

INSPECTION REPORT

GARIBALDI SCHOOL

MANSFIELD

LEA area: NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Unique reference number: 122830

Headteacher: Mrs Elaine Huckerby

Reporting inspector: Mr Brian Rowe
1695

Dates of inspection: 06 – 09 January 2003

Inspection number: 249855

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Forest Town Mansfield Nottinghamshire
Postcode:	NG19 0JX
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A McKie
Date of previous inspection:	17 February 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Garibaldi School is a mixed comprehensive for pupils aged 11-18 years, situated in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire. The majority of the pupils live in the immediate areas of Forest Town and Clipstone. Currently, the school is at full capacity and is regularly over-subscribed. Many of the children live in an area that is economically disadvantaged, but pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds. Overall, unemployment in the area is average. There are currently 1124 pupils on roll, of whom 131 attend the sixth form, making it larger than an average-sized secondary school. The proportion of boys (592) is similar to girls (532), but varies between years. Only 18 pupils come from minority ethnic groups, a very much lower proportion than average. Virtually all of them are fluent in the English language. There are no refugees or pupils from a traveler background. About 15 per cent of pupils receive free school meals and this proportion is close to the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry is well below the national average. About 12 per cent of the pupils have been placed on the special educational needs register, of whom 32 have been assessed to have a high level of learning difficulty. These proportions are average when compared to other secondary schools. Four pupils have statements for special educational needs; this is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Garibaldi School is a good, effective and improving school. Pupils start with low standards of literacy and numeracy and the school does well for them so that by the end of Year 11 they achieve standards that are in line with the national average and above average in comparison with pupils in similar schools. The sixth form is cost effective and students achieve well. Across the school, effective teaching and positive relationships ensure pupils make good progress. Parents and pupils are rightly pleased about what the school offers them. The school is led well by the governors and headteacher, but long-term strategic planning is an area for development. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Effective teaching has led to good improvements in the quality of pupils' and students' work and in their examination results.
- Innovative and sensitive leadership has created a positive ethos in school where staff feel valued and are determined to improve the quality of education.
- Parents and pupils value the quality of care given to pupils and the school is held in high esteem in the community.
- A high level of consideration for all the pupils ensures they are fully involved in school life and develop well as responsible young people.
- A varied curriculum programme offers relevant and worthwhile courses for pupils of all abilities in Years 10 and 11.

What could be improved

- The range and organisation of courses offered to sixth form students.
- Communicating the long-term strategic planning for developing the sixth form and improvements to the quality of accommodation.
- The quality of the accommodation to match the number of pupils on roll and the wide range of courses offered to the pupils and students.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1997 and has accomplished good improvement since that time. It has successfully addressed many of the recommendations identified in the last inspection, with the exception of providing daily worship and religious education in the sixth form. The school has also made improvements in many other important areas. These include: considerably raising pupils' and students' attainment; improving the quality of teaching and learning; making good use of assessment data and providing greater curriculum opportunities for pupils. The school has also been successful in gaining a School Curriculum Award, the Sportsmark Award and maintaining Investors in People status. Improvements have been made to the accommodation and the number of computers for pupils' use.

STANDARD

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
GCSE examinations	E	D	C	B	Very high well above average A*
A-levels/AS-levels	E	D	n/a	n/a	A above average B average C below average D well below average E very low E*

Pupils enter school with overall standards that are well below average. The school does well for its pupils. By the time they leave at 16 they achieve standards in line with the national average and above in comparison to similar schools. The results of both the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 and GCSE examinations have improved greatly since the last inspection. The most recent 2002 GCSE results are the best the school has ever achieved. The school has been successful in meeting its examination targets during the last two years. A high proportion of pupils are entered for examinations and virtually all gain some success. During the last few years, girls have out-performed boys at a similar extent to national trends. The best results have been in English, food technology, history, mathematics, science and physical education. By the age of 14, pupils' results in tests are below the national average and just below average when compared to similar schools. However, pupils achieve well and make good progress in Years 7 to 9. The results are reflected in the work seen in lessons. Standards in mathematics are slightly better than in English and science. Literacy and numeracy skills are close to average and developing well in most subjects. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in the courses they follow. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve similarly well. The pupils' use of computers and other aspects of technology in most subjects are good.

The attainment of students in the sixth form is now close to the national average and the school has gradually improved its examination results over the last three years. The students, who finish their courses, achieve well and gain results in line with those predicted from the grades of GCSE examinations. However, too many do not complete the courses they have started because they do not have the necessary level of attainment from GCSE to tackle the advanced level courses or they seek employment. The school sets itself challenging, but realistic examination targets. Most targets were met in 2001 and 2002 and there is confidence in the school about further improvements being achieved in 2003.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The majority of pupils are enthusiastic about their lessons, well motivated, interested in learning and they develop a good work ethic.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good in classrooms. Around the school and outside in the grounds it is satisfactory. Some pupils do not always observe common courtesy in the corridors and push past others. Outside, rough horseplay is too common.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good as a result of the school's expectations that pupils will act responsibly and follow the code of conduct. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is similar to the national average and good when compared with similar schools.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is good throughout the school and has improved since the last inspection. In the sixth form there were no unsatisfactory lessons seen during the inspection. The quality of teaching is good in most subjects and is the main reason why pupils are making good progress and achieving well. During the inspection, teaching was especially effective in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, history, physical education, music and religious education. In modern languages and geography, teaching was satisfactory, but not as effective as in other subject areas. Generally, teaching is effective because teachers have a high level of subject expertise and manage the pupils well in class. In many subjects, teachers' expectations are very high and this ensures most pupils are challenged to achieve well. Teachers are mostly successful at matching the work to meet the needs of pupils. In a small minority of lessons, learning is over-directed by the teachers and pupils are too passive, not developing sufficient self-motivation or their own 'culture for learning'. This is the case for a relatively small number of pupils, mostly boys, who find it hard to concentrate when not sufficiently active or positively engaged in lessons. Teachers provide pupils and sixth form students with individual support when necessary and make good use of systematic assessment to ensure a good rate of progress is maintained, both in lessons and throughout the units of work. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to effective teaching. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make similarly good progress. The promotion of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects is developing well. Virtually all pupils and sixth form students use computers confidently. Homework is used well to consolidate and develop learning, but practice is inconsistent between teachers and departments.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the learning activities offered to pupils are satisfactory for Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form and very good for Years 10 and 11. The curriculum is considerably enhanced by the provision of a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Many sporting and musical activities are offered, as well as many areas of study support.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The high level of support for pupils with special educational needs is part of the school's commitment to ensure all pupils have access to all aspects of school life and an equality of opportunity to succeed.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision for pupils with little English is good. Tremendous care is taken to provide support by using others, who speak the same language, and placing them in groups that match their ability.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school's positive ethos and very supportive relationships combine to promote a good provision for pupils' and students' personal, moral, social and cultural development. Their spiritual development is satisfactory. Tolerance, understanding and inclusion underpin the school's ethos and provision for pupils' personal development. The good overall provision has a positive effect on pupils' learning.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well cared for and arrangements for child protection are good. Assessment arrangements are good and used effectively to track pupils' progress and help raise standards.

Parents have positive views about the school. They receive good information about school life, how their children are doing and are always made to feel welcome.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher, who is well supported by senior staff and governors, provides innovative and sensitive leadership and gives a clear direction for the school. Most aspects of the school are managed effectively, but more attention should be given to longer term planning and developments.
How well the governors fulfill their responsibilities	The governing body is well informed about school issues. Governors fully understand their responsibility and contribute well to the school's development. They do not fully meet statutory requirements for providing a daily act of collective worship or teaching religious education in the sixth form.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring by the headteacher and senior staff has improved since the last inspection. It identifies many of the strengths and areas for development and these are recorded in the school's plans for improvement. However, the monitoring by some heads of departments is still not sufficiently rigorous.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its resources and additional funds. It correctly applies the principles of achieving best value to all major purchases.

The school has sufficient appropriately qualified staff to teach the curriculum effectively and to meet the needs of pupils and sixth form students. Overall, learning resources are satisfactory and there is a very good provision of computers to enhance learning. The accommodation is wholly inadequate for the numbers on roll and the curriculum it offers.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school sent out 1124 questionnaires of which 78 (6.9 per cent) were returned. Seventeen parents attended a meeting prior to the inspection to express their views about the school.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Pupils make good progress. • Pupils' behaviour. • The teaching is good. • The school has high expectations of the pupils. • They feel comfortable in approaching the school with problems. • The school provides a good range of activities outside of lessons. • The school helps pupils to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework. • Providing more information about their children's progress. • The school working more closely with parents.

The inspection team fully endorse the positive views expressed by parents. They do not agree with the views concerning homework and the information provided about pupils' progress. In both these aspects they found the provision to be good. The school works hard to involve parents in their children's learning and life in school.

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM GARIBALDI SCHOOL

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form of this above average-sized school has 131 students. It offers an extensive range of AS and A2 examinations and a limited number of vocational courses. About 40 per cent of students from the main school continue their education in the sixth form and an increasing number enter it from other schools. Most students entering the sixth form pursue AS and A2 Level courses, or a mixture of AS/A2 and vocational courses, although a few follow an exclusively vocational programme of study. Entry to the sixth form is open to all students who are committed to further study. Nearly 42 per cent of students enter higher education when they finish their sixth form studies.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

This is an adequate sixth form, which is generally cost effective. The overall standards achieved are just below national figures, but attainment in relation to course expectations and previous achievements is good. This is because teaching is good and students have positive attitudes to their work. The range of courses offered is not always appropriate to meet the differing interests and aptitudes of all students. The school makes good provision for students' personal development, including their moral, social and cultural development. Teachers are committed to their students and care for them very well. Students are prepared well for the next stage of their education. However, information and guidance about alternative training and employment opportunities are limited.

Strengths

- Access to the sixth form enabling students with a wide range of ability to continue their education beyond the compulsory years of education.
- The quality of teaching and the commitment by staff to high achievement for the students.
- Monitoring and reviewing procedures to support the students' academic progress.
- Relationships between staff and students and the positive attitudes students have to their work.

What could be improved

- The range of courses offered to students and organisation of the curriculum.
- The adequacy of sixth form resources and accommodation.
- The advice and guidance given to students before they select courses to study in the sixth form.
- Meeting the statutory requirements for religious education.

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
English	Good. A Level results have been well below national averages, but improved significantly in 2002. AS results in 2002 were also good. Teaching is good and supports the achievement of the students, who are doing better than predicted.
Mathematics	Very good. Results at A Level have improved over the last three years and were good in 2002. Teaching on all courses is very good. Students have very positive attitudes and make good progress.
Physics	Good. Examination results at AS and A Level are below average. However, students make good progress when compared with their GCSE results. Students have very positive attitudes to the subject as a result of good teaching and the good support they receive. Leadership and management are good.
Health and Social Care	Satisfactory. The small number of students taking the examination achieved well due to good teaching and positive attitudes of students to the course. The planning and co-ordination of the subject are good, but some students do not receive the adequate time due to a timetable clash with other subjects.
ICT	Good. Results for the new courses are well below average. However, effective teaching ensures pupils make good progress. Students have positive attitudes and achieve well.
Sociology	Satisfactory. Standards are improving and the subject is becoming more popular in the sixth form. Teaching is good and students are well supported. There are few resources in the library to promote independent learning.
Business Studies	Good. Overall, standards are good with many students achieving better than expected grades. The good teaching and students' very positive attitudes to learning in this subject contribute well to their success. Leadership and management are good, especially reviewing appropriate courses to be offered.
Leisure and Recreation/Travel and Tourism.	Satisfactory. The one entry in travel and tourism in 2002 attained the highest grade and achieved well. The attainment of the four students in leisure and recreation was below average. The standards of the work, on both courses, seen during the inspection were average. Teaching and learning are satisfactory.
Psychology	Satisfactory. Standards in 2002 for the small number of students on the course are below expectations. Achievement in lessons is better than examination results indicate. Teaching provides students with a good introduction to the course and students have positive attitudes to their work.

Work was sampled in many other subjects during the inspection week. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning was good.

The provision in **media studies** is satisfactory. In 2002, most students performed better than predicted from their GCSE results. Teaching observed was good and students have positive attitudes to their learning. The provision in **chemistry** is good. The attainment of students is above average at A Level and represents good progress from GCSE. The teaching was good and this ensures that the attitude of students is very good. The provision in **biology** is good. The attainment of students is below average at A Level, but in line at AS Level. The teaching observed was very good and there are very good relationships between teachers and students. The provision in **general studies** is satisfactory. Over the last three years, results have fluctuated. In 2002, students achieved well. The teaching observed was satisfactory and students have very positive attitudes to learning. The provision in **design and technology** is good. Standards gained are satisfactory and students achieve well. Retention of students to the course is excellent and many continue the subject in higher education. The provision in **art and design** is satisfactory. Standards in examinations are below the national average. However, achievement is good due to the effective teaching and positive attitudes of the students. The provision in **music technology** and **performing studies** is good. Examination results are satisfactory. The teaching and learning are good, promoting positive attitudes by students to their learning. The provision in **history** is good. Results in 2002 are below average, but have improved at both AS and A Level. Teaching and learning are good and students make good progress. The provision in sports studies is very good. Standards are improving and this is reflected in the 2002 results that are in line with national averages. Students achieve well as teaching and learning are good and lessons are thoroughly planned. Standards are above average and improving. The provision in **French** is good and students are achieving national expectations in A Level French, an improvement since the last inspection. Their achievement is good due to their positive attitudes supported by good teaching. Management of the subject is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	<p>All, who achieve sufficient GCSE results, are invited to go into the sixth form where academic and two vocational courses can be studied. Students can change courses within a six-week period if they feel they have made a wrong choice. The numbers studying most courses are small, ensuring attention, good support and feedback for all students. Although providing quite a wide range of A Level courses, the school does not always match these to individual students' abilities, needs or ambition, which in part accounts for the early 'drop-out' rate of 15 per cent. Students spoke highly of the support they received from their teachers.</p> <p>Key skills are identified in teachers' planning and taught through subjects creating opportunities for students to develop these skills to support their learning. Monitoring the effectiveness and impact on achievement has not yet taken place. A small number of students are developing key skills portfolios to obtain accreditation. This aspect of the curriculum is developing well.</p>
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	<p>Overall, leadership and management of the sixth form are good. There has been a strong focus on raising standards through the monitoring of the quality of teaching and students' progress. Equal emphasis has been placed on students' personal development. There is a clear vision of educational direction in the sixth form. However, the governors and senior staff have not committed their future priorities to a long-term development plan. There are aspects of curriculum organisation and the guidance on suitable course for students that need attention. The sixth form is mostly cost effective.</p>

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"> • Good support and guidance for A2 and AS courses. • Positive relationships between students and teachers. • Teaching is good and students are challenged to succeed. • Teachers have high expectations, know students well and help them to achieve. • Teachers are readily accessible to provide help. • They enjoy sixth form life and would recommend it to other pupils. • School responds to the views of sixth form students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on alternative courses, training and career opportunities. • The organisation of GCSE examinations that are retaken in the sixth form. • Condition of the facilities and accommodation, especially the toilets.

The inspectors agree with the views expressed by students and these are well supported by inspection evidence.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Results and achievements in Years 7 to 9

1. When pupils start school in Year 7, their overall attainment is well below expectations and their skills in literacy and numeracy are not well developed. The level of attainment fluctuates slightly each year. There are, however, several pupils in each year, who are achieving the highest grades in national tests and examinations.
2. In the 2002 tests, taken at the age of 14, pupils' attainment overall was well below the national average. During the same year, attainment in English was just below average and in mathematics and science it was well below average. When compared with similar schools¹, results are just below average. In the 2002 tests, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 6 grades was below the national average, but an improvement on the previous year. From 1997 to 2002, girls outperformed boys, but to a lesser extent than national trends. During this period, the school improved pupils' attainment at the same rate as the national trend.
3. The quality of pupils' work seen during the inspection was slightly better than the attainment indicated by these latest test results. In Years 7 to 9, pupils are achieving well and for many their progress is good. There are a number of factors that have contributed to the improving trend:
 - effective leadership and management;
 - improved planning and departmental schemes of work;
 - making better use of assessment information to set pupils targets for achievement;
 - improvements in the quality of teaching and learning;
 - successfully implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies;
 - increased use of computers.
4. In virtually all lessons seen during the inspection, pupils made good progress. Pupils with special educational needs achieved well in their learning, especially when they received specific support in lessons. Inspection evidence suggests that pupils are currently attaining at a slightly better level to the 2002 national tests in English, mathematics and science, reflecting that for a few years the school has made these the priority for development. Attainment is close to national expectations in design and technology, history, music and physical education. In all other subjects it is below average. In religious education, standards are below the local requirements. There were no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls in these subjects. Overall, pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and make good progress from where they started in Year 7.

Results and achievements in Years 10 and 11

5. In the most recent 2002 GCSE examinations, results improved again and were the highest ever achieved by the school. This result is in line with the national average and well above the average for similar schools. From 1997 to 2002, girls outperformed boys by a similar extent to the national trend. Over the last four years, the trend in the school's performance at GCSE has been considerably above the

¹ Similar schools are identified by using the number of pupils claiming free school meals.

national trend of improvement. This is an indication that the above average and average-attaining pupils are achieving well and gaining good examination results. The proportion of pupils achieving the lower five or more A*-G grades also improved and was above the national average and well above similar school averages. This reflects the school's determination to ensure that all pupils, whatever their ability, achieve well and gain success in accredited courses. The proportion of pupils, who do not gain the expected examination success, is relatively small and an issue the school is working hard to tackle. In a few subjects, pupils have found it difficult to achieve well in examinations and this is mostly the result of long-term staff absence and recruitment difficulties.

