabulary and phrases. At present there is too little use of ICT, chiefly because of problems with access to computers. Teachers regularly mark work and assess students' progress. Formal assessment uses National Curriculum levels, but the lack of such a clear reference point in day-to-day assessment limits the effectiveness of target setting.
105. Leadership and management are good. There is a useful handbook and new schemes of work match students' needs well. The department is now fully staffed, and teachers share a commitment to their subject and to improving provision.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Lessons for Year 9 students have a good balance and variety of musical activities.
- Music makes a very good contribution to students' personal development.
- The range and quality of extra-curricular activities are good.
- There is good provision and challenge for gifted and talented students.

Areas for Improvement

- Standards in Year 11 are too low.
- Standards and progress are not tracked closely enough in relation to national standards.
- The quality and range of percussion instruments is very limited.
- The variety and range of teaching is restricted by accommodation for music.

106. Standards in Year 11 are below average, but this represent satisfactory achievement. Students find it difficult to define musical terms and often struggle to recognise names of instruments or beats in a bar. Their compositions are very simple and show little understanding of musical form and structure. However, standards of work from the current Year 10 students are average, with strengths in performing. They discuss their compositions enthusiastically and are able to make musical decisions in order to make improvements. Students in Year 9 are just within the average range overall, but there is a very wide range of standards among individual students. Overall, achievement is satisfactory. Those who are gifted and talented make good progress and reach above average standards in response to challenging work. However, many students cannot compose effectively, and a significant minority have very negative attitudes and

behaviour that lead them to make unsatisfactory progress despite strengths in the teaching they receive. Students with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress overall, although their use of musical language and evaluative skills are lower than expected and they find it difficult to discuss or describe their music.

107. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers are committed and enthusiastic, despite the reluctance of some students to learn and behave in lessons. Most students enjoy their lessons despite the often stuffy and cramped conditions of the music rooms. Teachers encourage students to make progress and to fulfil their potential. Teachers know their subject, and select resources and activities that appeal to students. There are good demonstrations, and questioning is often modified to ensure all can answer effectively. However, some teaching is not fully adapted to meet the needs of all students, so that some become passive in class, as they are not fully involved. Time is not always given at the end of lessons to review and reinforce learning. Lessons for Year 9 students have a good balance of musical activities, but the limitations of accommodation and resources lead to some compromises. For example, some lessons have to be taught in a non-specialist room, so students do not have the stimulus of musical information and there are insufficient percussion instruments.
108. Lessons are planned to ensure music contributes to other areas of learning. Students use mnemonics to help remember rhythm patterns; by using them their Kpanlogo layered rhythm patterns remained rhythmical and accurate. Students in Year 10 make good use of the ICT equipment in the recording studio to compose, refine and edit their compositions. The opportunities afforded to students during extra-curricular activities and other performances significantly enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Within lessons they are encouraged to reflect, value and support each other's work, and they study a wide variety of music from different cultures.
109. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Teamwork is good and there is a clear commitment and determination to raise standards and heighten the profile of music within the school. At present there is insufficient use of national assessment data in order to compare and monitor progress by different groups of students. National Curriculum levels are beginning to be shared with students, but as yet they are unsure how to improve their work.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good; teachers plan lessons with a range of activities that allow all groups of students to learn well.
- There is very good leadership of a dedicated team of specialist staff.
- The very good extra-curricular programme provides opportunities for all students to extend their learning.
- The provision of very good accommodation and outdoor facilities.

Areas for improvement

- ICT is under-used in Year 9.
- Provision for rugby needs further development.
- Some Year 9 teaching groups are too large.
- Athletics field events facilities need to be updated.

110. Standards in Year 9 are broadly average. Standards in Year 11, in both GCSE sports studies and National Curriculum PE, are above average. Talented students achieve well in a range of sports at district, county and sometimes regional levels. Individuals and teams perform particularly well in cricket and athletics. Students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress, sometimes in response to excellent co-operation between subject teachers and specialists in special educational needs. There is no significant difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls. Standards in the department

represent very good achievement. Continuity and progress across all years are aided by well-structured schemes of work, which build on previous learning.

