

INSPECTION REPORT

GUILDFORD COUNTY SCHOOL

Guildford

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125300

Headteacher: Mr P Costello

Reporting inspector: Elizabeth Charlesworth
19532

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 5th March 2003

Inspection number: 249857

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 11 - 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Farnham Road
Guildford

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr J Petitt

Date of previous inspection: April 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Guildford County School is a mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11-18. It is one of five comprehensive schools which serve the borough of Guildford. There are 920 pupils and students on roll, making this an average sized comprehensive school. The school is oversubscribed. Its pupils live close to the school in an area which is relatively advantaged and come from four main primary schools. However, there are indications that in the most recent years more pupils are coming from less advantaged areas of Guildford. Attainment of pupils on entry to the school is above average. There are fewer pupils with special educational needs than is found nationally, their needs being mainly learning and behavioural. The number of pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue is higher than in most schools, but few of them are at an early stage of learning English. The school is in a stable position with many factors the same as at the last inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Teaching in all years is good and pupils make good progress from when they enter in Year 7 to when they complete compulsory education at age 16. However, GCSE results in 2002 were very similar to those at the time of the last inspection, whereas results nationally have been steadily rising. Although higher attaining pupils continue to do well, there are pockets of disaffection among pupils and these pupils either do not complete courses or fail to achieve worthwhile results. The recently appointed headteacher has a clear philosophy of catering for all pupils but his ideas are not yet strongly communicated to the rest of the school community. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Results in GCSE examination for pupils of above average ability are well above average.
- Pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching.
- Pupils are involved in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and are becoming mature responsible young adults.
- The house system promotes a sense of healthy competition and identity in pupils.
- Recently-appointed heads of department have brought new ideas to the role of middle management.

What could be improved

- The extent to which the headteacher's vision for the future of the school is communicated to all members of the school community.
- The consistency with which the school, including the sixth form, evaluates its performance and acts on its findings.
- The consistency with which the behaviour management system is applied to make sure that learning for all pupils is protected.
- Recognition of the value of, and the pressing need for support for, heads of department.
- Aspects of teaching and the curriculum, to be more closely suited to the increasingly diverse needs of the pupils and raise the achievement of pupils of below average ability.
- The shabby, drab and cramped condition of the learning environment and quality and quantity of resources which do not foster a sense of pride in pupils.
- Statutory requirements in information and communications technology (ICT), citizenship and, religious education in Years 10 and 11 are not met.

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 1997. Most of the issues arising from the report have been dealt with. However, there are still not enough computers to fulfil the statutory requirements for the teaching of information and communication technology, leaving the school with more work to be done. Standards of teaching and learning and in public examinations remain the same as at the time of the

last inspection. A new headteacher in his second year at the school has yet to make his mark in creating a school in which every pupil has equal access to everything the school offers.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2001	2000	2002
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	C
A-Levels/AS-Levels	*	B	B	

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

Standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 9 are above average, especially at the higher Level 7, and are keeping pace with rising standards nationally in mathematics and science. English results have been falling but the evidence from lessons observed is that the decline has been arrested. GCSE results over the last three years have been well above average. Girls do much better than boys, especially in gaining the highest grades. Because the school's results are not rising as they are nationally the gap is closing between school and national results. In 2002, results were below the challenging targets set. Nevertheless, from their level of attainment in Year 7, which is above average, pupils make good progress over their five years in the main school. In the 2001 GCE examinations, for which there are the most recent comparative figures, results were above average. The best results were in English, physics and sports studies, where all students passed and where there were more A and B grades than nationally. Achievement in the sixth form is good. The disparity in the performance of boys and girls at GCSE has largely disappeared at A-Level.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Most pupils have positive attitudes, however, in lessons and in assemblies many pupils are content to listen rather than be actively involved. The number of exclusions is high.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Although behaviour in lessons is mostly good, it becomes boisterous in the corridors, where unacceptable language was heard.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils readily take part in extra-curricular activities and are loyal members of their houses. In lessons where collaboration is encouraged they work well together.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

Most pupils have positive attitudes, but the amount of litter, particularly after lunch, and the carelessness with which many pupils wear their uniform, are indicative of a lack of pride in the school. Although the dining room is small for the size of the school, pupils are socially adept and accommodate one another well. Sixth formers take a strong lead in the running of the houses and give younger pupils a good example to follow. There is general enthusiasm for the activities and competitions.