6. The school has set itself challenging, but realistic GCSE targets for the 2003. Most targets were met in 2001 and 2002 and there is confidence in the school about further improvements being achieved in 2003. The school has implemented several strategies to raise standards in Years 10 and 11. These include: supporting individual pupils with a mentor to help them achieve their academic targets, using assessment information to set pupils precise targets to achieve, identifying pupils at risk of underachieving and providing examination revision clubs. Undoubtedly, the staff have worked hard to improve pupils' performance in Years 10 and 11. The school's analysis of its 2002 results has identified that only a relatively small number of pupils failed to achieve their predicted grade. The inspectors agree with this analysis.
7. In most subjects, the achievement of pupils in their GCSE examinations was close to, and in many cases above, predictions based on their prior attainment when measured at the end of Year 9. This is a clear indication that pupils make good progress in Years 10 and 11. In many subjects, pupils' attainment in Years 10 and 11 is currently in line with the national averages and, in physical education, is above this standard. In art and design and modern languages, attainment is below expectations.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They receive good levels of assistance from teaching and support staff and by occasional withdrawal by well-trained teaching assistants. There is an appropriate emphasis on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Suitable targets are recorded in their individual education plans. Pupils receive good levels of support to meet their social, emotional and behavioural needs arising from their learning difficulties.

Results and achievements in the sixth form

9. Most students entering the sixth form pursue AS and A2 level courses, or a mixture of AS/A2 and vocational courses. Entry to the sixth form is open to all students for whom there are appropriate courses and, who are committed to further study. About 40 per cent of students from the main school continue their education in the sixth form and an increasing number enter it from other schools. Nearly 42 per cent of students enter higher education when they finish their sixth form studies.
10. The attainment of students taking two or more GCE A/AS courses is now close to the national average and the school has gradually improved its examination results over the last three years. There is no significant difference between the examination results of male and female students. The students, who finish their examination courses, achieve well in their chosen subjects and gain results in line with those predicted from the grades of GCSE examinations. However, too many do not complete the courses they have started because they do not have the necessary level of attainment at GCSE to tackle the advanced level courses. Some leave the school to seek employment. Overall, the level of improvement is frequently good. Most

students are making good progress with developing their key skills, although the opportunities to use computers in the school are limited in some subjects.

Standards of literacy and numeracy in Years 7 to 11

11. Standards of literacy across the curriculum are just below average when pupils leave at the end of Year 11. Pupils have low levels of literacy skills when they start the school and improve each year. Pupils are easily understood when speaking, although, in most cases, their vocabulary is limited and they are often confined to short phrases. In some cases they do not listen closely enough so their replies are not relevant. Although reading attainment is below average, it is not weak enough to affect learning seriously across the curriculum. When writing, most pupils are competent enough to make their meaning clear, although they make mistakes in grammar and spelling. They use the appropriate technical language as required.
12. Standards of numeracy seen during the inspection improved as pupils progressed through the school. On entry they were well below average, but by the end of Year 9 the majority of pupils were able to do many basic mathematical skills in their heads and when necessary make appropriate use of a calculator. These skills continued to improve and by the end of Year 11, most higher- and middle-attaining pupils were confident to use their skills in other subjects, although sometimes only after a reminder.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Main school

13. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. The majority are enthusiastic about their lessons, well motivated, interested in learning and they develop a good work ethic. They value the merit system and are keen to complete their 'gold card', which leads to recognition amongst their peers. They are open, honest and not afraid to express their opinions. Relationships between pupils and with adults are good.
14. Pupils like school. The majority arrive on or before time in the mornings and many have enjoyed breakfast in the school's café before going to their tutor groups. Their attendance is similar to the national average and good when compared with other similar schools. Garibaldi ensures that pupils with special educational or other needs are very well integrated and absorbed within the school community. There is similarly good inclusion of the few, who speak English as an additional language. Pupils, who arrive mid-term or half-way through their schooling, having been excluded from other schools, are well supported and integrated with their peers.
15. Behaviour in most lessons is good: where this falls below an acceptable standard, teachers are quick to reprimand and deal with the offenders. Should they persist they are referred to the isolation room in order to reflect and to allow their peers to continue with their lessons. Those, who attend the inclusion centre either for additional help with basic skills or to discuss their behaviour targets, are well supported. A few recognise when their behaviour is becoming unacceptable and seek further help, which is indicative of the value and effectiveness of this unit.
16. Behaviour around the school and outside in the grounds is satisfactory. Some pupils do not always observe common courtesy in the corridors and push past others and outside some rough horseplay was observed. Whilst none of this behaviour appeared malicious some pupils were upset. Bullying does occur, but pupils have confidence in the school's systems to deal with this. The number of fixed-term exclusions has risen

slightly since the last inspection and the number of permanent exclusions has also increased, but they remain well below average for secondary schools.

17. Pupils' personal development is good as a result of the school's expectations that they will act responsibly and follow the code of conduct. They are reminded they have a duty to themselves and to others to behave well, to be aware of others' difficulties and to give help where it is needed. The majority respond well and the school is a well-ordered and generally tolerant society, a place where those who wish to can learn. Many take the opportunity to train as mentors in Years 8, 9 and 10. Year 11 pupils organised a 'leg waxing' for male teachers in order to raise money for charity. Problems are aired and usually resolved within tutor groups. Personal, social and health education lessons present pupils with a variety of scenarios to consider. For example, the interactive presentation on drugs and alcohol for Year 9 pupils gave them plenty of moral and social issues to consider. Good moral and social provision is helping the pupils and students to learn.

Personal development in the sixth form

18. Sixth-form students know that in order to achieve well in the courses they have chosen they should attend regularly and arrive punctually. They register in the mornings and their attendance is good, although too many drop out of courses before completion. The atmosphere is one of adult commitment and enjoyment. Good relationships with teachers, tutors and their peers are evident in students' very good attitudes and motivation. They talk confidently about their work and are not afraid of making mistakes. They feel they are treated with respect in the sixth form and their good behaviour reflects this. The immature behaviour of a small number of boys in Year 12 improves as they move through into Year 13. The sixth-form centre is a cohesive and supportive environment and students' personal development is good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

Teaching and learning in the main school

19. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school and there are examples of very good teaching in most subjects. Of the 125 lessons observed in Years 7 to 11 during the inspection, the quality of teaching was good in 40 per cent, very good in 27 per cent and satisfactory in 28 per cent. In only six lessons, some taught by temporary staff, did teaching not ensure pupils made adequate progress. Teaching was less than satisfactory in 5 per cent of lessons. The quality of teaching is now a strength in the school and has contributed to the progress pupils make and the raising of standards in all years. In addition, the quality of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' personal, moral and social development, their attitudes towards work and their behaviour in class and around the school. Through staff development and a focus on improving teaching, the school has made a good improvement since the last inspection.
20. The previous inspection report judged that unsatisfactory teaching was closely linked to several factors that included: some teaching led to pupils being too passive in lessons, work was not always well matched to the needs of the higher- and lower-attaining pupils, slow pace, inadequate use made of assessment in lessons, insufficient use made of individual educational plans for pupils with special educational needs, the quality of teaching in drama and pupils were not encouraged to become independent learners. This resulted in two key issues relating to improving the quality of teaching and learning. Findings in this inspection show that the school has successfully addressed most of these issues relating to teaching and learning,

although there is still room for further improvement in ensuring pupils develop their capacity to work by themselves and that teachers make better use of the individual education plans, matching the work to each individual pupil.

21. The quality of teaching is good in most subjects and is the main reason why pupils are making good progress and achieving well. During the inspection, teaching was especially effective in art and design, design and technology, history, English, mathematics, science, physical education, music and religious education. In modern languages and geography, teaching was satisfactory, but not as effective as in other subject areas. Teaching is effective because teachers have a high level of subject expertise and manage the pupils well in class. In many subjects, teachers' expectations are very high and this ensures most pupils are challenged to achieve well.
22. In the best lessons, teachers show good subject knowledge that is passed on to pupils with zest, interest and enthusiasm. The purpose of the lesson is effectively shared with pupils and this contributes well to their understanding of their own learning. Planning is very good, matching the scheme of work and ability of the pupils. Teachers use demonstration and explanation well to put across key teaching points. Relationships are good, with pupils being confident and secure with their teachers and support staff. In these lessons, pupils make very good progress and are keen to learn.
23. Within this context of a good provision for teaching, at times, learning becomes too directed by the teachers. Pupils are too passive, not developing sufficient self-motivation or their own 'culture for learning'. This is the case for a relatively small number of pupils, mostly boys, who find it hard to concentrate when not sufficiently active or positively engaged in lessons. They become distracted and this leads to inappropriate and poor behaviour. Many teachers deal with this situation well and keep the pupils working on task, but some teachers lack the behavioural management skills to cope with pupils' negative response. When this happens the amount of learning decreases and pupils lose interest in the subject. Many subjects make good use of information and communication technology to further pupils' learning. However, the school is aware this is an area for development, especially when classes cannot gain access to a computer suite.
24. Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly and this guides pupils in their future learning. The quality of marking is satisfactory, but there are inconsistencies in the use of constructive comments on how to improve. Teachers often use the results of marking to plan future lessons as well as the assessments they make of pupils' learning. They use homework in a beneficial way to support the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, but there are inconsistencies between classes.
25. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Learning is good in withdrawal groups and when pupils are working individually with teachers or support assistants. Teachers, with effective support from the teaching assistants, use suitable teaching methods and resources for pupils with special educational needs. This enables them to complete similar work to the other pupils in class. As a result of this effective support, together with the good teaching they receive in class, pupils with special educational needs learn well alongside their fellow pupils.

Teaching of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum

26. The quality of teaching literacy and numeracy skills in different areas of the curriculum is good throughout the school. Most teachers have secure knowledge of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. They usually plan thoroughly, identifying clearly how the basic skills of literacy and numeracy for pupils of different abilities are to be covered, although there is room for improvement in some subjects, for example geography. Teachers recognise the primary importance of literacy and often create effective links between English and its application to other subjects. This is particularly the case in science lessons. When pupils start school, their reading and writing skills are well below average and pupils are helped in most subject areas by helpful guidance on spelling and writing frames, which have been developed as part of the Key Stage 3 Literacy Strategy. Pupils are taught to apply their numerical skills well in many lessons. In some subjects, such as history, good use is made of these as teachers carefully plan where pupils can use and develop their skills.

Teaching and learning in the sixth form

27. Teaching was reported as 'frequently good' in the last inspection and the quality has improved considerably since that time. The quality of teaching and learning is now good throughout both years of the sixth form. During the inspection, 43 lessons were observed and the quality of teaching was good in 51 per cent of lessons, very good in 26 per cent, excellent in 2 per cent and satisfactory in the remaining 21 per cent. Consequently, there were no unsatisfactory lessons and this represents a good profile of teaching. The good quality of teaching is a significant strength in the sixth form and has contributed to the increasing success in examination courses. In addition, the good teaching has a positive impact on the support and guidance given to students and prepares them well for the next stage of their educational career or employment. The school teaches students the key skills of communication, numeracy and ICT in the sixth form. Key skills are identified in teachers' planning and taught through subjects creating opportunities for students to develop these skills to support their learning. This aspect of students' learning is developing well.
28. In the sixth form, teaching is invariably very good in mathematics. In most other subjects it is good. The particular strengths of teaching are the high level of the teachers' subject expertise, the very good relationships between the teachers and students and the effective use of assessment information. Teachers have high expectations of the students and provide good support and guidance for them. In return, the students respect this commitment by their teachers and respond by working hard in lessons and on their coursework assignments. The quality of learning is restricted at times by a lack of focus on developing students' independent study and by the inadequate access to resources and computers and poor accommodation. The school is aware of these aspects and is making an effort to remedy the current shortfalls.

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

Whole-school issues

29. The quality and range of the learning activities offered to students are satisfactory for Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form and very good for Years 10 and 11. For Years 10 and 11 it is particularly effective in providing for the needs of boys, girls and pupils of all abilities. The curriculum is successfully designed to provide an equality of

opportunity to all pupils, giving them the widest choice possible. It is the result of a careful examination of government initiatives and also of suggestions by members of staff. Proposals are extensively discussed before being accepted by the senior management team and becoming part of the school curriculum. Citizenship, together with sex and drugs education, is taught effectively through a weekly lesson as part of the personal, social and health education programme.

30. Most of the curriculum issues identified in the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. For example, the statutory requirements are now met for information and communication technology in Years 7 to 11 and this is contributing to the rising standards. All pupils are now taught religious education in Years 10 and 11. However, religious education is not sufficiently taught in the sixth form, which was noted in the last inspection report. Also, the school still does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
31. The school has developed useful links with the business community, which successfully support the development and teaching of the curriculum in most subject areas of the school. The school's links with other schools and the formation of a successful consortium have improved the range of AS, A Level and GNVQ courses that are on offer. The college has developed very good links with teacher-training institutions and has benefited by recruiting high-quality students from this partnership.
32. The curriculum is considerably enhanced by the provision of a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Many sporting and musical activities are offered, as well as many areas of study support. These include the breakfast homework club, which is appreciated by the many pupils, who attend. All activities make a very good contribution to widening pupils' horizons and there are high levels of participation.

The curriculum provision for literacy and numeracy

33. There is a good whole-school literacy policy based on the national strategy. It is organised by a literacy co-ordinator and a literacy group with representatives from each department. All teachers have had training. Good provision is made for literacy in almost all subjects and is included in most schemes of work. The curriculum in mathematics is very good across all years. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their numeracy skills and understanding in many subjects. ICT is now being used more frequently to develop numeracy skills than at the last inspection. Particularly good examples were seen to support and develop investigations and problem-solving activities. Higher-attaining pupils enter GCSE mathematics at the end of Year 10 and study GCSE statistics in Year 11, thus, broadening their experience. In Years 12 and 13, the curriculum for AS, A2 and further mathematics is good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good within mathematics lessons and is very good for students in the sixth form.

The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs.

34. The school offers good support for all pupils with special educational needs. The provision for its four pupils, who have statements of special educational need, is also good. The high level of support is part of the school's commitment to ensure all pupils have access to all aspects of school life and an equality of opportunity to succeed. On a few occasions, pupils are withdrawn from lessons for a short time for specific support and this usually proves to be successful. A few Year 7 pupils get good support from a senior teaching assistant when following a Quest course. However, there is insufficient monitoring of their work that is not always well matched to the

individual pupils' needs or ability. In the short time that the head of learning support has been in post, she has done very well to put into place individual education plans. In most cases, the plans suitably meet the pupils' needs. As these individual education plans are still being developed, the present register of special educational needs has some pupils placed at an inappropriate stage. For example, some pupils, who have emotional and behavioural difficulties, have been noted as a concern and have not yet been placed on the register. The individual education plans are reviewed with good involvement from parents, teachers and specialists from agencies outside the school.

The curriculum provision for pupils with English as an additional language

35. The provision for pupils, who enter the school with little English, is very good. Tremendous care is taken to provide support by using others, who speak the same language, placing them with tutors, who have an understanding of the problems that these pupils may face, and placing them in subject groups to match their ability. The 'buddy' system is used to ensure that these pupils are looked after at all times. Also, every effort is made to provide materials that use their home language as well as English. This results in these pupils making good progress in the acquisition of English and in being part of the school community.

The curriculum in Years 7 to 9

36. For students in Years 7 to 9, the curriculum covers all subjects of the National Curriculum, as well as religious education and personal, social and health education. However, drama is no longer taught as a discrete subject. An additional lesson, above the two allocated, is given to technology in Year 7, physical education in Year 8 and languages in Year 9. This allows the different areas of learning in these subjects to be covered. A small group of pupils in Year 7 follow a course to develop their study skills and improve their basic skills of literacy and numeracy.
37. Links and liaison with the six local 'feeder' schools are good. The Support Centre manager, as well as the head of Year 7 and other teachers, visits these in the summer term prior to pupils arriving at Garibaldi. Useful information is gathered and sample lessons taught. Year 7 pupils speak highly of their visits when they were in Year 6. In particular, they say how much they enjoyed experimenting in the science laboratories.

The curriculum in Years 10 and 11

38. The curriculum for Years 10 and 11 pupils is very good as they have a wide range of courses to follow. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection and the curriculum has been considerably extended. As a result of this good provision, the school holds a Schools Curriculum Award and Sportsmark Award. A great deal of thought and effort has been put into providing a range of curriculum opportunities to meet the needs of all pupils. In addition to studying the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, pupils select from a wide range of National Curriculum options that include humanities, arts and music and there is a genuine choice between French and Spanish within the option system with the opportunity to choose both. The school meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education by offering a short course to all pupils in Years 10 and 11. The curriculum is considerably enhanced by a very effective and appropriate vocational education and work-related curriculum. Intermediate GNVQ courses include business studies, leisure and tourism, art and design, health and social care and information and communication technology. The school took an ambitious decision to offer the

new GNVQ examination in five curriculum areas. This has succeeded as a result of determined and committed teachers and management support. The development of vocational courses has been an important factor in motivating many older pupils and has played a significant part in the huge improvement in A*-C grades at GCSE. Most pupils have improved on their predicted scores, some by as much as two grades. The success of the vocational curriculum has been used as an exemplar to other schools by the local authority in their regular newsletter to schools.

39. Through well-planned personal, social and health education lessons with their tutors and career presentations, pupils receive good information and guidance. Option choices are considered prior to the very well attended Year 9 parents' evening meeting after which decisions are made. Year 11 pupils find their work experience useful in determining their future and most enjoy this. Almost all placements are out in the local community or beyond, but some are made available in school for the few, who want to help in the office or kitchens. Year 10 pupils listened carefully to the well-led 'careers in the construction industry' presentation that sparked the interest of a significant number. They were surprised to learn of the many different skills needed and that they could be given apprenticeships and training whilst earning. Although invited to attend mock interviews with the Connexions adviser to prepare for the 'real thing', not all Year 11 pupils have accepted.
40. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 receive good career information and guidance and when in Year 11 they are encouraged to 'aim high'. A well-attended consultation meeting is organised for pupils and parents, useful booklets distributed and possible careers are discussed with their personal tutors. All, who achieve sufficient GCSE results, are invited to go into the sixth form where academic and two vocational courses can be studied. Careers education and support is of a high quality. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their lives, particularly attending the sixth form or other colleges.