111. Most students in Year 9 understand basic fitness principles, show sound individual and team skills and judge performance accurately. The standards of a small minority are well below average. Their performance in badminton is affected by poor hand-eye co-ordination and in games, by lack of spatial awareness. Higher-attaining students use refined skills and tactical awareness to outmanoeuvre opponents in racket and team sports.
112. By Year 11, students use their knowledge of training principles to plan exercise programmes, apply attacking and defensive concepts to game situations and analyse performance well. The few lower-attaining students often show sound basic skills in isolation, but lack tactical and spatial awareness in a game. Higher-attaining students are successful in a range of extra-curricular sports. They show high levels of skill and tactical knowledge. Most GCSE students are on course to achieve above average standards. They understand the theoretical aspects, show good practical ability, and present written assignments well. A few lack extended writing skills, and do not recall facts well.
113. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in Year 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers are very knowledgeable and manage students very well. Work is planned to suit all students, so that those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress. For example, in a Year 9 hockey lesson, lower-attaining students progressed well because the teacher simplified instructions, modified tasks and used demonstrations. The learning of higher-attaining students is accelerated by extension tasks, grouping and extra-curricular sport. Teachers provide opportunities for students to learn independently in most lessons. In a Year 10 basketball lesson, students planned and performed tactics evaluated each other's performance and practised officiating. They achieve well in such tasks. Learning is less effective in a small proportion of lessons, when teaching is more prescriptive and students are given fewer opportunities to explore their own ideas. Students' learning is enhanced by their positive attitudes and good relationships, but small numbers underachieve, because of poor concentration.
114. Students improve their numerical skills through opportunities to score, measure and record performance. Teachers emphasise key words and are adept in their use of questioning. These approaches improve the technical vocabulary, speaking skills and listening ability of students across the attainment levels, including those learning to speak English. The subject makes good provision for Year 10 and 11 students to develop their ICT skills. Video camcorders are used to analyse performance and GCSE students' learning is enhanced through the Internet and computer software. ICT opportunities in Year 9 are very limited.
115. Leadership and management are very good. The subject leader has a strong commitment to improvement and success and is ably supported by an experienced team of specialists. Good procedures exist to monitor, evaluate and improve standards. Good assessment systems are used well to monitor progress and plan work. The subject makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Very good quality accommodation and outdoor facilities enhance learning, though athletics field facilities could usefully be updated. A very high proportion of students take part in extra-curricular sport, and the school has made a strong application for the Sportsmark gold award. The department has very good capacity for further improvement.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision for religious education (RE) is **very good**.

Strengths

- Standards in the GCSE short course are above average.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- The full GCSE examination has been introduced for all students in Year 10.
- Assessment, target setting and mentoring of students is very effective.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Religious education contributes significantly to students' personal development

Areas for development

- There are too few links with middle schools.
- There is limited use of visits and visitors.
- ICT is under-used.

116. Standards in Year 9 are broadly average. This represents very good progress in a short time from the well below average standards of most students joining the school. Year 11 students reach above average standards in the GCSE short course taken by all students, and were reaching similar standards in their work during the inspection. There are no significant differences in standards reached by boys and girls. Gifted and talented students are challenged effectively in their work and achieve well. Students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress because of the support given to them by teachers. There is very little support from teaching assistants in RE, and these students would benefit from additional support. Overall, achievement in Year 9 and Year 11 is very good because of the very good quality of teaching and effective use of individual targets for students.
117. Year 9 students have good knowledge and understanding of many of the key features of Christianity and other world religions. They draw successfully on their own community backgrounds. Students can describe how Islamic faith influences the lives of modern Muslims, for example by describing fasting requirements, and explaining why Muslims fast. The GCSE course, begun in the Spring term, enables students to appreciate Christian and Muslim teaching and practice in relation to moral and social issues such as euthanasia.
118. In Years 10 and 11 students build upon the rich and varied experiences gained in Year 9. They can explore links between religion and everyday life and understand ways in which religious beliefs can influence peoples' attitudes and values. For example, in a Year 11 lesson on war and peace students could identify causes of war and explain the difference between a just war and a holy war. All students can distinguish the difference between moral and immoral actions. Quotations from the bible and Qur'an are well used in responses to examination questions.
119. Teaching is very good and often excellent. Particular strengths are excellent subject knowledge, teachers' enthusiasm and excellent relationships between teachers and students, which are used effectively to engage students' interest and extend learning. Teachers have high expectations of attainment and behaviour, and classroom management is excellent. A wide range of activities, such as the word and question cards and the use of poetry, music and art, enrich learning opportunities. The work for lower-attaining students and those with special educational needs is carefully matched to their abilities so that they make progress in lessons. Teachers are particularly skilled in preparing students for GCSE examinations.
120. Close attention to improving literacy skills, including the identification of key words in every lesson, helps students to extend their vocabulary and gives them confidence to develop their written work. Skills in numeracy are used well where appropriate. For example, statistics were used to good effect in Years 10 and 11 to illustrate poverty in the third world. ICT is under-used in teaching.
121. Leadership and management are very good. Documentation is thorough and includes good development planning and very useful schemes of work. The newly qualified teacher and three non-specialists receive excellent support. Assessment is well established, monitoring of students' subject performance is very good. Students are aware of their target grades, which many surpass. The majority of students take pride in their work and achievements in RE. The RE department makes a major contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students through extensive opportunities to reflect on attitudes and values, inspiration, aspiration and motivation. An appreciation of the richness and diversity of other cultures is a prominent feature of the work. The attractively decorated rooms create a purposeful and stimulating learning environment, and colourful displays in classrooms and corridors celebrate achievement. There is shared commitment to improving standards still further, and the capacity to succeed is high.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- The new subject has been introduced effectively.
- Standards are average in Year 9, and students view the subject positively.
- Discussion of current world issues in the school makes a positive contribution to citizenship.
- Links are being developed with middle schools.