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.

Teaching is good in English, mathematics and science. The best teaching is where teachers work hard to encourage pupils to take an active part in lessons and to work on their own initiative. In lessons which were satisfactory, and the very small number of unsatisfactory lessons, teaching was didactic, adopting a lecturing style with pupils expected sit and listen for long periods. This passive style of learning does not suit all pupils and particularly in lower sets pupils become disaffected and unco-operative. This was the main feature of the unsatisfactory lessons observed. The English department promotes the features of the Literacy Strategy well but the notion of all subjects promoting literacy skills is not shared across the curriculum. The teaching of numeracy is confined to the mathematics department. The school is not as yet taking part in the other national strategies in science, information and communication technology and the foundation subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. There is broad range of subjects on offer, including Latin and separate sciences which suits higher attainers. The lack of alternatives to GCSE means that a few less academically able pupils leave with no recognised qualification.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with statements are supported well and the school has recently begun to involve other professionals in order to diagnose and support pupils with behavioural difficulties
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The number of pupils whose mother tongue is not English is rising. Such pupils are looked after by the special educational needs department, with additional support from the local education authority. They are placed in the right set according to their ability.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop socially and morally through extra-curricular activities. Although lessons in religious education cover many different cultures, there is a lack of consideration elsewhere in the curriculum of the ways of other countries. Assemblies offer the chance to pupils to conduct themselves well in formal settings but they offer little in the way of spirituality.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The school now has a draft policy for child protection but has not yet completed the training for staff. Health and safety checks are regularly carried out.

The number of subjects offered to pupils and students is extensive and is of particular benefit to the more academically able. There are too few openings for those who do not respond well to a more traditional form of learning. For these pupils the options for further education are restricted, especially if they do not obtain the necessary GCSE grades for Guildford County School sixth form.

Statutory requirements are not met in information and communication technology, citizenship and religious education in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form. Heads of year play an important part in the pastoral care of pupils. Parents value the way heads of year deal promptly with any problems they have.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision, embracing the promoting of learning which allows all pupils to achieve well. Although this vision is shared by others, he does not make his views explicit enough to give the support which heads of department need to turn the vision into reality.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The school is served well by a knowledgeable and loyal governing body. They have a sound understanding of the school's strengths but are less sure of its future direction. There are several areas where statutory requirements are not in place.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The school's performance is not systematically reviewed and evaluated. There is a programme for observing lessons by senior management but it has been interrupted because of an urgent need to support new teachers in the management of behaviour in the classroom.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. High staffing costs leave the school with very little leeway in managing its budget. As a result the accommodation is in critical need of maintenance and departments are short of resources, particularly computers.

Having lost a third of its teachers in the last two years the school now has a full complement of teachers, although several are on temporary contracts. Most of the buildings are shabby and in a poor state of repair. There has been a lack of investment over recent years but there is now the promise of a substantial sum of money from the local authority to refurbish the science laboratories. The headteacher does not give a strong lead in communicating his ideas to the rest of the school community and as a result younger heads of department do not feel fully supported. The principles of best value are applied well to financial matters. However, the school does not challenge its own decisions, compare its performance with other schools or consult widely within its own community.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their child likes school. • Pupils make good progress. • Staff are approachable and deal well with questions and problems. • The school has high expectations of their child. • The school helps their child to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The behaviour of pupils in school and in the town. • The information they receive about their child's progress. • Closer working links with parents. • The way the school is led and managed.