The curriculum in Years 12 and 13

41. The quality and range of opportunities for learning provided for sixth-form students is satisfactory. There is a good range of A and AS level subjects offered, however, the number of alternative courses on offer is limited. There are also a small number of students taking a combination of AS and AVCE courses, who do not receive sufficient time for their AVCE course due to a clash with the AS/A Level course being taken. The school does not meet the statutory requirement for religious education.
42. The school works hard to provide courses requested by students and encourages students of all abilities to pursue a post-16 course for one or two years to enable them to achieve appropriate qualifications and skills for higher education in particular. The range of alternative courses available is limited, as is the advice and support for students, who may wish to follow different courses leading to training and employment. Advice and guidance for students wishing to pursue A and AS levels is good and students feel that every effort is made to help them to succeed in their chosen courses. This is supported by a comprehensive induction programme enabling students to understand and adjust to the philosophy and different approach to learning required post-16. However, the numbers of students, who change courses or fail to complete the year, are much higher than expected.
43. Provision to help students develop key skills is satisfactory. The school encourages this development through lessons. Skills are identified in subject planning, but the monitoring of the impact on students' learning has not yet taken place. Students can also opt for accreditation in key skills and the school is encouraging students to do

this with some success. There are procedures in place to develop further this aspect of the curriculum.

44. Students are able to explore wider issues that may affect them inside and outside the school through a satisfactory enrichment programme that broadens their horizons and extends their personal development. The partnership arrangement with local schools is developing and the school recognises the advantages to the curriculum of this consortium arrangement.
45. Sixth-form students feel well informed about career choices and can access further information in the library or through good information and communication technology software. They are encouraged to make use of the Connexions adviser, whose office is situated adjacent to the library and whose door is always open when she is in school. They are well prepared for the work place and for further education if this is their ambition.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

46. The overall provision for pupils' and students' personal, moral, social and cultural development is good and for their spiritual development is satisfactory. In response to the last inspection report, opportunities to enhance pupils' personal development are now planned in all subjects. These are firmly embedded in the whole school's curriculum and monitored by the curriculum committee. Assembly themes are not adequately linked to the 'Thought for the day' that is planned for discussion in tutor groups. In practice this does not always happen and opportunities are missed to further pupils' understanding and awareness of spiritual development. The school does not meet the statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship.
47. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. They are encouraged to express their ideas and feelings in lessons, but little time is given in assembly to reflect and morning tutor sessions are too short for anything other than routine administration. However, good examples were seen in some lessons and discussions. For example, after much thought, a Year 7 pupil stated that his best moment at school was choosing a new musical instrument and the excitement was evident as Year 9 pupils realised they could text their friends in French. Pupils enjoy exploring the imagery conjured up in poetry and composing their music. Mathematics is regarded as a 'wow' subject and fun to learn.
48. The school's code of conduct, well known to all, ensures good moral values are developed. A strong sense of natural justice exists in the school and sixth form alike. Pupils soon learn that anti-social behaviour is not acceptable. Provision for and development of social skills, highlighted through assemblies as well as tutor groups and personal, social and health education sessions, are good.
49. Cultural knowledge is enhanced through the visits pupils and students make and meeting visitors in school. They learn of different countries' and cultures' beliefs and traditions. Discussion in art, music and religious education lessons particularly demonstrates their awareness of and interest in cultural and multi-cultural matters. Tolerance, understanding and inclusion underpin the school's ethos and provision for pupils' cultural development is good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Care for pupils in the main school - *pastoral support*

50. Garibaldi has good systems to promote pupils' health, safety and welfare. The wide-ranging and very effective pastoral care and the educational support and guidance for them are good. Annual risk assessments are recorded and monitored, personnel trained in first aid are always on site and practice of first aid is good. Staff are aware of child-protection issues and the governors have adopted the local authority guidelines. The designated teacher regularly attends courses to update her training. A number of health and safety matters noticed during the inspection were given to the school. These included making sure that telephone numbers as well as names are taken out to fire drills and the need to dispose of the litter that accumulates around the site.
51. Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are good and effective. They should improve even further once the computerised system is fully operative. The few latecomers have to register at the pupils' reception before going to their lessons. Parents are alerted to the adverse effect holidays taken during the term can have on their child's education. The school's education welfare officer works with the few whose attendance or punctuality causes concern and has been known to make home visits to get recalcitrant pupils out of bed! The officer from the local education welfare service works well with the school. However, pupils are not required to sign 'out' when they leave the school at dinner time, which could cause problems should an emergency occur.
52. The code of conduct, rewards and sanctions are well known as a result of the school's effective systems to promote good and eliminate any oppressive behaviour. Teachers manage pupils well and mutual respect is evident. Those identified with behaviour problems are well supported in the inclusion centre where they work hard to achieve their targets. Detention is the most frequent sanction, but periods in the isolation room are also well used to diffuse difficult situations and to encourage completion of work. Fixed-term exclusions, both internal and external, are used judiciously and effectively. Permanent exclusion is the ultimate sanction and very rarely invoked.
53. Although few formal responsibilities are allocated to pupils and students, the school's expectation of a mature attitude from them results in their good personal development. The school council meets twice a year and has a very low profile. Year councils meet twice a term and chose one of their number to attend school council meetings. Their representatives, elected from each tutor group in Years 7 to 11, are keen to develop their role. Well-planned personal health and social education units, coupled with assembly themes such as the one on 'time' during the inspection and visiting speakers, including local police officers, ensure all are aware of the difficulties and dangers to be found outside their school environment and of the choices they face. They learn about their duties as citizens in Britain's multi-cultural society and are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for life in the work place. Satisfactory recording and monitoring of personal development is carried out through pupils' personal files and their annual reports.

Care for students in the sixth form - *Advice, support and guidance*

54. The school provides good support for students. Personal tutors and the head of sixth form are always available for advice. As the number of students on many courses is small they are aware of how well they are performing through on-going feedback. Links with local industry and other colleges are very good and used well. Students value the encouragement and support they receive both from their peers and teaching

staff. However, the guidance students receive on what courses to take is not always appropriate for their abilities and interests and 40 per cent 'drop out' in the first term.

55. Although providing quite a wide range of courses, the school does not always manage to match these to individual students' abilities, needs or ambition, which in part accounts for the early 'drop-out' rate. The inspectors identify this as an area for development.
56. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good, although students are not required to sign 'in' or 'out' when they leave the premises. They register themselves and demonstrate commitment to their education by doing so conscientiously each day. Students respond very well to the sixth form expectation that they will behave responsibly.

Educational inclusion and racial equality

57. Garibaldi successfully strives to provide an equality of opportunity for all pupils and the school is highlighted as an exemplar for good practice to other schools by the local authority. It meets the learning needs for virtually all in school and the sixth form, although a minority of students do not study appropriate courses. Expectations of pupils are high and relationships are good. Support for pupils excluded from other schools is well targeted and effective. The few pupils and students, who speak English as an additional language, are well integrated with their peers and receive good additional support when this is necessary. Those with special educational or other needs are well supported and integrated into school life. For example, some pupils in Year 7 attend the Quest group, where they receive additional help with basic learning skills. Others in Year 10 and 11 attend work placements whilst pursuing a reduced, alternative curriculum in school for the other days. Some pupils value and benefit from the smaller groups and individual attention they get in the Support Centre, where they are encouraged to drop in whenever they feel the need. The school has an effective racial equality policy and anti-racist remarks or behaviour are not tolerated.
58. The school is aware of the needs of the disabled and has made much of the building accessible for disabled pupils and adults, although this does not include the first floor classrooms.

Assessment

Assessment in the main School

59. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and academic progress are good. They have been significantly improved since the previous inspection. A fully computerised system is now in use that provides a wide range of data that is driving pupils' progress and attainment in a positive way. Computerised reports are now provided for parents each term. All departments have copies of 'Know Your Class'—an extremely comprehensive and well-produced booklet of assessment information profiling the progress of all pupils in the school. Teachers are trained to understand and use this to set targets, identify future needs and to raise standards. The procedures for assessing, monitoring and supporting pupils' progress are good in

most subjects and particularly so in design and technology. They are very good for older pupils following vocational and GCSE courses in ICT.

60. The use made of assessment information to guide and plan for what is taught in the school is good. At the time of the previous inspection, this area was considered to be unsatisfactory and was made a key issue for improvement. The school now analyses the information it generates very effectively, comparing the performance of boys with that of girls and the progress made by pupils of different backgrounds. It explores ways of using information to help both identify trends in progress and solve curricular problems. In Years 7 to 9, teachers make good use of National Curriculum levels of attainment to track progress and enable wise option choices to be made. There are very good practices in design and technology where effective self-assessment procedures help younger pupils to track their own progress. In Years 10 and 11, teachers make good use of targets and predictions based on a wide range of school information. There are good practices in most subjects, particularly in GCSE and vocational courses in ICT. Assessment information is used particularly effectively to motivate pupils in mathematics and to plan for some to take GCSE early. The monitoring of progress for those with special educational needs, however, is less consistently successful in subject areas. Standards of marking of pupils' work generally are now considered by inspectors to be satisfactory in most subjects with the exception of modern languages and in some areas of mathematics where more could be done to identify underachievement.

Assessment in the sixth form

61. The school does much to track students' progress from grades predicted on the basis of attainment in GCSE or vocational examinations through their courses in the sixth form. In their discussions with inspectors, students confirmed that they had a good knowledge of their progress in relation to prior achievements and predictions and that they valued the help, guidance and support given to them by their teachers. Most subject departments have clear assessment procedures that students understand. These are particularly effective in ICT.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

62. The school has productive links and a good relationship with parents and all have signed the home-school agreement. They are very supportive of the school's aims and ambitions for their children and proud that they attend this popular, over-subscribed school. Few came to the parents' meeting or returned the questionnaires on their views of the school. Those who did said they value the school's 'open door' policy and feel welcome to discuss any concerns they may have, either with their child's tutor, head of year teacher or ultimately with the headteacher, assistant heads or the deputy. Where they are able or choose to, parents help their children with work at home and the majority sign the homework diaries. Parents support fund-raising events, but efforts to resurrect the parent teacher association have been unsuccessful. Many parents whose children are involved in sporting events come to both school and away fixtures to give their support.
63. Parents are pleased that their children are encouraged to go on to further education and to attend the school's sixth form, subject to satisfactory GCSE results, as few of them had this opportunity themselves. Parents' attendance at consultation and information meetings, such as options choice, is very good, particularly as the timing could be difficult for some. Governors are pleased at the number of parents, who come to their annual general meeting that takes place during the interval of the brass

band concert. The school tries hard to involve and support parents, for instance, initiating Garibaldi On Line with free taster courses and a crèche provided.

64. The school provides good-quality information for parents in the interesting brochure, well-written governor's annual report to parents, regular news and general letters and other documentation they receive. Should any have difficulty in understanding the information the friendly and approachable staff in the school's office are always ready to assist. Parents whose children have special education or other needs are always invited to the reviews of individual education plans, although some choose not to attend. Those, who speak English as an additional language, are well informed and supported. Parents like the annual reports and the monitoring sheets sent at the end of each term that give basic details about their child's achievements and the efforts made. A small minority of parents feel they do not receive sufficient information about their child's progress, but inspection evidence does not confirm this. Parents are invited to attend the post-16 meeting and like the information and guidance they receive concerning their children's further education, training and employment choices. Sixth-form parents receive good information about students' progress through talking to staff, via written reports, newsletters or e-mails.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management in the main school

65. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection and has the capacity to ensure that this level of improvement will be maintained. Garibaldi is an effective and improving school that provides the pupils and sixth-form students with a good quality of education. There is a clear focus and determination by the governors, headteacher and senior staff to raise standards and improve the school. Most of the recommendations identified in the previous inspection have been successfully addressed, with the exception of providing daily collective worship and religious education in the sixth form. The school has also made improvements in many other important areas. These include: considerably raising pupils' and students' attainment; improving the quality of teaching and learning; making good use of assessment data and providing greater curricular opportunities for pupils. The school has also been successful in gaining a School Curriculum Award, the Sportsmark Award and maintaining Investors in People status. Improvements have been made to the accommodation and the number of computers for pupils' use. The school has been short listed to gain specialist college status. Consequently, there has been an improvement in the overall quality of education and the academic standards pupils and sixth-form students now achieve throughout the school.
66. The school is a well-ordered community that creates a positive environment where virtually all pupils work well and achieve some academic success. The mission statement and aims of the school, the Garibaldi Goals, are successfully reflected in the life of the school and the vast majority of pupils are happy to come to school as indicated by the good attendance rates. There is a vision for future school developments and a shared commitment from all staff to succeed. The school is also fully committed to equal opportunities for all and is successful in providing most pupils with opportunities to achieve the academic and personal standards of which they are capable.
67. The headteacher provides innovative and sensitive leadership that has helped to raise standards and ensured the school remains popular in the local community. She is supported well by hard-working and effective senior colleagues. Together, the team of senior staff ensures the school operates smoothly day by day. There is a

high level of delegation of responsibility to staff and many of them are involved in working groups to develop and monitor school initiatives. Staff receive a high level of autonomy and flexibility to manage projects within a 'no blame' culture. This has motivated many staff to lead and develop a range of exciting initiatives to improve the curriculum opportunities and support systems for pupils. Consequently, the school provides a positive environment for staff and pupils to work. The leadership and management of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy are effective and this is now beginning to raise the standards of literacy and numeracy.

68. Monitoring by the headteacher and senior staff is good and has improved considerably since the last inspection. The senior staff, with support from other agencies, undertake monitoring of work across the school and this keeps them informed about the quality of work in subject areas. However, further development within departments is still needed to improve the monitoring and ensure greater consistency of practice in aspects such as marking pupils' work and setting homework.
69. The school's improvement plan is well thought out and identifies suitable priorities for raising attainment and improving the quality of education. There have been substantial improvements made in development planning since the last inspection. The improvement plan is prepared by senior staff, but governors and other staff are suitably involved in the process. The current plan is linked closely to departmental action plans and issues raised through the performance management appraisal scheme. The improvement plan provides a clear focus for the governors to enable them to help the school to move forward and is often an issue for discussion at governors' committee meetings. The improvement plan is written for the current academic year only. This does not provide sufficient forward planning in relation to funding, accommodation, resources and examination courses in the sixth form and for other major school developments. The governors and headteacher have a vision for the school's future, but this is not communicated sufficiently well to all, who are involved in the school's development. The governing body does not have its own plan to ensure governors' development and effectiveness.
70. The governors meet at least termly and provide good support to the school. They fulfill virtually all of their statutory requirements with the exceptions of not providing daily worship and religious education in the sixth form. Governors have developed a detailed knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have ensured good improvements have been achieved. During the last few years, the governing body has developed its role as a 'critical friend' by becoming better informed about what happens in school.
71. The head of learning support effectively manages the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The requirements of the Code of Practice are met. Since the last inspection there have been good improvements. There is a positive team approach amongst all staff working in the department. Some of the teaching assistants are highly qualified and have been delegated substantial responsibility that they manage well. Funding for special educational needs is prudently and well spent. Relevant training supports all staff working with pupils, who have special educational needs. The head of learning support is satisfactorily developing the monitoring and evaluation of provision and teaching assisted by other senior teachers, but there is room for further improvement. The governing body ensures parents are well informed about special educational needs and provide the school with good support.
72. The school's bursar is actively involved in the administration of the finances. She has detailed records of current budget figures and projected costs. The overall

management and control of financial matters are good. The school makes some use of the local education authority to provide budget monitoring and in maintaining the accounts. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the use made of its finances and resources. For example, the ratio of teachers to pupils has improved and teachers have less of a teaching load for their administration. The school has also been very successful at winning bids to acquire additional funds. Principles of 'best value' are applied well to major purchases, but there is room to develop this aspect of financial management by measuring if value-for-money is achieved. The school uses its specific grants for the purpose they were intended and makes good use of new technology in aspects of its work. For example, it has started to use computer software to record and analyse assessment information and record pupils' attendance.

Leadership and management in the sixth form

73. Overall, the leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The governors, in conjunction with senior staff, take an active role in setting clear priorities for the development and operation of the sixth form. They give clear direction and share the agreed philosophy effectively with parents, teachers and students. This promotes the commitment to high achievement demonstrated in the improving standards over the last three years.
74. The daily management of the sixth form is good and the co-ordinator has a good view of the strengths and weaknesses in the area and is able to articulate appropriate strategies for improvements. Some procedures and policies are available, but many are too informal. The co-ordinator and the head of Year 12 have plans to formalise procedures to support the overall monitoring of sixth-form provision. The good quality of teaching and learning is ensured by formal monitoring and evaluation by senior managers. Regular review meetings are held with heads of department to monitor performance against targets. There are issues about the range of curriculum examination courses and organisation matters, such as the timetable, that need attention.

Staffing

75. The staffing provision is good. Overall, the match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum are good. There are sufficient well-qualified teachers in most departments and the sixth form. Qualified supply teachers are employed to cover short- and long-term absences. This has resulted in a lack of continuity in some subjects. In the last two years, staff turnover has not been excessive or caused the school undue difficulties. The teaching assistants and technical staff undertake a valuable role in assisting and supporting the teaching of the curriculum. The secretarial, clerical and site management staff make a significant, positive and effective contribution to the smooth day-to-day running of the school.
76. The school's arrangements for the induction of new staff, appraisal and professional development are good. Newly qualified teachers receive effective departmental support and valuable additional mentoring from senior members of staff. The school has good procedures for the professional development of teachers. Evaluation and feedback systems ensure that the school receives real benefit from the courses teachers attend as well as the other development opportunities that are arranged specifically for individuals and departments. Performance management procedures are well established and have built on an existing appraisal system. The school has maintained Investors in People status and this has been renewed for the next three years, which further contributes to effective provision.