Areas for improvement

- Teaching and learning are not yet monitored effectively.
- Assessment of achievement and progress needs to be developed.
- There is too little use of ICT.

122. Standards in Year 9 are broadly average. There is as yet no clear evidence of standards in Year 11, though discussion with students indicated that they have a similar understanding of the subject to most young people of their age. There are no significant differences between the performance of girls and boys, but there are some differences in achievement between groups of students. Those in top sets use discussion well to develop their ideas and understanding. In lower sets, restricted literacy and communication skills limit the quality of discussion and learning.
123. By Year 9, students understand rights and responsibilities. They can explain why rules are needed in a democracy, and some had helped draw up class rules. Students have a good knowledge of rule and law breaking and the role of the police. They spoke of the role of citizenship in developing skills, particularly discussion through debate and decision making. Some can identify elements of citizenship taught in other lessons, for example by describing how women had struggled to achieve the vote. Most had participated in elections to the local youth council. They were able to describe this process and the organisation and importance of the work of the school council. Year 9 representatives had made suggestions that resulted in improvements to the toilet provision for students. Students are generally positive about their experiences in citizenship.
124. Teaching and learning in citizenship are satisfactory, but there are considerable differences in quality between classes, particularly when they are taught by non-specialist teachers. When teachers have the confidence and skills to use active teaching styles, students make good progress. A Year 10 lesson on crime and punishment was successful because teacher-student relationships were good, and the teacher encouraged and developed a debate effectively. Students listened attentively to alternative viewpoints. In another lesson, the quality of learning was weaker because discussion was unstructured, with student contributions limited to those on the worksheet. Students assess their effort and understanding at the end of each unit of work, and keep some records in their progress file, but formal assessment and analysis of progress are not yet fully in place. The school plans to address this by using software currently used in middle schools.
125. A good module of citizenship within the PSHE programme has topics and supporting resources that meet the National Curriculum requirements for Year 9. Team meetings are held half-termly, but they provide information rather than training. Teaching and learning are not monitored and the head of department's knowledge of the quality of teaching is limited. Some rooms are not appropriate for teaching citizenship; for example, discussion was made difficult in a laboratory in which sound echoed. Access to and the use of ICT for learning is limited. Most students take part in fund-raising for charities and gave this as an example of being a 'good citizen'. The calm and purposeful discussion of world events within the school helps students learn the practical importance of citizenship. The school achieved a New Citizenship award, sponsored by a leading bank, for an environmental project involving students building a garden alongside young people with learning difficulties. Other extra-curricular activities such the Duke of Edinburgh award offer additional opportunities for individuals to develop the skills of citizenship.

Business studies

126. The GCSE course in business studies was sampled. The course is very well organised. Teaching and learning are very good. Topics are carefully selected and presented, and teaching very well matched to students' learning needs, including those of gifted and talented students. Coursework seen during the inspection was of above average quality, and students are very well prepared for further study.

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. At the time of the inspection, no students in the fully re-organised school had taken examinations for which national comparative data are available.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

Mathematics and biology were inspected at AS and A level, and the GCSE retake course was sampled.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good overall and students work hard in lessons.
- There is a good, co-operative working atmosphere.
- Students remember and apply what they have learned.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment and target setting are not fully developed.
- There is too little teaching time in Year 12, and there are some timetable clashes.
- ICT is under-used in teaching and learning.