The inspection team agree with the positive views expressed by parents through their written comments and at the parents meeting. Inspectors noted few incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour in school but commented on the appearance of pupils which suggests they lack pride in themselves and the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

Guildford County School has 177 students in the sixth form. This is about the same size as at the time of the previous inspection. The school provides a wide range of subjects at AS and A-Level. In 2002, 65 per cent of students continued from Year 11 into the sixth form, with a few students joining from elsewhere. Most students have the required GCSE grades to join the sixth form and attainment on entry is above average. Very few students do not have English as their mother tongue.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

As a result of good teaching students learn well and results are above average. At the last inspection these aspects were judged to be very good. Much of the unsatisfactory physics teaching has been eliminated. The sixth form caters well for those students who reach the required standard of entry by providing a large number of academic courses. A small number of pupils who would benefit from the strong pastoral care which the sixth form offers are excluded because only academic subjects are offered and they do not meet the entry requirements. Students have very positive attitudes and use very well the many openings to develop personally, gaining benefit themselves from, for instance, running the houses, at the same time as giving very good leadership to younger pupils. Where teaching is innovative and encourages questioning students are developing good responsible study-habits. But where it is more didactic students lose that sense of inquiry. The effect of this, added to the fact that there is not enough access to computers, discourages students from studying independently. Attendance is good and students value the opportunities open to them. Most AS classes have healthy numbers, except in the technology areas. At A2, English, media studies and psychology are particularly popular. Leadership and management are good, led by an experienced head of sixth form who is also a member of the senior management team. The sixth form is cost-effective and provides satisfactory value for money.

Strengths

- Students reach high standards in examinations, particularly in history and English.
- As a result of good teaching students achieve well.
- Relationships between students and with teachers are very good.
- Students become mature young adults with a sense of responsibility fostered through their involvement in a wide range of enrichment activities.
- Students provide good role models and leadership through their management of the houses.

What could be improved

- Aspects of teaching to give students more independence and responsibility for their own learning and to pave their way into higher education
- Better access to computers to promote the learning skills of students
- Curriculum opportunities which are outside of GCE A-Level and AS courses including more active personal and social education, and physical education for everyone
- Statutory requirements in 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
Mathematics	Good. Examination results are above average and achievement is good. Teachers have sound knowledge of the subject and the quality of teaching is good.
Physics	Satisfactory. A-Level results have risen in the past four years and are now well above the national average, although AS results are lower. Teachers know their subject well but in a few lessons the teaching style does not relate to students' learning needs, the result being that lower ability students do not do as well as their GCSE results predicted.
Business studies	Good. Students achieve well as a result of good teaching. Teachers know their subject well with the result that more students now attain higher grades in public examinations.
Physical education	Good. Results in previous years have been above average, as are the standards of the present students. As a result of good teaching students learn and achieve well. Students' attitudes and relationships are very positive.
Geography	Good. Results fluctuate from year to year but standards are generally above average. Students achieve well where lessons are well planned and teacher expectations are high.
History	Very good. Results are well above average and rising. Teaching is consistently very good, based on very good subject knowledge.
English	Good. Students attain above average results at A-Level. Teaching is a particular strength resulting in good progress and achievement. Very good leadership and management ensure that teachers plan effectively to promote collaborative learning. Students enjoy the subject and apply themselves well to their work.
French	Very good. Standards are above average. In Year 12 most students' spoken French is very fluent, following their teachers' excellent example. Teaching is very good.
Spanish	Good. Standards are above average in Year 12. Teaching is good and often characterised by a range of imaginative activities.

In addition, lessons were sampled in music, human biology, economics and German. Standards are similar to those found in the subjects inspected in depth and teaching is particularly good in music.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Satisfactory. Information about courses both before entering the sixth form and later about higher education is good. The strong pastoral support offered by tutors and the head of sixth form means that students complete their course and are well-prepared for the next stage of life. Assessment of work is not consistent across all subjects.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The head of sixth form gives good, clear direction. He is supported satisfactorily by the governing body in everything except the statutory requirement to teach religious education in the sixth form. As in the main school, the monitoring and evaluation of performance does not apply the principles of best value. Equality of access to the sixth form is not guaranteed because of the current practice of only offering A-Level courses.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The choice of courses suits their aspirations. • Printed information is helpful. • The school helps them to settle well into the sixth form. • They are taught well and challenged and helped to study independently. • Teachers treat them as young adults and are accessible to them for help. • Students enjoy the sixth form and would recommend it to others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more thorough assessment of their work. • More information about their progress. • Advice which is helpful and constructive in deciding future options. • The behaviour of younger pupils who do not conform to their standards.