Resources

77. Resources for learning are just adequate overall. At subject level, resources are good in mathematics, geography and physical education, but inadequate in modern foreign languages, design and technology, music, sociology and psychology. There is insufficient equipment for advanced work in some aspects of sixth form science. In other subjects, provision is generally satisfactory. At whole-school level, there has been considerable investment in resources for information and communication technology (ICT). There are four fully equipped computer rooms and all teaching rooms have a computer linked to the school's network. There is a good range of software on the system that is being extended as funding permits and the use of e-mail is being developed. However, access by some subjects is limited in lessons as the computer rooms are frequently in use. Pupils do have opportunities to use computers in an ICT club that operates before, during and after the school day and in the library.
78. The library is pleasant, but is under-resourced and underused. It does not play the part it should in pupils' learning, despite the best efforts of the library manager. It has a large number of books, supplemented by loans from the educational library service, and some collections aimed at specific groups of pupils, such as poor readers and those for whom English is a second language. There are magazines, encyclopedias and four computers for accessing information through ICT and a small stock of CD ROMs. Project packs are provided on request for teachers to use in lessons. There is a separate annex for sixth form use and they have access to the main library at any time, but overall provision for advanced level work is inadequate for most subjects. Access to the library at break and lunchtime for pupils in Years 7 to 11 is limited by a rota system, so that most pupils can use it on only one day a week. It is open for only a very short period before and after school time each day. Supervision and assistance are limited because the library manager has only one assistant for one hour at lunchtime each day.

Accommodation

79. There have been some improvements made to the accommodation since the last inspection, particularly the specialist rooms for computers and the new sports hall. In the same time, numbers of pupils and the range of courses they follow have grown significantly. The school has tried to provide more teaching spaces, but these are often small. Important areas in science, design and technology, music, physical education and the sixth form are now well below an acceptable standard. Consequently, the school is unable to provide enough good-quality teaching areas or introduce new courses. Overall, the accommodation is wholly inadequate for the number of pupils in this popular school.

Value for money

80. Taking into account:
- the good achievement and progress made by pupils throughout the school and sixth form;
 - the quality of leadership, which has ensured good improvement since the previous inspection;
 - the overall good quality of teaching and learning;
 - the positive behaviour and attitudes of the pupils; and
 - the levels of attendance;

the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

81. In order to improve further the standards of education, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

Whole school

- 1 Improve the communication of the strategic planning of whole-school priorities by:
 - Clearly identifying the planning that reflects the future vision and developments of the whole school;
 - Forward planning in relation to funding, accommodation, resources and examination courses in the sixth form to ensure that the demand for places from pupils in future years can be fully met;
 - Devising a plan for the governing body to ensure their own development and effectiveness.

(paragraphs: 65 – 70)

- 2 Continue to develop the quality of the accommodation to match the number of pupils on roll and the wide range of courses offered to the pupils and students by:
 - Seeking further opportunities to secure funding from a range of agencies.

(paragraphs: 69 and 79)

Sixth Form

- 3 Meet statutory requirements for teaching religious education by:
 - Providing students with an appropriate course of study.

(paragraph: 41)

- 4 Enhance the range and improve the organisation of courses offered to sixth form students by:
 - Increasing the range of examination courses offered to ensure students build on the subjects followed in Years 10 and 11;
 - Reducing the number of timetable clashes that result in students missing lessons.

(paragraphs: 41 – 45)

- 5 Provide greater guidance on course selection to reduce the number of students, who fail to complete the course by:

- Providing more information about the range of course and career opportunities over and above AS level examinations;
- Providing alternative information from other post-16 institutions.

(paragraphs: 54 – 56)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

Governors may consider including the following less important issues in their action plan:

- Complying with the statutory requirements outlined within the report;
 - Improving the quality of the library and the quantity of resources to develop the capability of pupils to learn by themselves;
 - Ensuring greater consistency of practice in marking pupils' work and setting homework.
- (paragraphs: 24, 77 and 78)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	125
	Sixth form	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		64

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

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

Number	0	34	50	35	6	0	0
Percentage	0	27	40	28	5	0	0

Sixth form

Number	1	11	22	9	0	0	0
Percentage	2	26	51	21	0	0	0

Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for the sixth form as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	993	131
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	165	0

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	132	4

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	56
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	44

Attendance

Authorised absence

Unauthorised absence

	%		%
School data	8.0	School data	1.1
National comparative data	8.1	National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	98	90	188

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	39	60	54
	Girls	51	50	47
	Total	90	110	101
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	48 (39)	59 (57)	54 (49)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	19 (12)	32 (35)	17 (20)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	51	59	61
	Girls	51	54	53
	Total	102	113	114
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	54 (41)	60 (58)	61 (41)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	10 (16)	31 (36)	25 (26)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	98	96	194

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	43	86	93
	Girls	54	91	95
	Total	97	177	188
Percentage of pupils achieving The standard specified	School	50 (43)	91 (90)	97 (97)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96.0 (95.7)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	37.6
	National	39.8

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

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

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

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002			

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates			
	Average point score per candidate			
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	18	17.5

Ethnic background of pupils

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 pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1106	84	1
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	1	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
7	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	67.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	351

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.8
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	26.5
Key Stage 4	22.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2
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	£
Total income	3,664,519
Total expenditure	3,664,014
Expenditure per pupil	3,313
Balance brought forward from previous year	65,784
Balance carried forward to next year.	66,289

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	14
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	23
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	5.4
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

6.9%

Number of questionnaires sent out

1124

Number of questionnaires returned

78

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36	52	5	3	4
My child is making good progress in school.	41	52	1	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	59	6	3	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	13	70	12	1	4
The teaching is good.	23	62	5	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	17	45	26	8	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	38	54	5	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	48	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	17	55	22	5	1
The school is well led and managed.	29	54	3	4	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	27	64	4	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	49	5	3	5

Other issues raised by parents

- The cost of some resources (books) is high, particularly for single-parent families.
- Poor dining room facilities – not changed in 25 years.

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:

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress in all years.
- GCSE results in both English and English literature have improved and are now at the national average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The marking of work in Years 10 and 11 is of an excellent standard.
- The department is very well managed.

Areas for improvement:

- Results in the national tests for pupils in Year 9 are well below the national average.
- The marking of books in Years 7 to 9 is not always helpful to pupils.
- A few pupils with special needs are not given enough support.

82. Pupils enter the school at the beginning of Year 7 with standards that are well below the national average. They achieve well in lessons and by the end of Year 9 their attainment is now below, rather than well below, average. In Years 10 and 11 they continue to achieve well and by the end of Year 11 their work is in line with the national average.
83. Results in the national tests for pupils in Year 9 in 2002 were well below the national average and below the average for schools with pupils from a similar background. Results over time have been inconsistent. Girls perform better than boys by the same amount as in most schools. In GCSE English and English literature, results were at the national average, having improved significantly over the last three years. In English, the difference between girls' and boys' performance was similar to the national difference; in English literature, the gap in favour of girls was slightly bigger.
84. By the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment is below average, although it shows good improvement over their attainment on entry to the school. It is better than the attainment indicated by the national test results, an indication of the improvement being produced by consistently good teaching. Most pupils speak clearly, but have a limited vocabulary. However, the highest-attaining pupils structure well what they are saying and use technical terms confidently, for example, when discussing a speech of Martin Luther King. Most pupils read well enough to understand tabloid newspapers, but struggle with unfamiliar words such as 'exonerate'. The highest attainers are beginning to analyse poetry with skill. Although in Year 9 some pupils make many mistakes in their written work, most construct sentences and paragraphs fairly accurately and their spelling mistakes, such as writing 'peice' for 'piece', do not affect understanding. Some benefit from being given helpful short-term targets, but this practice is not carried out by all teachers. In some books, comments are too bland to be meaningful.
85. The attainment of pupils by the end of Year 11 is in line with the national average and matches the most recent GCSE results. The lowest-attaining pupils do not listen carefully enough to what others are saying. Consequently, their contributions are often irrelevant. On the other hand, the highest attainers are very articulate. Most pupils read competently. The lowest attainers read the texts of simple advertisements

successfully while the higher attainers are very perceptive in understanding the force of specific words or images in poetry. A few pupils are scarcely literate and do not receive enough individual support. Most, however, write competently while the highest attainers have very assured command of language. Excellent standards of marking help pupils to improve. Comments are clearly focused on showing pupils how to improve and teachers set sensible and helpful targets. Consequently, pupils know if they are meeting the required standard and know what they need to do in order to achieve or exceed it.

86. Pupils, who have special educational needs, progress well in English. They benefit from being taught in smaller classes and having teachers set work that is suited to their needs. Teachers take heed of pupils' individual education plans, but do not link their comments on exercise books to the targets in them. There are occasions when older pupils with special educational needs would benefit from more individual support, especially those with specific behavioural problems. When there is support from learning support assistants it is generally effective.
87. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan well, share the lesson objectives with pupils and focus on them throughout. They ensure that pupils are kept motivated by providing them with a number of short tasks, often with strict time limits to aid concentration. Lessons proceed at a good pace. For example, a Year 7 lesson began with a quick starter to revise what pupils already knew about the media. The lesson progressed logically from generalisations about magazines to particular points. Pupils had to read, answer questions orally, produce written answers and display their findings about which magazines pupils read in the form of a bar chart. Because there was total focus on learning, pupils made very good progress.
88. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils and fully stretch them. This was seen in a Year 11 lesson where high-attaining pupils showed great interest and skill in analysing a complex poem by Ted Hughes. In a Year 8 lesson, average and lower attainers worked hard to understand how newspapers frequently use puns to attract their readers.
89. Pupils learn well because they generally have good attitudes. A very small minority behave in an unsatisfactory way, but teachers have good management skills so that the work of others is not unduly disrupted. Most lessons are conducted in a pleasant and co-operative atmosphere. Pupils support each other well when working in pairs or small groups. Good social provision has a positive impact on pupils learning effectively in pairs and groups. Most take care with the presentation of their work, often making use of computers, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
90. The department is very well managed. There is good emphasis on teamwork. Good-quality schemes of work are regularly reviewed and this ensures that there is good provision for pupils' personal development. For example, there is planned consideration of moral issues in literature. Good use is made of data to track pupils' progress and set targets. The development plan identifies suitable priorities and there is a general desire to improve standards. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. In particular, GCSE results have improved significantly and teaching is now good rather than satisfactory.

Media studies

91. In 2002, results in media studies at GCSE were very good with nine pupils out of 11 gaining grades A*-C. It was not possible to see any lessons during the inspection, but written work shows a wide range of attainment. Most students competently prepare a

story for filming. They explain decisions and understand industry-based features such as setting, target audience, distribution and spin-offs. The number of pupils choosing to follow the course in Year 10 has been low in recent years and in 2002 there were too few for the course to be provided.

Literacy across the curriculum

92. The school makes good provision for literacy across the whole curriculum. There is a coherent strategy, which works on two fronts. One aim is to ensure that all subjects play their part in raising standards of literacy. Another is to raise the literacy standards of those pupils in Years 7 and 8, who are functioning below expectations. Nearly all subjects make good provision: in art, history and design and technology the provision is very good and in geography and modern foreign languages it is satisfactory. Teachers ensure that pupils know the correct technical terms in use in their subjects. There is good emphasis on spelling and accurate expression, although pupils do not have enough opportunities for extended writing, particularly in Years 7 to 9. On the other hand, there is some imaginative provision made, as in art, where pupils write poems in addition to descriptions and evaluations. Progress is monitored by a literacy group to which all departments send a representative. There is a literacy programme for pupils in Years 7 and 8, who are not meeting required standards. This has been more successful in improving spelling than in improving sentence construction.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths:

- Teaching is good; lessons are well planned and teachers have high expectations.
- Teachers know their pupils well and ensure that work is at the appropriate level.
- The leadership of the subject is very good and gives clear direction and support to the team.
- Teachers have very good mathematical knowledge and are enthusiastic about their subject.
- Pupils make good progress.

Areas for improvement:

- Marking is inconsistent and does not inform pupils how they can improve.
- The setting of homework.
- The identification and specific supporting for underachievers.
- The involvement of the whole department in monitoring the work in mathematics.

93. Results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were slightly below the national average, but good when compared to similar schools. Pupils enter the school with numeracy skills that are well below average and the standards they obtain by the end of Year 9 indicates they make good progress. The test results were very close to the targets set by the department. By the end of Year 11, results in the GCSE examination were not significantly different to national averages and were above those predicted for the pupils. There is no significant difference in the results of boys and girls at the end of Years 9 and 11.
94. Standards of work seen in Year 9 during the inspection were often average and good in relation to the standards at the beginning of Year 7. This is largely as a result of good teaching. The highest-attaining pupils achieve above-average standards and in

Year 9 they are able to identify and generate linear and non-linear sequences, when appropriate, using a graphical calculator with confidence. Lower-attaining Year 7 pupils identified factors and multiples and some rose to the challenge and found the common factors of 24 and 36. Algebraic skills are developing well for most pupils, as are problem-solving skills. The majority of students, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their lessons.

95. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' progress is also good. Higher-attaining pupils cope well with terminating and recurring decimals and their algebra skills are good. In a Year 11 low-attaining group, pupils were confident in calculating journey times and were beginning to ask 'is my answer sensible?' Pupils demonstrate good problem-solving skills and use information and communication technology (ICT) to generate solutions. For example, they investigated the most appropriate trough to hold the maximum amount of water in a disaster area. Higher-attaining pupils extend their investigations well, indicating a good understanding of the mathematics. Standards of work seen during the inspection were good overall and indicate good progress made between the end of Year 9 and Year 11.
96. Those pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their mathematics lessons. Teachers and support staff are aware of their needs and give them effective support. They are taught in smaller groups and teachers make sure that the work is at the appropriate level. They are given many opportunities to practise their basic mathematical skills, often in the form of games, and, as a result, their ability to calculate mentally is improving.
97. Overall, the teaching of mathematics is good. It is often imaginative and good fun and pupils generally enjoy their lessons. Teachers have very good mathematical knowledge and are enthusiastic about their subject. Teaching was good or better in significantly more than half the lessons seen and in about one third it was very good. Lessons are planned well and are based on detailed schemes of work that are constantly reviewed and modified. All lessons include a variety of activities and begin positively with a good starter activity that often reinforces previous work or prepares the pupils for a new topic. Relationships are good and teachers usually engage most of their pupils fully in their learning. Teachers have a very good mathematical knowledge and are enthusiastic about their subject. They have high expectations of their pupils, often above what would be expected for their age. Most lessons include a 'challenge' and require pupils to develop their thinking skills. The new numeracy strategy has been fully implemented in Years 7 to 9 and in some lessons these principles have been carried on into Years 10 and 11. All these strategies ensure good progress and improving standards. Lesson objectives are not always made clear to the pupils and, as a consequence, they do not always know what is expected of them. The most successful lessons end with a review of what has been achieved and a task that enables the teacher to check pupils' understanding. Marking takes place, but is very inconsistent across all years. There is no agreed system and pupils are often unclear about what they need to do to improve.
98. The leadership and management of mathematics are very good and ensure a clear direction for the department. Mathematics has a high profile in the school that is currently bidding for specialist mathematical and computer college status. Teachers are very supportive of each other and all have a very strong commitment to raising standards. The department shares ideas and is willing to take on board and become involved in new developments such as the School Mathematics Project Interact Pilot and a local revision strategy. Links with the primary schools are a strength and their use of 'transition' work in primary schools enables pupils to transfer with greater ease. The department uses data well and uses assessment information to modify the

provision. For example, they identify a drop in motivation at the end of Year 10 and plan to increase the numbers of pupils, who take their GCSE examination earlier than usual. Currently, the department does not identify and mentor underachievers. Not all staff are adequately involved in the monitoring process in order to see good practice, although informal sharing is very good.

99. The department has made good improvements since the last inspection. Attainment is now very close to national expectations and all pupils experience a variety of appropriate tasks. Pupils are now judged to make good progress overall and access to computers is much improved.

Numeracy across the curriculum

100. The teaching of the basic skills of numeracy in mathematics lessons is good. Pupils have an increasing number of opportunities to improve their numeracy skills and confidence in other subjects. For example, in science, Year 9 pupils are confident when required to use and construct graphs. They have lots of opportunities to use formulae and graphs and they do so competently. In a lesson on media studies in Year 7, the teacher took time to ensure that pupils set out carefully the information for a bar chart on reading habits. In design and technology, pupils have a number of opportunities to practise measurement skills and, in French, they are able to use percentages with confidence.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths:

- The leadership and management of the department are very good.
- The teachers are very well qualified, have good subject knowledge and are experienced.
- The attitude and behaviour of the pupils are good, which leads to them forming good relationships with teachers.
- The pupils make good progress and achieve well in Years 7 to 11.

Areas for development:

- The building programme in order to ensure all science lessons are held in laboratories.
- Increasing the range of teaching and learning styles, especially the use of computers.

101. In tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002, standards were below the national average. The trend has been upwards over the past five years. When compared to the other core subjects, pupils do better in science than in English, but not as well as in mathematics. The achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is good. Overall, the standards seen were below those expected nationally at the end of Year 9. This, however, represents good progress as the school's extensive data indicates that pupils join the school in Year 7 well below the national expected level. Current Year 7 pupils are achieving standards well below those expected and were only able to explain the process of sinking and floating in very simple terms. In Year 9, the higher-attaining pupils were producing work of standards above the expected levels and were able to calculate speed and discuss with confidence the concept of balancing forces.
102. At the end of Year 11 in 2002, most pupils took double certification GCSE. The number of pupils obtaining a GCSE grade of A*-C is close to the national average.

The trend has been dramatically upwards over the past six years. There is little difference between the attainment of boys or girls. The achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is good and the standard of work seen was at the expected national level. This represents good progress. The lower-attaining pupils were confident when discussing such topics as food chains and could devise simple food webs. Higher-attaining pupils understood the adaptation of organisms to their environment. They also recalled and explained the structure of atoms and how atoms combine in detail.

103. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good. Pupils behave very well and work hard in science in lessons when there is good classroom control linked to well-planned lessons. There was, in these lessons, a friendly co-operative atmosphere between teachers and pupils leading to a very pleasant working atmosphere. This was especially true with the higher-attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11. Pupils of all abilities work in an enthusiastic and safe manner when carrying out practical work. A good example of this was in a Year 9 class, where the pupils were performing an investigation on solubility. The higher-attaining pupils have complete notes and, overall, a good standard of presentation. However, a significant number of pupils have poor writing skills and their notes do not provide a good revision source. The department has identified this problem and has, this year, introduced work booklets directly linked to the GCSE examination to support their pupils further.
104. The quality of teaching and learning in science is good overall. In some of the lessons, the teaching was very good. There were no instances of unsatisfactory teaching in the lessons observed. A review of pupils' books indicates that teaching over time is of a similar standard. The best teaching was seen when the lessons were well planned, had good pace and there was good classroom control. One very effective lesson on motors with a higher-attaining Year 10 class involved a review session and the use of relevant and suitable resources linked to an enthusiastic manner from the teacher. Homework is structured and an integral part of the lesson plans and is used as an effective means of reinforcing learning. Teachers mark books and tests in detail and add narrative comments and praise. They set targets in a constructive manner and usually follow these up. The stock of books in the library is very limited, but this is compensated by the fact that most pupils have their own textbooks. The department use the library occasionally for independent learning and research work.
105. Pupils are aware of their progress from the assessments made on end-of-topic tests and are informed of their potential level or grades regularly. Pupils, who have special educational needs, are well supported in science and make good progress overall. Staff are aware of their needs and make some use of the individual education plans. The department is able to organise the group sizes in most years so that the lower-attaining pupils are in smaller classes. This allows the teachers to give greater support. Higher-attaining pupils also make good progress. The introduction this year of GCSE triple science should further support the higher-attaining pupils and also help increase numbers opting to follow a science subject beyond GCSE. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills both in written work and class discussions. The department has introduced the literacy strategy using key words in a range of writing styles and other support materials well and this has been of benefit to pupils. A similar positive approach has been made with numeracy that has enabled pupils to make good progress. The use of computers is not widespread in science and is unsatisfactory. The use of data-logging in science is restricted by the lack of sufficient equipment. More of these units are required to enable the whole class to use them.

106. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection. Attainment and the quality of teaching are now much higher. The department has a well-qualified and experienced staff. The head of department has worked closely with the team of teachers to introduce many new initiatives based on the school and departmental development plans. These include the review of all the science courses and linking this to a very effective assessment process. The assessment of pupils' progress and attainment is being used to set targets for pupils and to monitor the progress of individual pupils. There is also a departmental system of monitoring the teaching and learning, which has played a major part in the process of raising standards both in teaching and learning as well as attainment. The department is aware of issues that need to be dealt with and has drawn up appropriate development plans.
107. The accommodation for the science department is poor. There are up to 10 science lessons taking place at any one time and only six laboratories. This means that a significant number of science lessons take place in normal classrooms around the school. This results in teachers having to limit the range of teaching styles they can use. Of the six laboratories, two are in a very poor condition with inadequate facilities. The department has sufficient resources. The support staff are efficient, very well organised and ensure the equipment and resources ordered are present at the start of lessons. They do, however, find it difficult, at times, to cope with the wide range of requirements of the teachers. The proposed new suite of science laboratories will allow the department to make even further progress. They must use this opportunity to increase the range of teaching styles, including use of computers, and to review the required resources and the associated workload of the technicians.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths:

- Pupils achieve well and show good attitudes to their work.
- Lesson planning and schemes of work are very good.
- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning are good and this ensures pupils make good progress.
- Very good use is made of literacy skills and good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT).
- There is good subject leadership and a commitment to succeed.

Areas for improvement:

- Raising standards in art throughout the school.
- Use of assessment to help pupils improve the quality of their work.
- The amount of time allocated to teach the subject.

108. When pupils start school their attainment is well below average and their knowledge of art is very limited. Pupils' attainment is still below average by the end of Year 9 and Year 11, but they have made good progress. In the 2001 and 2002 examinations, pupils' attainment was well below the national average. In the 2002 GNVQ intermediate examination, pupils attained broadly average results. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
109. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' work and progress are guided by very good planning and satisfactory assessment procedures. The use of carefully-planned learning objectives supported by relevant resources is helping pupils to become more

aware of their own standards. However, they are not given sufficient information about the skills, techniques and knowledge they need to further their progress. For example, pupils in a Year 9 lesson effectively transferred a drawn design on to linoleum. Using cutting tools correctly they showed sound practical technique and successfully made a print of their design. However, there are insufficient systems in place for the teacher to record their progress and ensure the support they need to improve. A successful Year 10 lesson on the technique of mixing colour and how to obtain a variety of colour tones was taught without the teacher having any previously-recorded written information to show if pupils had or had not acquired these skills and knowledge before the lesson.

110. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good, with some evidence of very good teaching. As a result of the teaching pupils make good progress. Due to very good teaching in a Year 7 lesson, the pupils made a very perceptive analysis of previously drawn portraits showing a good awareness of proportions, scale and the positions of the mouth, ears and eyes. Often, very good use is made of literacy skills in lessons and pupils use computers well to research and record information about artists and other aspects of their work. For example, pupils have written good poems arising from their artwork. In many lessons, teachers give good explanations and examples of the meanings of words associated with the work being studied. The use of numeracy skills is less well developed. Teachers conduct their lessons at a good pace using the available time well. However, the present timetable does not provide sufficient time to cover the National Curriculum in sufficient depth. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, show good attitudes to their work. They are attentive and quickly settle down to their tasks working with good levels of enthusiasm and motivation.
111. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their art lessons. Similarly, pupils with English as an additional language make good progress.
112. The leadership and management of the subject are good. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection. The head of department has put into place a good scheme of work and has acquired a satisfactory level of resources for its development. The department has its own range of books and pictures on the work of artists, but the provision of books and resources to support the subject in the school library is unsatisfactory. There are not yet sufficient resources for the use of computers for image development and modification of work. The accommodation is satisfactory with suitable areas for drawing as well as wet and messy work and a good dark room for photography. At least 13 pupils have chosen art and design as their main career since 2000, going on to study it successfully at higher education. That is a positive indication of the work in the department. Good contacts are made with the local community and this supports pupils' cultural development.

CITIZENSHIP

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Strengths:

- The subject is managed and monitored well.

- A thorough audit of departmental contributions has been carried out.
- Pupils are encouraged to become active participants in lessons.
- There is a very wide range of extra-curricular and community activities.
- There is a strong emphasis on literacy and group work skills in lessons.

Areas for improvement:

- Some subjects are less proactive than others in promoting citizenship.

113. It is not possible to reach an overall judgement about standards as the school has only recently introduced this subject into the curriculum. In the lessons observed where citizenship was identified, pupils showed a good understanding of different aspects of society. This was demonstrated well in a Year 11 religious education lesson in which pupils reflected on the reasons for giving donations to charity both at home and abroad. Pupils also demonstrate skills of enquiry and communication; for example, through mathematics coursework assignments in which pupils designed a trough to take water away from an earthquake disaster area using all available resources. Throughout the curriculum, pupils have opportunities to participate in school activities and take action within the local community. There is a very wide range of extra-curricular activities and participation rates are high throughout the school. Pupils are also involved in charity work and take part in numerous activities within the local community, such as music concerts and sports matches. A school council has recently been formed, but is, at present, at an early stage of development and there are suitable plans to widen its influence within the school.
114. There were few instances during the inspection in which the teaching of citizenship was a major focus. During these lessons, however, the quality of teaching and learning was good and pupils were eager to participate in debate and discussion. These included a religious education lesson on religious tolerance within contemporary society, an English lesson on bias in newspaper reporting, a form-tutor period on the roots of discrimination and an ICT lesson in which pupils gathered information on the topic of fox-hunting. Throughout the school curriculum, there is a strong emphasis on group work and participation in lessons to promote the development of social skills.
115. The provision for citizenship is managed well. A thorough audit has been carried out by the recently-appointed co-ordinator and departmental responses are currently being scrutinised with a view to future planning of citizenship lessons. There is a particularly strong emphasis on the subject within the humanities curriculum, but other departments are at an earlier stage of development in this respect.
116. Overall, citizenship is beginning to make an important contribution to the school curriculum and there is a commendable emphasis on the development of literacy skills in this context. The provision for citizenship is being monitored well and there are clear strategies for future development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths:

- The quality of teaching, which results in good achievement.

- Leadership and management, which give a clear direction to the subject.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are good.
- The wide range of courses, which allows pupils to develop their interests.

Areas for improvement:

- Resources are inadequate and do not allow pupils to take full advantage of the curriculum.
- The length of lessons is inadequate for practical lessons.
- Food and textiles technology does not have the use of a technician.
- Food technology rooms have unhygienic surfaces and are not adapted for disabled students.

117. The standards achieved by pupils are satisfactory in each year group. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations matched national averages and the average of all other subjects in the school. Results in textiles have been consistently high for a number of years. The results of teacher assessments of pupils in Year 9 have improved over the last three years and, in 2002, reached the national average. The standard of work seen in lessons and in pupils' folders reflects the GCSE examination results and the teacher assessments for Year 9 pupils. When pupils enter the school, their attainment is well below national expectations. This is because they have had little experience of the subject. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well to attain the national averages in Years 9 and 11.
118. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of work show that standards are in line with national averages by the end of Year 11. Pupils clearly identify a need and, after research, generate a design solution. For example, the incidence of burglaries resulted in a pupil designing a security system that was cheap and easy to install. Pupils generate many ideas and select a final design that matches their original design specification. This was seen in a garment on which the American flag was used as a decoration and the making showed a high degree of skill. Pupils in Year 7 very quickly gain sound making skills and this was seen when they confidently used a pillar drill. They also use ICT effectively, for example, when making letters for key fobs. By the end of Year 9, pupils generate ideas using a variety of resources and this was seen when they researched the use of flashing lights. This ability to generate ideas has improved since the time of the last report. Pupils know and use materials and equipment competently. They also check and modify designs to a satisfactory level. For example, a pupil stated that he had added supports to his lift to keep it from falling out of the base. Pupils' evaluations are often detailed and to a good level, in contrast to those of some Year 11 pupils, whose evaluations are simplistic, such as 'not enough time to finish'. Pupils' knowledge of electronics is good and this provides a sound basis on which to take the subject at GCSE.
119. Teaching is very good overall and has improved since the last inspection. It is based on very good subject knowledge and detailed planning. The very good lessons are conducted at a cracking pace, so that much is covered and learnt. Demonstrations are very good, which ensure that pupils learn skills quickly, such as marking wood accurately. Questioning is very good, as it makes pupils think and teachers are careful to involve all pupils. For example, they were asked how they thought they could measure accurately. Relationships are very good, which encourages pupils to offer answers, to ask for help and therefore learn. Teachers' enthusiasm for their subject transfers to pupils, who, as a result, are highly motivated to learn and to achieve. Teachers also have very high expectations of behaviour and provide tasks that have a high level of challenge, which moves pupils on in their learning. Support staff are very well used and contribute to the good progress that pupils with special

needs make. Marking is detailed, with clear targets given for improvement. The one lesson that was satisfactory included a task that was difficult for some pupils to complete without support.

120. Pupils are keen to learn and quickly know the procedures expected in the workshops. They rapidly become independent and confident. This was seen in a Year 7 lesson when they used equipment sensibly without asking for assistance and moved between rooms in order to complete their key fob. This involved many processes in the one-hour lesson and they wasted no time in order to complete the task. This is due to pupils' careful listening when instructions are given. Pupils not only want to succeed, they also want to achieve the highest standards possible and they check with each other before being satisfied. They work well together and this was seen when groups were discovering the properties of various food products. They discussed, but did not argue. They respond well to criticism, think about the comments and take action. For example, a pupil acknowledged that her food product was not as healthy as it could be and described how it could be improved.
121. The range of courses in design and technology caters well for all pupils. In Years 10 and 11, pupils can take GCSE examinations in food technology, graphics, resistant materials, systems and control and textiles. The subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' personal development.
122. Leadership and management are very good and provide a clear direction to the subject. There is very good collaboration between all staff, which results in the sharing of good practice. Following an audit of skills and experiences, Year 7 pupils now have a basic skills course, which should assist in raising standards. The department is about to undergo major rebuilding in the resistant materials area, which should result in rooms more suited to the needs of pupils. Some large equipment is condemned for safety reasons and replacement is essential in order to meet the demands of the subject. Also, the lack of sufficient electric points results in pupils being held up when making projects. In food technology, the rooms are small and surfaces are old and unhygienic, which was noted in the last report. Also, there are no adaptations to hobs to make them suitable for pupils in wheelchairs.
123. Resources are inadequate to meet the needs of the subject. For example, many sewing machines are very old and pupils do not have their own textbooks in food technology, the provision of which should assist in raising standards. There are also no overhead projectors, the use of which assists teachers, especially when showing detailed drawings. Assessment is very good in Years 7 to 11, with pupils' self-assessment sheets used, so that pupils know how to improve.
124. There are sufficient well-qualified and experienced staff with the relevant expertise to deliver the wide range of subjects. However, there is no food and textiles technician, which results in teachers doing basic maintenance, which is an inappropriate use of their time. Lessons are one hour, which is not suited for some practical activities as much time is spent setting up and clearing away. This could affect standards achieved this year as it is now more difficult to complete coursework. Also, some classes, which are large, result in pupils waiting to use machines, which results in less achieved in these lessons. Teachers give freely of their time, both in term time and at Easter, in order to enable pupils to achieve higher standards.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths:

- GCSE examination results are above average.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good.

Areas for improvement:

- The range of teaching and learning methods being used is too narrow to develop pupils' skills fully and allow them to develop their ideas in depth.
- Performance criteria are not always applied accurately in the assessment of pupils' learning at the end of Year 9.
- The use of ICT to support learning is too limited.

125. Overall, the standards achieved by pupils are satisfactory. Results in standardised tests taken in 2000 and 2001 were below national averages. In 2002, results showed a marked improvement and were above national averages. These results contrasted with work seen during the inspection when the attainment of the majority of pupils was below national expectations. This is explained by performance criteria not being applied accurately in the assessment of pupils' learning at the end of Year 9. This was partly due to absence of the specialist staff. In GCSE examinations taken at the end of Year 11, the percentage of pupils gaining the higher A*-C grades has been above national averages for the last three years. All pupils in the small groups that have taken the GCSE examination in the last three years have gained a pass grade and this result is above national averages. The results pupils gained in the GCSE examinations were in line with expectations when compared with their prior attainment at the end of Year 9. There is no significant difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls.
126. In work seen during the inspection, Year 7 pupils interpret map symbols well and higher-attaining pupils measure distances and use map coordinates with confidence. In a good Year 7 lesson, lower-attaining pupils were able to take advantage of a snowy day to record accurately the main elements of the unusual weather conditions in the playground. Clear explanation by the teacher enabled pupils in Year 8 to distinguish between different types of industry. In Year 9, most pupils understand the difference between more or less economically developed countries and can extract information from maps, charts and graphs in an atlas. They gain a good knowledge of other cultures through studies of Japan and Kenya. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress, especially as they come into the school at a standard that is well below average for their age group. Year 10 pupils know the reasons why rivers flood, but are less secure when drawing diagrams to illustrate the link between rainfall and river discharge. Following a field trip to Castleton, pupils are learning the skills needed for GCSE coursework, but, at present, their work is more descriptive than analytical. No pupils have chosen to study geography in Year 11 or in the sixth form and this represents a serious weakness in the provision for geography.
127. Overall, the standard of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers' planning is thorough and they share learning objectives with pupils, who then know what to concentrate on during the lesson. Teachers over-rely on textbooks and worksheets as their main resources. In lessons seen during the inspection, little structured use was made of video programmes or slides to engage pupils' interest and enhance their learning. Computer access is available in classrooms, but its use is limited to a small number of pupils and does not extend the ICT skills of the majority of the class. Some word processing of coursework and case studies takes place by pupils in Years 9 and 10. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good and most pupils are keen to answer questions and contribute to discussion. However, the narrow range of

teaching strategies used does not allow pupils to develop their ideas in depth or extend their thinking skills. Pupils' work is marked regularly and constructive comments help pupils to make progress.

128. The leadership and management of the humanities department are satisfactory. Appropriate priorities for development have been identified in the departmental plan, but, as yet, these have not had an impact on improvements to the geography department. Schemes of work have been updated and now focus on investigative work in geography. Pupils' work is assessed regularly, but these assessments are not used sufficiently to plan future learning. Teaching is monitored effectively. The department is well resourced for books. There is one specialist geography room that provides a stimulating learning environment for pupils.
129. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are making satisfactory progress and GCSE results are good. However, the numbers of older pupils studying geography are small and the subject has a low profile within the school.

HISTORY

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

Strengths:

- Careful planning by dedicated specialist teachers results in lively lessons enjoyed by pupils.
- Good progress is made by most pupils throughout the age range 11 to 16.
- Classrooms are bright and display key vocabulary and the wide variety of pupils' work attractively.
- The quality and range of teaching styles is good and focuses on the different ways that pupils learn best.
- Marking, particularly in Years 10 and 11, provides clear descriptions of the strengths and weaknesses of work and guides pupils to areas for improvement.
- The regular use of well-designed homework tasks supports and extends pupils' learning.

Areas for Improvement:

- The range of materials used to support teaching, in particular the groups of lower attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9, needs to be extended.
- Monitoring of teaching and materials designed by teachers does not yet provide sufficient opportunities to analyse and share the most effective approaches.
- Greater use of specific progress targets is needed in Years 7 to 9, especially for pupils working at intermediate levels.
- Insufficient use is made of computers directly to support classroom learning and teaching.

130. Pupils come to the school with very different primary school experiences of history. Overall, their attainment at the start of Year 7 is well below average. They make good progress and by the end of Year 9, standards have improved, although they are generally still just below national expectations. GCSE results in 2002, with 65 per cent attaining the higher A*-C grades, were better than in previous years and were above the national average. All of the pupils achieved A*-G pass grades and this was also above the national average. This represents good achievement in Years 10 and 11, particularly because pupils at all levels of attainment at the end of Year 9 are permitted to follow the full GCSE course. There is no significant difference between the achievement of girls and boys.