127. Students are reaching average overall standards in Years 12 and 13. Their achievement is satisfactory in relation to their GCSE results.
128. Students' workbooks are well organised and provide a good record for revision. Students use and apply their previous learning well. Year 12 students make good use of past GCSE work to move on into new areas and are well into the course. For example, when introduced to definite integration as the inverse of differentiation, students applied their knowledge of the rules of indices and of algebra well. In Year 13, students integrating functions by substitution made good use of known identities and quickly moved onto integration by parts.
129. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good, and is good overall. Teachers know the subject well, and most lessons are well planned, with a very clear sense of purpose that is shared with the students. As a result, students are motivated, work hard and are prepared to ask questions when in doubt. Teachers maintain a brisk pace and raise many issues for the students to resolve. In some lessons, students contribute as much through discussion as the teacher, though few opportunities occur for demonstrating and confirming understanding at the whiteboard.
130. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, teachers lead strongly throughout the lesson, but rely too heavily on the textbook. Learning in Year 12 is held back by below average teaching time. This leads topics to be considered in too little depth, and seriously limits opportunities for students to practise newly taught skills. Teaching and learning for students retaking GCSE are satisfactory, but some students are not able to attend all of their lessons. Too little use is made of ICT.
131. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a shared commitment between subject staff to build on what has been achieved. Assessment procedures are well established but are not used well to focus students' attention on what they need to do to improve. Units of work are assessed less frequently than in most subjects, and students in Year 12, for example, were unaware of their targets or how to achieve them. The quality of teaching is monitored regularly and this is effective in enhancing teachers' skills. Teachers use much of their time outside

lessons to support students, and numbers have been largely maintained since the beginning of the current courses.

Biology

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

Strengths

- Teachers explain difficult ideas well.
- Students have access to good textual resources.
- Students receive good advice on how to do well in external examinations.

Weaknesses

- Standards are below average.
- Learning targets and guidance on reaching them are not clear enough.
- Schemes of work and other learning opportunities need further development.

132. Standards in Year 13 are below average, but represent satisfactory achievement for most students, who work steadily. There is, however, a significant amount of unsatisfactory achievement in Year 12, where standards are well below average. Around one-half of students have adapted well to the demands of their AS course; other students have a weak attitude to work and unsatisfactory attendance records, and as a result they are finding it very hard to cope. In one lesson during the inspection, only half of the students were present. So far, students have developed a better understanding of cell structure, the molecules involved in biological processes, and the cardio-vascular system. In lessons seen students mostly understood how cells in plant roots and shoots are organised and how information stored in biological molecules is replicated when new molecules are made. This represents satisfactory progress in lessons.
133. Students in Year 13 have a basic understanding of their course material. For example, they know that the liver is located just beneath the diaphragm, removes poisons from the body and helps to keep it in equilibrium. They have a sound understanding of the structure and function of different parts of the digestive system. Written work is generally well organised and detailed. However, they do not clearly understand more complex issues relating to the course, and have difficulty in organising their knowledge to meet the demands of examinations.
134. Teaching is satisfactory, and sometimes good. Both teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use well to explain difficult ideas to students. Students' work and teachers' planning show that steps are being taken to broaden the range of learning. However, there is scope to develop this much further, especially in ICT and in practical work. There are two main weaknesses in teaching. Firstly, the learning goals in each lesson are not sufficiently emphasised at the start of the lesson, and plenary sessions do not sum up the key things that have been learnt. Second, too much teaching focuses on exposition at the expense of developing students' independent learning skills and a broader appreciation of the subject.
135. Students in Year 13 are rising to the challenges and deadlines set but too many students in Year 12 are falling behind. Those students who work hard feel they are mostly achieving their target grades because they have access to good quality textbooks. Teachers follow coursework requirements closely, and give students good advice on how to answer examination questions. However, they also say that learning in most lessons is very similar, and many would like more variety. The poor attitudes of some students in Year 12 are a big obstacle to learning.
136. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. Good feedback on regular topic tests, assessed practical work, reports and predicted grades helps students understand how well they are doing. Teachers pay close attention to the requirements of examinations. However, there are no additional schemes of work to help teachers co-ordinate their work and develop higher quality learning opportunities, and students are not involved sufficiently in evaluating their work in co-operation with teachers. There is no clear plan for improving provision.

BUSINESS STUDIES

Business studies was inspected at AS, A level and intermediate vocational level.

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

Strengths

- Achievement is very good in all courses.
- There is a good range of vocational and academic courses.
- There is very good teaching and assessment.
- The department is very well led and managed, and is building links with the local business community.
- Students taking intermediate vocational courses make very good use of ICT.

Areas for improvement

- In some classes students do not show enough independence in their learning.
- There is too little access to ICT outside intermediate vocational courses.