Inspectors agree with most of these comments. The student handbook is good and gives them the information they need about the present and future openings. Students interviewed spoke very highly of the support of teachers in helping them to realise ambitions, but are aware that staying on in the sixth form is not suitable for all their peers. Inspectors are of the opinion that students in the sixth form are over-critical of younger pupils and do not appreciate the complexity of the behaviour issue in school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Results in GCSE examinations are well above average.

1. Results have been consistently above average for a number of years. Girls do better than boys, especially in gaining the higher grades. In every subject some girls gained A* grades, whereas this was not the case for boys. Many more girls than boys took physics, chemistry and biology, and gained more A*s than girls nationally. In contrast, results in business studies were the reverse of this with boys' A*s being almost twice the national average for boys. However, girls' performance in design and technology was their weakest with fewer girls gaining A*-G than nationally.

Pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching.

2. Teaching overall is good. Of the 32 lessons sampled in the main school a quarter was very good or excellent, and only two were judged to be unsatisfactory. Pupils respond very well to innovative teaching, which encourages them to work together and to develop personally as well as academically. Varied activities and the support for collaborative learning are the hallmark of the best lessons. Teachers know their subject well, share their enthusiasm with pupils and encourage good learning. In the classes where teachers recognise that pupils learn in many different ways there is energy and dynamism which also promotes good learning.
3. Over their five years in the main school most pupils progress well from their above average level of attainment to well above in their GCSE examinations. Limited evidence from lessons observed is that the progress of pupils with special educational needs, and those whose mother tongue is not English, is no different from that of the rest of the class. The school does not keep a record of pupils identified as gifted and talented, but several departments, notably physical education and geography, have identified the potential of particular pupils and provide them with the right degree of challenge through the teaching.
4. Teachers use specific subject related words accurately, a particularly good feature of English, mathematics, science, and art and this supports pupils' understanding well. In science texts are modified to help lower ability pupils to understand the texts more easily. In the teaching of modern foreign languages, teachers are very good at building in knowledge of sentence structure. Standards in literacy are good and pupils build on skills and knowledge as they move up through the school. Teaching which extends pupils' oral ability, such as English, drama and business studies, are a particular strength.

Pupils are involved in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and are becoming mature responsible young adults.

5. The social and moral development of pupils is well-supported through a rich and varied extra-curricular programme. There is a strong music tradition in the school with a successful chamber choir and orchestra and a jazz band. The campaign to involve boys in singing has been successful in fostering a more mature attitude through wider involvement in the musical life of the school. The sporting tradition is equally strong with successful team sport and encouragement to join national teams which gives pupils confidence. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is long-established in the school and sixth-formers take the opportunity to develop their own sense of responsibility through completing the leadership award at the same time as promoting greater maturity in younger pupils by helping them with their bronze and silver level activities.

The house system promotes a sense of healthy competition and identity in pupils.

6. The house system is an important part of the pastoral programme and one which parents particularly value. The highlight of the calendar is the drama competition, for which pupils, led by sixth-formers, eagerly prepare.

Recently-appointed heads of department have brought a freshness of approach to the role of middle management.

7. Over the last two or three years there has been considerable turnover of teaching staff. A benefit of this is that several new heads of department and teachers have been appointed who have brought fresh ideas not only about teaching and learning but also about the leading of their department. More collaborative teaching and learning are being developed and teachers are sharing their planning to achieve consistent quality. This is having a significant impact on the progress which pupils are making. In the English department, where almost the whole department is new, the reversal in the declining results of the last two years at the end of Year 9 is already taking place.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The extent to which the headteacher's vision for the future development of the school is communicated to all members of the school community.

8. The headteacher's beliefs about teaching and learning are central to his philosophy of educational inclusion. In this he has the confidence and support of the governing body. In the changing world of Guildford County School he is right in his view that good behaviour and the acceptance of people for who they are will move the school forward. In spite of this, he has not yet conveyed his beliefs firmly to everyone. Parents who returned the questionnaire and who attended the meeting expressed concern that standards are deteriorating. A major restructuring of the committees and working parties was undertaken shortly after the present headteacher took up his appointment 18 months ago. This has not answered the need for consultation throughout the school as not all heads of department subscribe to the success of this reorganisation in providing a forum for debate. He is building good working relationships with the local education authority. Within the school he needs to ensure that his vision for leading the school to greater achievement is adopted and practised by all his colleagues.