131. All teaching seen was satisfactory or better and work scrutiny suggests that it is at least good. Teachers make good use of their specialist subject knowledge to prepare lessons thoroughly. They choose teaching materials carefully and start lessons with a clear statement of learning aims. This means that pupils know what they are expected to do and helps them to be attentive and to work effectively throughout the lesson. Teachers use challenging questions and this encourages pupils to think about causes and effects of historical events. For instance, in Year 10 they could explain clearly why Japan wanted to invade Manchuria in 1932. When teaching makes the relevance of activities clear, pupils achieve particularly well. Visits to World War One battlefields and use of evocative pictures help pupils to write most moving accounts of life in the trenches and this linked with the work of the war-poet Wilfred Owen.
132. Pupils experience an excellent range of writing and speaking opportunities. Classroom displays encourage pupils to recognise and use specialist vocabulary. Lessons promote discussion and reporting of conclusions. Class work and the regular homework tasks encourage pupils to write for a variety of purposes. These include a recruiting poster for Roman soldiers, eyewitness accounts of the Battle of Hastings and biographies of Elizabeth I and Mary Queen of Scots. Teachers use well-designed writing prompts to support lower-attaining pupils, who make good progress. However, by the end of Year 9, many pupils still have difficulty in talking or writing about the implications of events or processes. Most prefer to give short answers and their written work reflects this. Answers do not usually include the detailed summaries or discussions that earn higher grades. This extends into GCSE work. Although progress continues, pupils in Year 10, who understood the complex factors linking the Depression in the USA with events in the Far East, did not feel confident enough to try to write this from a Japanese point of view. Teachers recognise this language problem and the use of well-designed worksheets encourages lower-attaining pupils to improve the quality of their descriptions and explanations. As a result, lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. In the few lessons where there is additional support, the help provided encourages confidence and independence. Teachers meet pupils' different needs by planning different activities within lessons. More difficult extension tasks cater for higher-achieving pupils. Well-planned and closely monitored homework provides all pupils with challenges and opportunities to perform well in work that interests them.
133. Teachers mark work regularly. Careful comments recognise the efforts made, help pupils to understand their strengths and point the way to improvements. However, this practice does not extend to identifying specific progress targets. Accordingly, pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not know what they need to do differently to get better at history. There is insufficient use of computers to support teaching and learning in lessons, although individual pupils do use school and home facilities well to conduct research and prepare project work. The inability to darken classrooms is preventing teachers and pupils from using overhead projectors effectively and this is limiting the range of teaching and learning.
134. Teachers and pupils treat each other with respect and behaviour in classrooms is good. Pupils take care with the presentation of their work. They generally enjoy history, especially project work such as that on medieval castles. History is a popular choice for GCSE where attendance is good and this helps the department to achieve a pass grade by all pupils.
135. Overall, leadership of the department is good. The relatively informal style of management has used recent curriculum changes to build an effective team of

teachers. Progress since the last inspection has been good and the department is developing a broad range of teaching approaches. There are still some areas of teaching excellence that are not yet fully shared. Standards of pupils' work are rising and should continue to do so. Accurate assessment of work in Years 7 to 9 would provide a clearer framework for helping pupils to understand what they need to do to improve further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Strengths:

- Very good management of the department.
- Significant improvements in provision since the last report.
- Good teaching, particularly by the specialist staff.
- Good responses from pupils.
- Significant improvements in equipment and the school network.
- Very good pupil monitoring and assessment systems.

Areas for improvement:

- The monitoring role of the head of department.
- Overall standards are below average in Years 9 to 11.
- The behaviour of a significant minority impacts on standards in some classes.
- There is insufficient technical support for teaching staff.
- Opportunities to use computers are inconsistent across subjects.

136. In the 2002 teacher assessments, at the end of Year 9, pupils attained standards that were well below the national averages. In previous years, pupils did not have discrete ICT lessons and teacher assessment results were inconsistent. However, in lessons seen, pupils, including those with special educational needs, were making good progress. In the 2002 GNVQ examinations, the percentage of pupils, who attained the equivalent of A*-C grades, was broadly in line with the national average. This is a significant improvement on previous years, where results were inconsistent. However, a marked proportion of pupils did not pass the exam. The department is aware of this and is taking steps to remedy this issue. In lessons, most pupils make good progress.

137. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is low. From discussions with pupils, many only used computers for word-processing in their previous school. Last year was the first year that pupils in Years 7 to 9 all had weekly ICT lessons. In work seen, by the end of Year 9, skill levels have improved significantly, though standards are still below average. However, pupils develop good communication skills. They produce high-quality documents that combine text and graphics and communicate well with the intended audience. For example, Year 7 pupils work on a presentation on fox hunting, collecting information from the Internet both for and against this, developing an awareness of bias. This work helps to develop literacy skills by its emphasis on communication through the written word. Pupils successfully communicate and model information using spreadsheets and databases and communicate the findings with bar charts using industry-standard software, developing their numeracy skills. The impact of ICT on the individual in society, which is an important part of the ICT curriculum, is well covered by pupils, where they learn about the main features of the Data Protection Act.

138. This year, the department has introduced a GCSE examination course that pupils will follow up to Year 11. By the end of Year 11, pupils develop a very good understanding of key concepts and knowledge in the subject. In their project work, they demonstrate a very good working knowledge of a suitable range of industry-standard software. They know enough to compare competently the features of the software and to choose the right application for specific purposes. They produce a very good running commentary on their work, explaining well why they alter drafts. They analyse the problems they tackle very well and generate good performance criteria to which they work closely. Low-attaining pupils successfully complete a CLAIT course, which provides them with a range of key computer skills. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
139. Teaching is good in ICT. However, the teaching of specialist teachers is significantly better than non-specialists. The specialist teachers have very good knowledge of their subject and communicate this well through expert demonstration, good use of technical language in context and effective support as they circulate to help pupils with tasks. Preparation and planning are good, lessons have a good pace and teachers have an enthusiasm for ICT. Lessons usually begin with the teacher sharing lesson objectives and end with a review that helps pupils to understand what progress they have made. This is good practice and gives pupils a better understanding of their own learning, in line with the recommendations of the new National Key Stage 3 Strategy. Non-specialist teachers are well supported by very good documentation on the school Intranet site, which ensures a degree of consistency, though they lack the skills and knowledge of the specialists. Homework is set regularly, is relevant and contributes well to progress. Relationships are good in all years. Most pupils are keen to learn. They enjoy the practical nature of the subject and are well motivated by the technology. They are keen to take advantage of access to a computer room outside lessons. This is always over-subscribed. However, a significant minority of pupils in some classes have poor attitudes, are badly behaved and affect the learning of other pupils.
140. The subject is very well managed. Rapidly-developing provision includes significant improvements in the number of computer systems and software, a comprehensive school Intranet site and an effective whole-school e-mail system. This site makes an important contribution to the training of teachers, support for pupils and the raising of the profile of ICT in the school. The department offers examination courses in ICT for all its pupils in Years 10 and 11. Assessment systems are very well developed for the GNVQ and GCSE courses, involve pupils in self-evaluation and are well used to inform teaching programmes. Though effective for younger pupils, assessment systems are still good and are developing rapidly. The head of department does not have the opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching, which means that opportunities to recognise and share good practice are missed. Teaching and learning of ICT are well supported by one full- and one part-time technician. However, there is insufficient support considering the large number of computers.

The use of ICT across the curriculum

141. Overall, provision for cross-curricular ICT is satisfactory. In ICT, schemes of work ensure that the school meets the statutory curriculum requirements. Some subjects enhance ICT skills well. For example, in English, pupils develop their research skills using the Internet. In design and technology, pupils use control technology to design and make key fobs. Pupils use a fully-equipped recording studio in music. However, some subject areas lack equipment to support learning, as in science. Pupils rely on teacher demonstration for data-logging since there is insufficient equipment. As a result, cross-curricular ICT requirements are barely met. Departments can book the

specialist rooms, but frequently they are not available due to groups following discrete ICT examination courses. However, continual improvements to resources are likely to remedy this issue.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The overall quality of provision in modern foreign languages is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths:

- Positive relationships between pupils and staff.
- Detailed planning of lessons that ensures pupils have work to match their ability.
- Pupils' positive attitudes in Years 7, 8 and 9.

Areas for improvement:

- To improve standards of attainment throughout the school.
- To use marking more effectively to inform pupils of their progress.
- Improve pupils' access to textbooks, computers and other support materials.

142. Standards in French and Spanish have been falling since 2000 and at the end of Year 9 in 2002 they were well below average. However, the standard of work seen during the inspection was better than the previous results indicated due to improved planning for lessons and the positive relationships of the pupils. Attainment was much closer to national expectations. There is little difference between standards attained by boys and girls and pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily. There has been no improvement in standards overall since the last inspection.
143. By the end of Year 11, attainment is variable between years and the two languages studied. Results in French in the 2002 GCSE examinations were well above the national average for both boys and girls, although only a few pupils were entered for this examination. Results in Spanish at A*-G were very low when compared to national averages. Pupils did worse in Spanish than all other subjects in the school and this represents a considerable fall in standards since the last inspection. Boys performed significantly worse than girls. Staffing problems were a major contributory factor to this performance at GCSE and standards in Spanish at present are still affected by staff absence. Analysis and observation of pupils' work show improved standards in French and the trend is moving towards a better performance.
144. By the end of Year 9, more able pupils in French and Spanish use a variety of verbs to write about holidays and future plans. Most pupils respond to instructions in French or Spanish, reply in short sentences and try hard with pronunciation. Average- and lower-ability pupils achieve well. For example, as part of a Year 9 French lesson, pupils reprimanded anyone, who spoke in English. In the same lesson they also successfully told jokes in French. Pupils of all ability can write short phrases from memory or complete 'fill the blank' exercises, however, there is little evidence of longer pieces of continuous writing. Pupils listen attentively when teachers conduct the lesson in the foreign language. Pupils do not have access to reading materials apart from textbooks in lessons and so do not understand longer and more complex passages. They understand classroom commands and respond appropriately. In Year 9, pupils can opt for a second language and are given an additional lesson to prepare them for the GCSE course.
145. By the age of 16, pupils learning French use the language more confidently than those learning Spanish. High-ability pupils use a full range of tenses to write about

themselves and others and they express opinions. Middle-ability pupils also write accurately about personal details, preferences and school and lower-ability pupils write in the present tense about holidays, school routine and free time. The pupils studying for the Entry Level² in French recognise key words and phrases and respond with limited accuracy. Pupils learning Spanish in Year 11 do not manipulate verbs and lack the breadth of vocabulary and grammar necessary for GCSE. This is due to poor teaching in the past and, as a consequence, pupils recognise key words only and use structures that describe simple everyday situations. Under examination conditions, pupils learning both French and Spanish find it difficult to remember vocabulary and how to construct sentences.

146. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the best lessons, staff speak fluently in French or Spanish, plan lessons in detail, share aims with pupils and teach grammatical structure as well as vocabulary items. They use a range of techniques, such as games and practical activities, as in a Year 7 Spanish lesson where pupils practised vocabulary using flashcards. They use humour and mimes to accompany the pupils repeating vocabulary. Such tasks interest pupils and, as a consequence, they learn new vocabulary quickly. In lessons where teachers use English, or give pupils inappropriate exercises, such as copying vocabulary or drawing pictures, pupils do not make as much progress as they should. Homework does not always support learning as teachers do not mark in enough detail or require pupils to correct their own work. For these reasons, pupils are unclear of their standard of attainment. Additionally, as pupils do not have textbooks to take home, teachers do not give a full range of homework tasks and this affects progress. There is limited access to computers. This results in pupils not using them as often as they should, although there are examples of pupils carrying out Internet-based research at home. For example, a teacher in a Year 9 French lesson gave homework to find out how to send text messages in French. Questioning is good as it involves all pupils, however, teachers do not always challenge more able pupils to extend their use of language by using a variety of tenses.
147. Pupils' attitudes are mostly satisfactory and are the result of good relationships with their teachers. In Year 11, however, there are pupils, who do not respond well and whose attitudes are the result of long-standing problems of staffing and poor teaching. Pupils learn best when they are listening and responding to the foreign language and where they take part in activities that involve pair work or competitions. For example, in a number of lessons, the teacher gave merits to encourage participation. Pupils misbehave when teaching does not involve them in a variety of tasks.
148. Leadership of the department is satisfactory as the head of department provides clear direction and vision for the department. Members of the team work well together sharing ideas and expertise. The development plan is appropriate with clear goals and is having a positive impact on raising achievement, particularly in French in Years 10 and 11. Management of the department is less secure, especially as the monitoring of pupils' work and marking are not well developed. This has a detrimental affect on raising pupils' progress.
149. Comparison with the previous report shows that standards seen in formal testing in Year 9 and in GCSE examinations have fallen. Staffing shortages affected last year's results; however, there is evidence that standards are now improving and the department is in a position to develop and move forward.

² An examination ~~that~~^{which} examines pupils below the level of GCSE.

MUSIC

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

Strengths:

- Pupils achieve standards that match national expectations.
- The quality of teaching is good and this ensures pupils make good progress.
- Pupils enthusiastically develop their musical talents.
- There is good provision for extra musical activities.
- Good use is made of music technology to enhance performing and composing.

Areas for improvement:

- Congested accommodation that restricts creativity.
- More teaching resources to support all teachers.
- A formal plan for future development.

150. Music is a thriving and popular subject in the school. This is substantially due to the good quality of teaching, positive attitudes of pupils and enthusiasm for performing in public. A broad range of concerts, stage productions and other opportunities to perform in public are organised each term. Over 100 pupils have free extra instrumental lessons each week taught by four visiting specialists. The congested nature of the accommodation, however, is preventing further expansion of music making in the school and restricting creativity in lessons, particularly where large numbers of pupils are working together. There is not enough space for more than one type of activity at a time and little space to develop group work in ensembles. A development plan is needed to address these problems.
151. Standards by the end of Year 9 in 2002 were judged by the school to have been above average compared with national expectations. From evidence seen in lessons during the inspection, however, it was agreed that marking at that time had been too generous and that present standards are about average, almost matching national expectations. Considering their starting points, pupils achieve well. Girls do better than boys – similar to the national pattern. The interest shown by boys, however, is as enthusiastic as that of girls and a good number choose to learn other instruments and get involved in extra music-making activities. All pupils play keyboards and tuned percussion instruments with increasing confidence and learn to read and understand basic musical notation. This enables them to compose and play short melodies and sometimes harmonise them. They frequently make good use of technical keyboard features to enhance their musical results. One of the music rooms is well equipped for this purpose as a keyboard studio. The congested space available, however, makes it only possible for pupils to share instruments and when two classes are taught simultaneously, groups of pupils are inevitably denied access to these good facilities.
152. Standards by the end of Year 11 are average and have improved over the last three years. GCSE results in 2002 matched national subject averages for A*-C grades. A separate group of pupils take GCSE courses in expressive arts that include a musical option. Results in this subject have also improved over the last three years and in 2002 nearly half of those entered gained a grade in the A*-C range. Performing standards in music are commensurate with individual skills and range from elementary to the higher grades in Associated Board examinations. Examples were heard during the inspection of self-assured and expressive playing on a range of instruments. Pupils' composing skills are about average. Whilst most of the examples heard relied heavily on basic chord sequences, they were all well structured

and musically coherent. Pupils listen to music perceptively and can discuss what they hear confidently in musical terms.

153. Standards achieved by the significant numbers of pupils having extra instrumental lessons are very good. Examples were heard of the concert band on a recently recorded CD produced in the school's well-equipped recording studio performing Christmas music to a high standard. Many pupils also perform as accomplished soloists. These, together with other groups of pupils, fulfil an important ambassadorial role by engaging in an extensive annual programme of concerts and musical events for both the school and the community. This is a major factor in the department's commitment to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.
154. The quality of teaching is good. It was good or better in well over half of the lessons observed and at least satisfactory in all the rest. The quality of learning matches this pattern. Where it is less than good, it is due to less experienced teaching. The department is aware of the need to review its provision of suitable materials to support teaching and learning. Lessons are well planned. In the best of these, the pace is good and pupils are able to combine their performing, composing and listening in closely related activities. In some, however, mainly due to the limitations of the accommodation, learning is restricted to non-practical activities for too much of the time. Pupils are managed well. They respond with good behaviour and generally make a good creative effort to be musically productive. Although many are unable to concentrate for long periods of time, they are generally enthusiastic and enjoy playing instruments. Teachers support pupils' learning well and their expectations match individual musical needs. They make good use of new technology to enhance pupils' learning and to add a degree of sophistication to their music making. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in their music lessons.
155. The leadership of the department is good. The problems of assessment and behaviour highlighted in the previous inspection have been addressed successfully. The instrumental and technical resources of the department are managed well, but their use and any further expansion are limited by the cramped nature of the accommodation.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths:

- Above-average GCSE and A Level results and improving trends in pupils' overall attainment.
- Good teaching that challenges pupils of all abilities.
- Very good leadership and management of the department.
- Good relationships and positive attitudes of pupils.

Areas for improvement:

- Small, dilapidated, unhygienic changing areas.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of their level of performance in specific activities in Years 7 to 9.