137. Standards in Year 13 are above average, and most students gained A or B grades at AS in 2002. All students continued to A level after successfully completing the AS course. Standards in the intermediate vocational course are average. Achievement is very good overall, and some students who have successfully completed the vocational course have adapted well to advanced work. Male and female students reach similar standards in Year 13, but some female students in Year 12 are falling short of their target grades because of literacy problems. Individual students using English as an additional language are achieving very well. Although some have difficulties with vocabulary and comprehension, the department is addressing these very well.
138. Students taking the Intermediate vocational course respond well to the challenge of work placement with a focus on customer service, and make good use of their opportunities to use computers. AS and A-level students make good use of their part-time employment, visits and conferences to inform their studies. The consistently high quality of the teaching builds very good attitudes among the students, who appreciate their teachers' work. However, a few students fail to attend regularly and are sometimes late to lessons.
139. Teaching and learning are very good. Lessons are very well paced, and pay good attention to key skills in communication and numeracy. Teachers use questions very well to assess understanding and to encourage students to think for themselves. They focus very well on literacy issues and business terminology. Not all teachers have experience in business and industry, but the department is developing good contacts with local businesses. Year 13 students understand takeovers and mergers, and the economies of scale. Higher attaining students have a very good knowledge of recent development in the retail and travel industries. In Year 12, AS students have secure knowledge of business theory and practice and show a good understanding of stock control systems. Intermediate students are developing a good level of knowledge about sole traders and partnerships. Students often use case studies very well. Marking and assessment are rigorous, and students have a clear understanding of examination requirements. However, there is too little access to ICT in most lessons, and students sometimes use photocopied material on topics that they should be researching for themselves.
140. The department is managed very well. Good teamwork has helped to establish the subject on a very firm foundation. New courses have been effectively introduced, planning is good and documentation is comprehensive and readily accessible. Student and unqualified teachers are very well supported, and make a valuable contribution to learning. There is a clear vision for the future in the bid to gain special status in business and enterprise.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

AS, A- level and intermediate vocational courses in ICT were inspected.

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

Strengths:

- Good teaching and learning result in good progress.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour are good, and often very good.
- Standards and progress are closely and effectively monitored.
- Students appreciate the provision and the work of their teachers.
- The subject is led and managed well.

Areas for improvement:

- The head of department has too few opportunities to monitor teaching.
- A school Intranet site would promote consistent learning.
- There are insufficient books in the library.

141. Standards are broadly average overall, but below average in the AS course in Year 12, where many students, transferring from the GCSE course in Year 11, find the work challenging. Standards of students following the Intermediate GNVQ full course and the A-level course are above average. Improving provision and very effective support and guidance for all students ensure good overall achievement. A significant proportion of students are improving on their predicted grades.
142. The work of students undertaking the post-16 courses shows good understanding of a range of industry standard software and the role of ICT in industry and society. Students are aware of the strengths and limitations of the software they use, and use the Internet effectively to gather information. As a result, they can explain why they choose hardware and software for specific tasks, when solving real problems. For example, one student produced a database solution for his father's business, replacing a paper-based system by a more efficient computer-based system. Students work well independently. They enjoy their work and are keen and enthusiastic learners. AS students in Year 12 develop sound research skills when looking at the benefits and limitations of Internet shopping. They also increase their awareness of the social implications, such as the benefits for people with disabilities.
143. Teaching is good overall, with some very good features. Staff know the subject well and plan to meet the needs of all students, ensuring that learning opportunities are maximised and students achieve the highest grades they can. They make good use of interactive whiteboards. Very good assessment systems and regular monitoring and support for students whilst working ensure any problems are cleared up quickly. Students know exactly what they have to do to improve; they make good progress and standards improve significantly as a result. Very good relationships with students create a pleasant working atmosphere where students feel confident to ask for help if they need it and are motivated to do their best. Staff are very willing to give up their free time and are always available to help and support, both at lunchtimes and after school.
144. Management of the sixth form provision is good, and significant improvements have been made since September. New courses have started and staff have had appropriate training and liaison closely regarding teaching programmes. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the head of department to monitor the teaching and learning in the sixth form and share good practice. Very good assessment systems track students' progress effectively, involving them at all stages. Students set their own targets and time scales. Because students have insufficient access to computers outside lessons, they can use equipment not being used in other classes. Book resources in the library are inadequate and out of date, and students would benefit from access to a school Intranet site. The department is aware of the areas for development and plans are in place to address them.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

145. No subjects were fully inspected, but physical education was sampled at AS and A level. Good teaching and learning lead to broadly average standards, with good achievement from higher-attaining students in sport. Numbers on examination courses are, however, very low.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

GNVQ vocational courses in health and social care were inspected at intermediate and advanced level, and the AS course was inspected. Some groups have only a few students, but a high proportion of students complete their courses, which offer very effective preparation for work.

Health and Social Care

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

Strengths

- Very good teaching and learning leads to success in examinations.
- Students achieve very well.
- Students have very positive views of the subject.

Areas for development

- A few students rely too heavily on the teacher, rather than thinking for themselves.
- Students do not have easy access to computers during lessons.
- Learning would benefit from improved community links.

146. 2002 results in the intermediate vocational course were broadly average and showed very good achievement, particularly in view of the very high proportion of students who had English as an additional language. No students with special educational needs were taking the subject during the inspection, but one achieved a distinction in the intermediate course in 2002. Students taking AS achieved results which were in line with those to be expected from their GCSE predictions, and two thirds of these students have continued to A level. Work seen during the inspection was also of a broadly average overall standard, and represents very good achievement. The subject continues to attract a high proportion of students, almost all female, with English as an additional language
147. All of the current Year 12 students passed their first unit of work at either their predicted grade or higher. Students have well-maintained folios that contain a good volume of work. Drafting and re-drafting the work in the light of feedback from teachers overcomes weak literacy skills. Students are able to work independently on computers, but the location of machines creates difficulties during lessons because students have to disperse to computers around the school. A group of three Year 12 students are on target to pass intermediate GNVQ. They were able to define poisoning, knew a lot about food poisoning and how to treat instances of poisoning. They could recall most types of poisons but knew little about solvents, inhaled and splashed poisons.
148. In Year 13, A-level students taking design and make a toy for a child they are studying. They are good at focusing design ideas on a particular area of child development, such as telling the time or colour recognition. Students can recall the main factors that affect child development, and discuss issues surrounding them. They express their own views clearly, and by listening to the views of others. They are less successful when asked for precise definitions of technical vocabulary, only half of which were correct in a lesson observed. These students rely too much on teachers' contributions in lessons, and do not think sufficiently for themselves. Students have adequate numeracy skills, chiefly in handling and interpreting data. They use their own cultural and ethnic backgrounds when carrying out research. However, students' weak literacy skills and examination technique hold back standards in tests. Teachers are working hard to improve these skills.
149. Teaching and learning are very good. Planning is a particular strength at all levels, and relationships are very good. Students respond very well, and have a good attitude demonstrated by the effort they are willing to put into their work. Assessment is a strong feature of the work

and students act on the very good feedback that they receive. Students speak very positively about the subject and the help and support they receive from teachers. Teachers are very good at improving key skills, particularly communication and literacy.

150. The subject benefits from very good leadership and management. Systems are in place to promote good learning and to monitor achievement. In order to move the work forward, more links need to be established in the local community to increase students' knowledge and understanding in a wider context.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

151. No subjects were fully inspected, but drama and theatre studies, music, music technology and media studies were sampled. The quality of teaching and learning in these subjects ranges from good to very good, although, apart from media studies, teaching groups are very small. Teachers use this opportunity well to provide high levels of personal support to students, who have good opportunities to pursue their own interests, including performance. There is very good practical work in drama, and particularly good use of advanced equipment for music technology, although students' compositions are more limited in scope. There is a good range and quality of essays in Year 13 media studies.

HUMANITIES

152. Geography, psychology and law were inspected, and religious education (RE) and history were sampled. RE is taught to all students through general studies. Over 20 students are taking advanced courses. Teaching and learning during the inspection were very good, and students' attitudes and behaviour exemplary. Standards are above average. Standards in history are also above average, reflecting good teaching and learning, and effective assessment.

Geography

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

What the school does well

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Students are provided with very good fieldwork opportunities.
- Students' attitudes and their relationships with teachers are very good.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

What could be improved

- The number of students choosing to study geography is low.