156. Pupils' standards on entry to the school are below average in most practical activities, but by the time they reach the end of Year 9 their attainment is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher A*-C grades in the 2002 GCSE was an increase on the previous year and continued the rising trend in GCSE results. The 2002 results were above the national average. Boys' results were well above average and girls' results were below. Boys achieved very well in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 9. Pupils' results in 2001 and 2002 were better than those attained in their other subjects, significantly so for boys. However, in 2000, girls' results were very much better than boys' results. The variability of these results reflects the relative ability of boys and girls in each year group. Pupils of all abilities, in all years, achieve well and make good progress.
157. The present GCSE pupils are working to a standard above the national average. The presentation of written work in Years 10 and 11 is very good. Pupils draw detailed diagrams and illustrate their work with photographs, for example of movement at joints and muscular endurance. Pupils are divided into two ability groups for the theoretical section of the course and this extends the more able and allows all pupils to work at an appropriate level. The majority of pupils reach high standards in the practical elements of the course. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
158. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 in the non-examination classes attain standards above those expected nationally. Pupils have secure practical skills, for example in basketball, and are able to plan and deliver warm-up and ball-handling activities efficiently in small groups. Pupils' planning and analytical skills are developing alongside their performance skills and those pupils taking part in the junior sports leaders award and the Football Association Organisers' Award gain valuable experience when working with younger pupils. Pupils get many more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and their planning skills have improved from those recorded in the previous inspection report.
159. Boys and girls by Year 8 are mostly well co-ordinated and work co-operatively in small groups to practise and refine their gymnastics and dance movements. However, pupils' individual movement skills often lack quality, tension and control. Boys in Year 9 have good rugby skills and boys and girls have an understanding of basic hockey techniques. By the end of Year 9, pupils are able to warm up and stretch independently and effectively. Their planning of sport specific exercises shows good understanding of the components of fitness.
160. A few individual pupils and teams achieve very high standards in district, county and national competitions in athletics, cross-country, rugby, basketball, archery and football. The attainment of these talented pupils is well above the national average and they benefit considerably from the very good opportunities offered by the hard work and dedication of their teachers. The numbers of pupils, who attend extra-curricular activities and the increased numbers taking the examinations, both boys and girls, demonstrate the positive attitudes and involvement of pupils in the subject. It is this involvement and the topics covered in the accredited courses that give pupils much experience and understanding of cultural, social and moral issues relating to sport. Good social provision inevitably has a positive impact on teamwork.
161. The quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good overall and very good in Years 10 and 11. Teaching was more consistent and of a higher standard than that reported at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils benefit in their learning because most year groups are divided by ability and teaching is closely matched to the needs of the pupils in each group. When ability groups are not

possible teachers set graded tasks on different court areas or different trampolines. Teachers recap previous work and share the lesson objectives at the beginning of the lesson with the pupils. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and their demonstrations give pupils a clear visual image of the activity and show them how to improve their skills. The two teaching assistants frequently demonstrate to a high standard and they make a very good contribution to pupils' learning by helping individual pupils and small groups. In a few activities, teachers use the digital camera to extend pupils' analytical and evaluative skills, but this strand of the National Curriculum is not addressed frequently enough in games lessons, especially in Years 7, 8 and 9. All lessons begin with a health and fitness section and this promotes knowledge and understanding from Year 7 onwards. The department focuses on developing literacy skills. Key words and objectives are displayed, but strategies for the development of numeracy are not as regularly used.

162. The head of department provides clear educational direction and very good leadership for the subject. He leads by very good example with his teaching and after only four terms in post has successfully addressed the issues raised in the previous report. Members of the department work very well together and they have an excellent commitment to improvement and the capacity to succeed. However, pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not get sufficient time to develop fully their performance, planning and evaluative skills. One hour a week limits the depth of their study and does not allow pupils to reach the highest standards or maintain their fitness. The involvement of the school in the sports co-ordinator scheme has forged very good contacts with feeder schools and other secondary schools. Schools in the cluster have benefited from funding for resources, outside coaches, extra-curricular activities and staff training. GCSE pupils are well informed about their standards by thorough marking that shows them clearly how to improve their work. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 do not fully understand their level of work in specific activities and what they need to do to raise their standards. There are sufficient indoor facilities, but the quality is poor. Working in cold drafty conditions with restricted space because of water leakage hinders pupils' learning. The changing rooms are cramped, drab and unhygienic. Overall, the department has achieved very good improvement since the last inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths:

- Pupils develop subject skills rapidly from Year 7 onwards.
- Teachers plan lessons well and use a variety of methods to stimulate pupils.
- The new GCSE short course is having a beneficial effect on pupils' learning and motivation.
- The department is led and managed very well.
- The subject makes a very strong contribution to the personal development of all pupils.
- There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection.

Areas for improvement:

- The written work of some pupils lacks depth and structure.
- Lower-attaining pupils need a wider range of classroom materials and resources.
- Pupils would benefit from the opportunity to visit local religious sites.

163. There have been no public examinations in this subject in recent years, but a short course GCSE is currently being offered to a group of Year 11 pupils and will be taken by the whole year group the following year. In lessons observed and work seen during the inspection, standards are below the levels expected in the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 9. A major contributory factor to this judgement is the fact that many pupils enter the school with very low levels of subject knowledge. From the outset, however, most pupils develop a good understanding of the distinctive features of Christianity and other world religions. They also develop confidence in discussing religious and moral issues and their oral progress is good. Some pupils also make good progress in the development of their writing skills, for example, in some thoughtful and well-presented projects on Judaism in Year 7 and Hinduism in Year 8. Other pupils, however, have difficulties with their written work, which lacks depth and structure. The department has clear plans to address this issue through commendable strategies on raising standards of literacy. During Years 10 and 11, pupils develop their subject skills in more depth and the introduction of the new GCSE short course has addressed an issue arising from the previous report concerning a lack of religious content at this stage. Pupils now examine religious and moral issues fully and, in this context, some impressive coursework assignments were seen from Year 11 pupils on Christian views of marriage. As a result, standards are in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus by the end of Year 11. Throughout the age range, higher-attaining pupils make good progress and have ample opportunities to develop their independent learning skills in depth. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, but there is a limited range of classroom materials to suit their individual needs. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved between boys and girls.
164. The overall quality of teaching and learning are good and sometimes very good. The previous report noted that there were no subject specialists within the department, but the school has rectified this. Subject specialist skills are now used very well to promote good learning. Non-specialist teachers in the department get very effective support. Teachers plan lessons well and expectations are high throughout the age range. They use a wide variety of techniques in lessons and there is a strong emphasis on reflection and discussion. This took place to very good effect in a Year 7 lesson, during which pupils examined the early life of the Buddha and reflected on the meaning of life and how to achieve personal fulfillment. Teachers take care to include all pupils in classroom activities through well-targeted questions. They conduct lessons with good pace and considerable enthusiasm. Pupils have ample opportunities to work in small groups and this contributes towards their social and personal development. As a result, most pupils show a keen interest in lessons. This was demonstrated well in a lively and wide-ranging debate on Christian charity in Year 11, which made an important contribution to pupils' understanding of moral and citizenship issues. There are minor instances of poor behaviour and lack of concentration, but, on the whole, relationships within the classroom are very good and pupils show respect for their teachers and for each other. Above all, they enjoy their lessons and, as a result, they learn well and make good progress.
165. The department is led and managed very well with purpose and enthusiasm. The previous report noted deficiencies in assessment procedures. This is no longer the case and teachers now mark and monitor pupils' work assiduously in all years. There is a welcome emphasis throughout the curriculum on the development of literacy skills and the subject makes a very strong contribution to the personal development of all pupils, particularly in the areas of citizenship and multifaith education. There are, however, insufficient opportunities for pupils to visit local religious sites. ICT is

beginning to have an impact on the work of the department, but more work is needed in this area.

166. Overall, the department has made very good progress since the previous inspection, particularly in terms of curriculum design, the provision of subject specialist teaching and the introduction of a short course examination at GCSE. This is now a strong department and the key challenge is to raise the status of religious education further within the school and to develop strategies to increase subject skills at all levels.

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

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002³.

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
English	19	100		21		63	
Mathematics	8	100		50		75	
Biology	6	100		0		47	
Physics	3	67		0		27	
Chemistry	0	-		-		-	
Business studies	9	89		22		62	
Art	6	10		33		73	
Sports Studies	8	88		50		78	
History	1	100		0		60	
Music	1	100		0		60	
French	0	-		-		-	
Drama	0	-		-		-	
Geography	0	-		-		-	
Design	3	100		0		53	
Psychology	3	100		0		60	
Sociology	2	100		0		40	
General studies	27	96		4		53	
Computing	6	100		0		63	
Business AVCE (Double Award)	0	-		-		-	
Media	8	100		25		73	

³ At the time of publishing this report the national comparative figures were not available

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
English Literature	16	100		81		51	
Mathematics	11	91		36		34	
Biology	16	83		25		30	
Physics	10	60		20		20	
Chemistry	1	100		0		30	
Business studies	15	80		13		29	
Art	5	80		20		26	
Media Studies	8	75		50		45	
Photography	5	20		0		8	
History	14	86		79		35	
French	0	-		-		-	
Design Products	12	83		33		33	
Sports Studies	10	80		20		34	
Psychology	8	50		0		15	
Sociology	11	91		36		37	
General studies	52	70		16		23	
Computing	12	100		17		37.5	

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
							n/a

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The inspection focus was on mathematics and physics. The work in biology and chemistry was also sampled.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths:

- Very good teaching ensures that students develop a good mathematical understanding.
- Teachers have very good mathematical knowledge that enables them to question and challenge their students and check their understanding.
- Students' very good attitudes towards the subject ensure that they make good progress.
- Students talk about their work with confidence and clarity.

Areas for improvement:

- Marking is inconsistent and does not inform students how they can improve.

167. Results of the A Level courses over the last three years have improved. In 2002, results were good with half the students obtaining a higher A or B grade. This was an improvement on the results from 2001. Additionally, all students, who took the further mathematics examination in 2002 obtained A or B grades. These results were much better than could have been expected given the students' GCSE grades and were due to very good teaching and extremely positive attitudes by the students. Male and female students do equally well.
168. Standards of work seen during the inspection were good and demonstrated the good progress made from Year 11 and throughout Years 12 and 13. In a Year 12 revision lesson, students worked co-operatively in groups to prepare presentations of solutions to examination questions. They presented very clear explanations of the Factor Theorem and were able to 'complete the square' and identify the minimum point of a function. They answered questions from other students and supplementary questions from their teacher with confidence. In a Year 13 lesson, students used complex methodology successfully to gain a full understanding of mathematics principles, after a brief reminder about some pure mathematics techniques.
169. Teaching is very good overall. Teachers know their students well and have developed excellent relationships based on trust, respect and humour. Teachers have very good mathematical knowledge that enables them to question and challenge their students and check their understanding. They successfully explore strategies to engage and challenge the students and use questioning techniques to ensure understanding. Teachers ensure that the students' differing needs are met and recognise their strengths and weaknesses. Students with particular needs, such as language difficulties, are well integrated and make good progress along with the rest of the class. All students are given opportunities for independent study and they respond well to the challenges.
170. Students enjoy their mathematics and are prepared to voice their ideas and opinions and discuss their work. They give good explanations of their thinking. They are supportive of each other and work well together when appropriate.

171. The successful teaching and learning results from the very good leadership and management of the subject. Teachers work well with each other and this ensures a consistency of approach within the department. They are enthusiastic about their subject and are committed to raising standards and ensuring that students have a good basis for further study. However, marking is inconsistent and does not always inform students how they can improve. Students, who start a post-16 course in mathematics, usually complete the examination. At the time of the last inspection, attainment in the sixth form was described as satisfactory, it has improved significantly and is now good.

SCIENCES

The focus of the inspection was on **physics**, but biology and chemistry were also sampled. In the biology lesson observed, the teaching was very good with some excellent aspects where all the students were involved in whole-class discussions. The attainment of the present A Level group is wide ranging, but is close to the expected national level. The students have made satisfactory progress from their AS examinations. This represents an improvement from the attainment of students at A Level in 2001 and 2002, which was below the national level. There is a very good relationship between the teacher and students that gives rise to a very constructive learning environment. In the two chemistry lessons observed, the teaching was good. The students had a very good attitude to the subject and performed the practical work on catalysts in a safe and mature manner. The students appreciated the support given to them by their teachers. The attainment of the students in 2001 was above the national expected level and this was maintained in 2002. The relationship between the students and teacher is very good and they work together in a very co-operative manner.

PHYSICS

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

Strengths:

- Teaching is good and enables students to achieve well.
- The teachers have very good subject knowledge and share this with enthusiasm.
- Students and teachers work together very well and relationships are very good.
- The subject is well led, with a commitment to further improvement.

Areas for improvement:

- The range of teaching and learning activities is limited by the small group sizes, insufficient equipment for advanced practical work and inadequate laboratory provision.
- Although there is some good use of information and communication technology by students and teachers, its use in lessons needs further development.

172. The GCE A-level examination results have remained below the national average. This is a consequence of the open access policy in the sixth form. Numbers taking the subject have been too small to make reliable comparisons between groups of students. However, students with good grades at GCSE generally achieve results above expectations at A-level. Male and female students do equally well, although in the last three years there have been only two female students. Numbers taking the new AS examination in 2001 were small, but increased in 2002. Students' results overall were in line with expectations and those with better GCSE results exceeded expectations. All of the students, who achieved good grades at AS-level in 2002, continued into the second year of the A-level course.

173. The standards of work seen in lessons and in students' work are above average. Students currently in Year 13 are achieving well in relation to their GCSE and AS results. They respond very well to the good teaching and well-structured course. In one lesson seen, the students' already good knowledge of quantum physics was effectively probed by the teacher using examination-type questions that had to be answered within short time limits. Their responses were discussed in detail and any difficulties were resolved with the help of other students and the teacher. This resulted in all the students producing good written answers that could be used for revision. In Year 12, students have made good progress beyond GCSE and show good knowledge and understanding of the first AS module on mechanics and radioactivity. In one lesson they were able to apply equations of motion to solve problems involving uniformly accelerated motion. In another lesson they showed good understanding of particle physics and the properties of neutrinos, which allowed the teacher to develop the topic further.
174. Teaching is good overall and so students learn well. The teachers have very good subject knowledge that they keep up-to-date. They show enthusiasm for physics in their teaching, relating theories to students' knowledge and describing events in the development of the subject. Teachers set out the objectives clearly, conduct lessons at a good pace and have high expectations. Students are actively involved throughout the lessons, concentrating well and readily engaging in discussions with the teachers. In a Year 12 lesson, the teacher helped the students gain a clearer understanding of nuclear binding energy by carefully building on their knowledge from GCSE. In the lessons observed, whole-class teaching was used for most of the time, with some time for individual work. This tutorial approach made effective use of the time and resources available. Although the small numbers of students restrict the scope for organising different groupings, teachers use a wide range of learning activities during the two years of the course. As a result of the small numbers, teachers have very good knowledge of individual students' abilities. They use this knowledge, together with the results of ongoing assessment, to plan lessons effectively and this ensures that all students make good progress.
175. Students work well in lessons and so they make good progress. They enjoy the subject, relationships with each other and their teachers are very good and they feel well supported. They readily discuss learning difficulties both during and outside lessons with their teachers, who are approachable and responsive. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to develop strategies to improve their knowledge. In a Year 12 lesson, having used the detailed subject specification to identify gaps in their understanding, with the help of the teacher they produced well-structured explanations of a difficult theory to add to their notes.
176. Written work consists mainly of notes and answers to structured questions that follow up the theory and practical work done in lessons. Marking of questions is thorough and the small teaching groups enable any problems to be discussed with individual students. All students have appropriate textbooks and are supported by additional worksheets. Students and staff use their own home computers to produce work and support their studies by using the Internet and communicating with each other by e-mail. There is a computer connected to the school network in most teaching rooms and students can usually gain access to a computer when not in lessons.
177. The subject is well led and there is a commitment to improvement. There is an effective process for departmental review. Good use is made of assessment data to monitor and evaluate the work of the department. A new course was introduced in 2001 that more closely matches the abilities of the students. The course is well

structured and organised with opportunities for further development. Almost one third of lessons take place in classrooms and this affects the planning of suitable activities for the course, limiting practical work. Further limitations are placed on practical work by the shortage of suitable apparatus for advanced level work. Several major pieces of equipment are old and in need of replacement. The technical staff work hard to maintain this equipment and this places an additional burden on the relatively small amount of technician time.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

No subjects were inspected in depth in this curriculum area, but the work in design was sampled. The provision in **design and technology** is good. Standards gained are satisfactory and students achieve well. Retention of students to the course is excellent and many continue the subject in higher education.

BUSINESS

The main focus of the inspection was on business studies.

BUSINESS STUDIES

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

Strengths:

- Teaching is good; with subject knowledge shared effectively to cater well for students' different needs.
- Relationships with students and the very good attitudes they have to their learning is supporting good achievement.
- The promotion and use of business and extended language develops students' achievement in coursework, particularly in Year 13.

Areas for improvement:

- Develop students' analytical skills and application of business concepts to support depth of understanding.
- The use of numeracy skills and mathematical formulae to develop students' application to business situations.

178. The department offers business studies at A Level and has introduced the AVCE course in Year 12 this academic year replacing the AS course. Recruitment to these is satisfactory with many students successfully completing their chosen course.
179. Standards in A Level and AS business are satisfactory with many students achieving at or above their expected grades in 2001. Results for 2002 continue this trend, with students gaining B and C grades in advanced courses. Standards of achievement seen during the inspection are also good and sometimes very good, particularly when compared to standards achieved at GCSE level.
180. The good achievement is due to the quality of teaching that is invariably good. This enables students to consolidate and apply their knowledge and understanding of business organisations and concepts into their coursework effectively. Teachers' planning and organisation are good, providing opportunities for students to develop a range of business techniques and concepts necessary for success in their course. For example, Year 13 students have a very good taught session that provides them

with detailed knowledge that helps their discussions and to make appropriate decisions about factors that influence profit margins of companies.

181. Overall, students have good written and oral skills that they apply well to their coursework and in discussions using appropriate technical and extended language. The priority given to developing these skills in lessons has resulted in good progress from Year 12 to 13.
182. Students' ability to analyse information and apply business concepts effectively is less well developed. Teachers are aware of this and are developing strategies to help students become more competent in this area by introducing more case study material for students to analyse, compare and make decisions about. Students' use of information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory, but the extended knowledge, understanding and application of ICT within the business environment is limited by access to the appropriate networked equipment.
183. Students are well supported to improve their work through the review and target-setting procedures that operate in the department. This gives students valuable information about their performance and helps them set achievable and challenging targets.
184. Leadership of the department is very good. The head of department has a clear direction and this is shared and supported by members of the department. He is aware of the strengths and areas for development and can articulate actions needed to promote and sustain improvements.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths:

- Significant improvements in provision since the last report.
- Good teaching by the specialist staff.
- Very good relationships between students and staff.
- Significant improvements in equipment and the school network.
- Very good management of the department.

Areas for improvement:

- The monitoring role of the head of department.
- Overall, standards are below average.
- There are insufficient girls taking up the sixth form course.
- There is insufficient technical support.

185. The focus of the inspection was on A and AS level computing. In Years 12 and 13, the school offers an A and AS level course in computing that focuses on the practical applications of ICT in commerce and industry. Over recent years, entries for A Level computing have been low and results have been consistently well below national figures. The 2002 AS results showed a significant improvement on previous years and most students surpassed their predicted grades.
186. Standards in the Year 12 computing course are below average. However, students tackle practical tasks well, writing and testing simple programs successfully in a computer language that they are seeing for the first time. Students demonstrate a

sound understanding of advanced spreadsheet functions and show that they can apply this in the context of practical problems. Year 13 computing students have a good knowledge and understanding of how data is processed in a computer. Their projects follow the examination board's criteria closely and the technical solutions they propose are sound. Students draw on their previous learning to overcome problems.

187. Teaching in the sixth form is good and sometimes very good. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject. The very good relationships with students and an enthusiasm that is shared with them make learning enjoyable. Lessons are well planned and provide good levels of challenge. Tasks are achievable and build well on previous learning. There is close support of individuals as they tackle technical problems or confront new concepts. Very good assessment systems ensure individual attainment and progress are monitored closely. Students are fully involved and aware of what they need to do to improve. The homework that is set provides work that extends as well as consolidates advances in learning. The two teachers involved often give up their non-teaching time, providing useful additional support in sixth form lessons.
188. Leadership and management in the department are very good. Provision has improved significantly over the past two years and significant improvements in equipment and the school network have been achieved. Review and monitoring systems are insufficiently established. The good take-up for the A Level computing course is the result of the head of department's efforts to attract students into post-16 ICT courses. However, no girls are taking the course, an issue the department is well aware of. Plans are in place to address this. There is insufficient technical support to support the work in the department.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The main focus of the inspection was on health and social care, leisure and recreation and travel and tourism. Work in physical education (sports studies) was also sampled. The

provision in **sports studies** is very good. Standards are improving and this is reflected in the 2002 results that are in line with national averages. Students achieve well as teaching and learning are good and lessons are thoroughly planned. Standards are above average and improving.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

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

Strengths:

- Teaching is good: lessons are effective and well planned.
- Relationships between staff and students are good, enabling students to gain confidence and strive to do well.
- Attitudes towards learning are good with students eager to improve their work.

Areas for improvement:

- The application of analytical and evaluative skills to make informed comparative judgements are weak.
- Use of technical and evaluative language is underdeveloped.
- Students' ability to work independently using a range of resources limits achievement in some units.

189. The AVCE course in health and social care was inspected. This is the only course offered in this post-16 curriculum area. Students are entered for either the single or double award. The numbers of students opting for and completing the course are small.
190. Overall, standards are satisfactory with a small number of students achieving an average grade. Students' achievement when compared with their GCSE results is generally good. The number of students currently following the course, who are predicted to achieve merit and distinction grades is good. Students' ability to gather first hand information using questionnaires, interviews and visits is good. The collection of additional information using the Internet and books is satisfactory. However, students' ability to analyse the information and use it to make comparative judgements is underdeveloped, as is their use of technical language and extended writing in their portfolio work.
191. Teaching is good and there is evidence of thorough planning, enthusiasm for the subject and strong teamwork. Theory and practice of health and social care are well related, giving students realistic insights into the demands of the sector, enabling good learning to take place. For example, in a lesson for Year 12 and 13 students studying the physical aspects of a health module, students were given the opportunity to work with a fitness instructor and the teacher to explore the factors that effect the fitness of different groups within society.
192. The very good relationships teachers have with the students create a good learning environment. Students have positive attitudes towards the subject and their learning, responding well to activities during lessons. They listen carefully and give adequate answers to direct questioning. However, they are less confident in open discussion and find some difficulty in working independently. Teachers' assessment is continuous and appropriate. Students benefit from and appreciate the support they get from their teachers, both inside and outside lessons.

193. Leadership and management of the subject by the co-ordinator are good. There is a strong team approach to the management of the subject with staff supporting each other and the students. Staff within the department are aware of the areas for development and have identified some actions to deal with them. Resources are just adequate. However, a problem with the timetable results in a minority of students being unable to have their full allocation of taught time. This is unsatisfactory.

LEISURE AND RECREATION AND TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Overall, the quality of provision in leisure and recreation and travel and tourism is **satisfactory**.

Strengths:

- The only student to complete travel and tourism in 2002, attained an A grade.
- Good relationships between students and teachers that supports learning.
- Good achievement of students with low point scores at GCSE in individual units of the courses.

Areas for improvement:

- Students' progress is not monitored with sufficient rigour to guide their improvement and pace of working.
- Many students are not able to attend the full number of lessons because lessons clash with their other subjects.
- The high number of students, who drop out of the courses and/or do not complete the required number of units to gain an accreditation.

194. The Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education (AVCE) was introduced in 2000. Four students completed the leisure and recreation AVCE in 2002. One student completed the travel and tourism AVCE and attained an A grade. Her achievement was very good. Three students were ungraded and one attained an E grade. All students achieved below their predicted grades based on their GCSE results. Several students on both courses did not complete the required number of units. Most left the school to go into employment and three students returned to complete the course this year. Students mostly attained results in individual units that were better than expected when compared to their low GCSE scores and their achievement was good.
195. The standards reached by current students in Year 12 and Year 13, as seen in lessons and in their written work, are average. This represents good achievement in relation to their GCSE results and students are doing better than expected. However, it is too early in the courses to have evidence from all assignments and final results will depend on the depth of students' research, the quality of their recording and their completion of the required units. Students' responses in discussion are well thought out and show a good basic knowledge about the tourist industry. Students are able to work independently and know how to obtain evidence from a variety of sources. The students studying leisure and recreation have a good knowledge of the range of employment opportunities in the leisure industry. Those students taking their controlled test in travel and tourism showed a clear understanding of a variety of tourist attractions in terms of location and facilities. Students have put much time and effort into their assignments and their finished units show dedication and pride in presentation.
196. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and are able to deal with students' responses effectively, for example, when discussing

employment situations and career opportunities in the leisure industry. Students are given basic assignment tasks for each section of work. This information extends the criteria provided by the board and helps students to understand what is required to meet the criteria and to organise their work and time. However, there is insufficient monitoring of students' progress in completing each task. Time deadlines are set, but not rigorously applied. Students feel that when they are required to research independently teachers do not give them enough structure and very often their learning is hindered by the enormity of the task. Evidence from previous students' completed assignments shows that teachers give detailed and informed comments after the students have submitted their work initially. Students benefit from this because there are clear indications of the provisional grade awarded and what is needed to meet further criteria. However, previous students have not all used the advice to improve and extend their assignments and there is no formal monitoring system that gives deadlines for the improvements.

197. Good relationships have developed through the independent nature of the learning and students support one another well and work co-operatively in small groups. Most students are comfortable with the independent ethos of the course and know they can ask for individual help whenever it is needed. A few students in the group are interested in the leisure industry as a career and are also studying associated courses like sports studies. The AVCE courses are well suited to the needs of half the students in the groups, but are not as appropriate for those students, who start the courses with very low GCSE points scores. Information and communication technology is taught as an integral part of the courses, but the lack of computers in the main teaching room considerably limits the amount of sustained help provided by the teachers in lesson time. Students feel that the book and magazine resources in the main teaching base provide them with good research material, but they are disappointed with the lack of visits. Over time, many contacts have been established and visiting speakers and visits arranged, but there is a lack of consistency in planning these necessary vocational activities. Several students are not able to attend all the set lessons and at least three students attend less than half the lessons. Although the courses have a vocational element and some final work is produced independently, teacher and student contact time is essential and of equal importance to that of all other courses run in the sixth form.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

No subjects were inspected in this curriculum area, but the work in art, music and media studies was sampled. The provision in **art and design** is satisfactory. Standards in examinations are below the national average. However, achievement is good due to the effective teaching and positive attitudes of the students. The provision in **music technology** and **performing studies** is good. Examination results are satisfactory. The teaching and learning is good, promoting positive attitudes by students to their learning. The provision in **media studies** is satisfactory. In 2002, most students performed better than predicted from their GCSE results. Teaching observed was good and students have positive attitudes to their learning.

HUMANITIES

The main focus of the inspection was on sociology and psychology. The work in history was also sampled. The provision in **history** is good. Results in 2002 are below average, but have improved at both AS and A Level. Teaching and learning are good and students make good progress.

SOCIOLOGY

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

Strengths:

- Standards are rising, particularly in Year 12.
- Subject specialist skills are used well to promote good learning.
- There is a strong emphasis in lessons on debate and discussion that includes all students.
- Students have very positive attitudes towards the subject.
- Detailed marking gives students a clear idea on how to improve their written work.
- The subject is becoming increasingly popular in the sixth form.

Areas for improvement:

- Most students have yet to develop adequate skills of analysis and evaluation.
- There is a very limited range of resources for students in the school library.
- Students have insufficient opportunities to attend conferences and to listen to visiting speakers.

198. Examination results have been well below the national average in recent years, but the number of students entered has been very small. In the most recent examination, however, there was a marked improvement in the AS level results when almost all students performed well both in terms of their overall grades and in terms of their prior attainment. The standards reached by students in both years, as seen in the current inspection, are below those expected nationally, but represent good progress in terms of their prior attainment. In Year 12, a large number of students are following the AS level course and most are developing a sound understanding of different sociological theories and methodology. This shows, for example, in some detailed note-taking on sociological perspectives on the family. Evidence from students' written work so far indicates, however, that they are not yet able to analyse these perspectives in depth and some of their files lack an evaluative structure.
199. Many students are struggling with the complexity of a new subject and the demands of Advanced Level work, but they are supported well in class with useful and relevant handouts. Students also develop their individual research skills well through the coursework assignment. The two students currently studying the subject in Year 13 are making good progress and are developing their essay writing skills well. For example, they produced well-structured essays on the role of religion in contemporary society.
200. The quality of teaching is good. The specialist teacher uses subject knowledge well to promote good learning. Lessons have a firm structure and are planned well with clear aims and objectives that are shared with the students. A positive classroom atmosphere lends an air of purpose to lessons and, as a result, students develop the confidence to ask questions and participate in debate. This was seen to good effect in a Year 13 lesson, which produced an animated and articulate debate on the nature of religious fundamentalism. There are good opportunities for students to work in small groups in order to promote their collaborative learning skills. Good use is made of question and answer techniques to reinforce learning gains and praise and encouragement are also used to good effect. As a result, students have very positive attitudes towards the subject and are eager to do well. For the most part, they respond well to the tasks that are set, but a few students in Year 12 lack maturity and are reluctant to pursue their studies to sufficient depth.

201. The subject is managed well with competence and enthusiasm. Students' learning is assessed thoroughly and detailed marking gives students a clear idea on how to improve their written work. There is a good range of home-produced materials to support students in the classroom, but there is a very limited range of books and journals on sociology in the school library to support research and independent learning. ICT and the Internet are playing an increasing role within the subject curriculum, but students would benefit from more opportunities to attend relevant conferences and to listen to visiting speakers. The subject makes a strong contribution to citizenship and to the personal development of students.
202. Overall, this is an increasingly popular part of post-16 provision in the school. The key issues now are to improve examination results and to encourage more independent learning for students in both years.

PSYCHOLOGY

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

Strengths:

- Well-planned lessons provide students with an effective introduction to a new subject.
- Detailed written comments by the teachers on students' work provide very clear guidance to students about their performance and progress.
- Students value the dedication of teachers in providing help with their studies.
- Good use is made of information about performance to predict and monitor students' progress.

Areas for improvement:

- Improve the learning/teaching environment by providing better physical amenities and a significant improvement in the number and range of specialist texts.
- Monitor specialist subject teaching systematically and analytically to support the growing popularity of the subject.
- Move to more independence in students' learning by using lesson and tutor time to structure, review and evaluate issues rather than for providing basic subject content.

203. The number of students in previous years has been too small for the A-Level results to provide a comparison with national standards. The standards achieved in 2002 were below the average for the whole school. This reflected the facts that psychology was a completely new subject for all students at AS and that a number of students did not complete the A2 course. Work scrutiny indicates that present standards at both AS and A2 levels are in line with the teacher predictions of the lower C-E grades. Because many students enter the course with GCSE results below the national average, the overall progress made in Year 12 is satisfactory. The work done by students mirrors the range of short tasks and discursive writing required by the course. Students already understand basic research principles, statistical analysis and can recall the main features of key studies. There is still insufficient use of the vocabulary of 'critique', with students too ready to accept research studies at face value. By Year 13, the quality of analysis has improved, but students still tend to focus on differences between studies rather than analyse the strengths and weaknesses of particular research. They are over-reliant on anecdotal evidence, as in a discussion about aspects of substance abuse where there was a notable absence of appropriate subject vocabulary and failure to suggest general principles.
204. Most students choose to study psychology because they find the subject a refreshing change from the National Curriculum. Many do not intend to study it for more than a

year and a number do not appreciate how much work, especially reading, is required. This limits the amount of effort some students are prepared to make, reduces the numbers completing the course and cuts down the proportion of higher grades. The popularity of the subject is placing a considerable strain on the book resources and teaching spaces. These have become inadequate for the larger AS group. There is no effective 'library' of journals, research papers or specialist textbooks. Many students do not have their own computers and access to the Internet is not always straightforward. Students have insufficient opportunity to read widely enough. Consequently, they cannot make appropriate connections between studies. This limits the quality of their spoken and written discussion and lowers the quality of their research evaluations.

205. The students fully appreciate the quality of the teaching and the ready willingness of the staff to provide extra individual support. The very good rapport between staff and students plays an important part in keeping students on the courses. However, there is over-reliance on the specific help available from teachers and this is reducing the degree of independence in the learning. This in turn restricts the range of work studied and reduces the quality of work, particularly in Year 13.
206. All the teaching seen was satisfactory or good. Scrutiny of work files and the results achieved in tests indicate that teaching is good overall. Well-planned lessons provide clear focuses, but there is great pressure on teachers to cover basic course content. Students in Year 12 do not complete sufficient preparatory reading and too many classes have to cover basic facts. The most vibrant lessons are those where there are attempts to extend the relevance of the subject. A strength of the teaching lies in the very detailed marking of students' work. Prose comments provide clear advice on weaknesses and identify areas for improvement. Graded marking is also detailed and links consistently with the examining board mark schemes helping students to check their performance. In Year 12, assessed work on identifying key studies encourages students to develop answer styles that use fewer words to earn more marks. Well-planned visits to conferences and from visitors working in the criminal justice system support the teaching of the criminology modules in the course. There are fewer opportunities to support studies in health psychology.
207. Subject leadership has successfully introduced psychology into the sixth form curriculum and is responsible for its increasing popularity. The teacher in charge has good subject knowledge, but does not have clear enough plans for the further development of psychology. The main teaching room is beginning to develop a subject ambience, but displays are limited to teacher-generated materials. The absence of blackout limits the use of projection facilities to when there is dull weather. This seriously reduces the impact of some teaching and restricts the range of group activities undertaken by students. There is no formal monitoring of the quality of specialist subject teaching in the department. Day-to-day management of the very limited text resources is satisfactory, but failure to respond sufficiently to the requirements of the large AS group is limiting students' progress towards the higher grades.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus of the inspection was on English Literature. However, French and general studies were also sampled. The provision in **French** is good and students are achieving at national expectations in 'A' level French, an improvement since the last inspection. Students' achievement is good due to their positive attitudes supported by good teaching. Management of the subject is good. The provision in **general studies** is satisfactory. Over the last three years results have fluctuated. In 2002, students achieved well. The teaching observed was satisfactory and students have very positive attitudes to learning.

ENGLISH

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

Strengths:

- Results in AS and A-level examinations are improving.
- Students achieve well and are attaining standards close to the national average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Students have very good attitudes to English literature.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

Areas for improvement:

- A-level results are below the national average.
- There are not enough works of literary criticism in the library.

208. Results in A-level examinations in recent years have been well below the national average. Results improved in 2002, but there are not yet any national statistics with which to compare them. Students achieved better results than the predictions based on their GCSE results. AS level results in 2002 improved markedly on those in 2001 with 15 students out of 22 achieving the higher grades A and B. As at A-level, students did better than predicted.
209. Standards of work seen during the inspection match the improving examination results. Students in both Years 12 and 13 achieve well and reach standards that are close to the national average. Students in Year 12 are still in the early stages of post-GCSE work. This was apparent in a lesson on Carol Ann Duffy's poem *The Litany*. At first the teacher had to lead the class through the poem and show them how to tease out what the poet was doing. As the cynicism of Duffy's view of working class life in the sixties became apparent the students became more confident and more actively involved in the lesson. By the end the students understood the force of the imagery, although the wider implications of the poet's outlook on life largely escaped them.
210. By Year 13, students have made good gains in understanding and their work is of good quality. They have good analytical skills. For example, they trace the negative impression of Othello that Iago gives to Desdemona's father by the use of images such as 'a black ram tupping your white ewe'. They compare cogently the disgusted tone of much World War One poetry with the heroic picture painted by Tennyson. They build their arguments carefully, showing good understanding of the texts and using quotations appropriately to support their arguments.
211. The quality of teaching is good and students learn well as a result. Teachers have very good subject knowledge that allows them to lead discussions confidently. They assist learning by skilful questioning. The students' response is more confident in Year 13 than in Year 12. Nevertheless, in both years, students think very hard, support each other very well and enjoy learning. Teachers are encouraging in manner and motivate students by providing variety in their lessons. For example, in a very successful lesson on Vera Brittain's *Testament of Youth*, students were required to read, discuss, answer questions, work together and study a video. As a result they understood the importance of the social context and explored usefully the social class and feminist attitudes implicit in the text.

212. Teachers plan each unit of work and each lesson well. In a Year 12 introductory lesson to *The Rivals*, students made good progress because the teacher had planned in detail. Having shared the lesson objectives with the students the teacher divided the class into small groups to research various relevant topics. A review session showed that even in one lesson students were discovering that the late eighteenth century was a period of order and reason. A good feature of the lesson was the emphasis placed on students taking charge of their own learning, something that they particularly value about the course.
213. Students have very good attitudes to English and work hard. Most students, who complete the AS course, continue with English literature to A-level. They take good care with the standard and presentation of their work, making good use of computers both for word processing their essays and for research. However, there are only a few helpful works of literary criticism in the school library. Teachers mark their work carefully and thoughtfully with helpful comments and suggestions.
214. The improving standards result from the subject being very well led and managed. Teachers are responsible for their own section of the curriculum, but work successfully as a team so that the whole course is cohesive. Students' work is regularly reviewed in the light of their predicted grades. There was little information on English in the sixth form in the previous report so it is not possible to judge the department's improvement since that time.