153. Eight students study geography at AS level and eight at A level, with one group at each level. Only one student dropped the subject between AS and A level, due to over-commitment to too many subjects. Standards overall are average, and this represents very good achievement for this group of students. Male and female students reach similar standards. Students have very positive views of the subject and the quality of the teaching they receive. They thoroughly enjoy geography and work very hard.
154. Because of the teachers' excellent subject knowledge and the challenge that is provided, students learn very well. Year 13 students were investigating ways of making urban environments more sustainable through judicious management, and they were working in pairs to evaluate possible futuristic developments such as floating cities. This led to the development of independent thinking skills and the presentation of coherent oral arguments. Year 12 students were simulating the role of meteorological consultants preparing a report for the organiser of an open-air concert which was developing their learning about weather systems and their movements.
155. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers manage students' learning very well, keeping them aware of the requirements of their examinations. They plan challenging lesson activities with well-structured tasks and interesting resources that develop knowledge and skills through

students' participation. At no time was there any didactic teaching or dictation of notes. Lessons always move at a fast pace, establishing and maintaining a high level of students' interest. Students are aware of their progress in terms of target grades and they are becoming independent learners. ICT is well used as a tool for research and learning. One student with special educational needs was seen and was making very good progress in line with the rest of the group.

156. The subject is very well managed at this level with a strong commitment to improving results and attracting larger groups of students. A good range of learning opportunities is provided, including very good fieldwork expeditions. Students' progress is regularly assessed; very good marking gives plenty of guidance for improvement. The subject has the capacity to develop further as a strong and successful sixth-form department.

Law

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

Strengths

- Standards are above average and students achieve very well.
- Teaching is of a high standard. It is based on extensive professional legal experience, and has a very clear emphasis on literacy.
- Numbers are growing, and a high proportion of students complete their course.
- The subject is expertly managed to ensure the best possible results for students.

Areas for improvement

- Students have good computer skills, but ICT is not being used enough in the classroom.
- The attitudes and attendance of some students in Year 12 are not good enough and this is affecting their progress.

157. Standards in Year 13 are above average, and most students achieved A and B grades in AS examinations in 2002. All students have continued into the second year of the course. There are a number of higher-attaining students in Year 12, but also some who find the subject difficult because of weaknesses in English. Standards in Year 12 are broadly average. Numbers of male and female students are similar and they are achieving equally well. Overall achievement is very good in relation to results in previous tests or examinations.

158. Attitudes are good overall and very good in Year 13. Students work very hard, contribute well in class and prepare well for lessons because they are very eager to do well. In Year 12, however, some students fail to attend class regularly or to complete set work. Some students are using English as an additional language but there is no evidence that this is having an overall impact on standards. All students require support with legal language and unfamiliar vocabulary.

159. Students make very good progress because teaching has a major focus on meeting this need. In a very effective lesson the teacher clearly understood that students needed support with vocabulary and that they were not familiar with concepts such as the 'glass ceiling' that still prevents women reaching the higher positions in the legal profession. The issues and legal language related to this topic were explored very effectively because of the care in planning, particularly in the identification of unfamiliar language. This approach helped all students, including those using English as an additional language.

160. Students respond well to the teacher's effective and challenging questioning. In Year 12, they recall knowledge gained from previous lessons well and most use legal language with increasing confidence. They are confident in using websites to research specific issues but there are no computers available in the classroom. In Year 13, higher-attaining students can explain different aspects of criminal liability and cite case law and precedent with real confidence. All students show secure knowledge of possible defences in criminal law and understand that ignorance of the law is not one of them. Written work shows real understanding of the varied aspects of the course, for example the importance of statute law, the youth justice system and aspects of European law. Teaching is very good and at times excellent. Excellent

subject knowledge and the application of this, and of current experience in the profession, ensure very effective learning.

161. Management is very good. Year 13 students particularly value visits to courts and to student conferences. Assessment data are readily available and there are very detailed schemes of work. Resources are managed well and the new courses have been effectively introduced, although ICT is not used as much as it could be. Overall, this is a successful and increasingly popular subject that is promoting high standards.

Psychology

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

Strengths

- Lessons and resources are well planned and prepared.
- The teacher knows the subject very well.
- Teaching pays very effective attention to the skills required for examinations.
- Relationships between teacher and students are very positive.

Areas for development

- Higher-attaining students could be challenged further.
- Students need to read more widely, and to improve their study skills.
- More extensive use could be made of ICT.

162. Standards in Year 13 are above average. AS results in 2002 were good, and all students continued to A level. Achievement in Year 13 is very good, and students are expected to achieve above average grades at A level. Standards in Year 12 are broadly average, and some students are on track for higher grades than would be expected from their GCSE results.

163. Year 12 files of work are very well organised, and each has a glossary of terms and topic specifications. Students, all female, demonstrate a good level of knowledge in their written work. However, there is little evidence of reading beyond that provided in lessons, and some students do not easily recall key studies and technical terms when asked by the teacher. Students work well in small groups because the teacher organises them into mixed ability groups to improve the quality of discussion and learning. In the introduction to a new topic, students can apply aspects of 'memory' to their own experiences. The teacher's use of structured tasks in a lesson on evaluation skills challenged the passivity of some students, but some higher-attaining students could be challenged more to justify their answers.

164. Year 13 students use key terms and concepts well in written work and discussion. They can distinguish between cause and effect, and understand directional effect. They can summarise theories, such as Freud's interpretation of depression, and apply their understanding, for example relating their knowledge of twin studies to a television programme. All but one are female. Most are confident in discussion. Some students volunteer additional information, developing ideas expressed by others. Their retention of previously acquired information is sound. Files are very well organised. Again, there is limited evidence of wider reading. Students use a good level of evaluation and analysis in written work.

165. Teaching and learning are good in Year 12 and very good in Year 13. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and structures lessons well. Pace is very good in Year 13, but is a little slower in Year 12. In Year 13, students work together co-operatively, and the teacher relates the outcome of this work skilfully to the requirements of the examination. Students are well motivated, and the teacher fosters good relationships that give them the confidence to take risks in discussion. Students are provided with good resources, including summaries of key studies and frameworks for note taking, and there is a good variety of teaching styles. For example, Year 13 students enthusiastically took on the role of 'expert', to explain depression, and responded efficiently to the requirement to summarise theories of clinical depression in 100 words. Work is assessed in detail. Students receive individual targets for improvement, and are given credit for progress towards them. Students need to be encouraged to undertake more independent work, particularly to move on from the content of lessons and the set text to wider

reading. Numeracy and literacy skills are developed well through statistics and coursework, but there is very little use of ICT.

166. Provision for psychology is very well organised. The subject attracts large numbers of students, but some find it very difficult, and six students of the 25 students who started Year 12 in 2002 have dropped the subject. The head of psychology has plans to offer taster sessions to prospective students in Year 11 from this year.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

167. English literature and English language were inspected at AS, and English literature at A level. Work in French was sampled. The quality of teaching and learning in French is very good, and the standard of work seen was above average. Imaginative and very well informed teaching helps students to develop fluency in speaking, and to make the transition from GCSE to AS. Students' attitudes and participation are excellent, but the teaching group is small, with only four students.

English

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

Strengths

- Standards in examination coursework are above average.
- Teachers know their subject very well.
- Students have good attitudes to the subject. Most work hard to achieve their best.

Areas for improvement

- Students need clearer guidance on what they need to do to succeed.
- Opportunities for learning outside lessons are rather limited.

168. Standards on entry to the sixth form are broadly average for advanced courses. Students show good achievement in Years 12 and 13, and the overall standard of work seen during the inspection was above average.
169. Students put forward and justify their opinions thoughtfully in class discussions. They also demonstrate good analytical, close-reading skills in their written work. Coursework essays are thorough and well structured, with detailed reference to texts studied. All students make good use of opportunities to redraft and polish their writing, taking into account comments and advice from their teachers. In literature courses, most make a confident and perceptive analysis of character, theme and style in the plays, novels and poetry set. In one Year 13 lesson, on Blake's poem 'The little black boy', students showed a sensitive engagement with textual detail and a strong personal response to its overall message. Creative writing seen for the AS-level language course was fluent and expressive. It was well researched and developed. Written work is presented to a high standard, using ICT effectively.
170. Teaching is good. Planning to ensure the coverage of work is thorough. Teachers also monitor students' progress carefully and are prepared to give additional personal help and guidance where it is needed. Their expectations are high, particularly for the development of written work. In the best practice, students' essays are assessed promptly, with detailed written comments that evaluate achievement constructively against specific examination grade criteria. Above all, teachers know their subject very well, and have a very good understanding of what students need to do to meet examining board requirements. The most effective lessons featured a lively interchange of ideas, and involved students actively in the work. A successful balance between teacher input and student contribution was not always fully achieved, however. Students themselves sometimes felt that there should be more opportunity to put forward their own views, in order to explore ideas by testing and challenging each other in open discussion.
171. Students have good attitudes to the subject. They work hard throughout their courses to increase their knowledge and understanding. Teachers do much to encourage them to develop

independent learning skills, through wider reading, note making and research. The department could help new students further by preparing a study guide, to make course requirements clearer and set out expectations for independent study. More generally, opportunities to widen students' horizons through external visits, study days and theatre trips are limited, and there are also no extra-curricular activities in the subject.

172. Leadership and management are good. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Regular departmental meetings and internal moderation exercises develop effective communication. Staff training is well supported, with particular importance attached to keeping up to date with changes in examination requirements.