The consistency with which the school, including the sixth form, evaluates its performance and acts on its findings.

9. The school does not have a well-established routine of self-evaluation. The 'challenge' and 'compare' of the principles of best value are not applied when reviewing and planning the work of the school. The management relies on maintaining the status quo at the expense of innovation. As a result, they do not take effective action to recognise and meet the needs of a changing school population. Although the school development plan is a useful document in that it identifies the right way for the school to move, it is not rooted in a clear assessment of where the school is now.

The consistency with which the behaviour management system is applied to make sure that learning for all pupils is protected.

10. There is a good system in place for the management of behaviour which requires teacher and pupil to be accountable for behaviour in the classroom. Not all parents, teachers and pupils recognise the responsibility which teacher and pupils have for behaviour, expecting more senior staff to deal with discipline. Depending upon the severity of the misdemeanour and the pupil's response the ultimate sanction is exclusion. In classes where instances of unsatisfactory behaviour occur and are not promptly dealt with, the learning of all pupils suffers.

Recognition of the value of, and the pressing need for support for, heads of department.

11. Heads of department, including those recently appointed are very much in tune with the headteacher on the important areas of teaching and learning. However, there is as yet very little formal dialogue between them and the heads of department need to know that what they are doing is valued. The committees and working parties set up to give heads of department a forum in which to make their views known and to communicate with senior management are not fulfilling their function and are in need of review. In order to be successful, departments must be rigorous in their monitoring and self-evaluation, but no recent training has taken place for the development of management skills to help heads of department to fulfil these duties effectively.

Provision, through teaching and a broadening of the curriculum, to be more closely suited to the increasingly diverse needs of the pupils.

12. Pupils who are academically able do well in Guildford County School. However, pupils of below average ability gain less from their time in the school and a small number of them do not complete the course. The setting arrangements which help pupils to gain good GCSE grades are less favourable to pupils of below average ability. In many of the lower sets pupils feel they are not welcome in the school and the older they get the more disenchanted they become. Alternative arrangements, which include work placements, for a small number of Year 10 pupils, are proving successful in keeping them interested in school, but such openings are not available for all the pupils who need them. There is a pressing need for the school to build on this good practice and to investigate other courses and forms of accreditation so that the number of pupils who leave without qualifications is reduced. In 2002 five per cent of pupils, more than the national average, left without any qualifications. Not all teachers recognise the different learning needs of pupils and where teaching is didactic, as in the satisfactory and unsatisfactory lessons seen, pupils did not make as much progress and their behaviour deteriorated.

The shabby, drab and cramped condition of the learning environment and quality and quantity of resources to foster greater pride in pupils.

13. The fabric of the building is in a poor state of repair. There are very few displays in corridors and classrooms to brighten the appearance, to lift the spirits or to encourage pupils to take care of the school. Space is very tight and even though the school has dispensed with bells between lessons so that not everyone moves at once, there is still a lot of congestion on the corridors. The school is short of computers, which is a factor in preventing the teaching of ICT through all of Years 7 to 9. Most departments have inadequate and out of date resources and only manage to make things work by continuing to use equipment, for instance in science, which is old-fashioned. The school spends much less on learning resources than other secondary schools.

Meeting the statutory requirements in ICT, citizenship, and religious education in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form.

14. ICT is only taught separately in Year 7. With a new head of ICT in place, arrangements are already being made to extend the teaching to all pupils in Years 7 to 9. The school has not yet undertaken an audit of the citizenship programme although strong elements exist in several subjects, notably religious education, and through the extra-curricular programme. The religious education department is a strong one, but the subject is not taught to all classes from Years 10 to 13

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve the quality of education provided, the governing body, headteacher and teachers should:

- (1) The headteacher must give strong leadership and share his vision for the school by:
 - *Communicating regularly with parents and pupils (paragraph 8)*
 - *Re-organising the committee structure through which heads of department voice their views (paragraph 8)*
 - *Building a senior team to move the school forward in the same direction (paragraph 8)*

- (2) Evaluate performance at all levels and take action to improve by:
 - *Implementing a common system of self-evaluation as a basis for development planning (paragraph 9)*
 - *Linking the training needs of teachers with the school's targets for improvement (paragraph 11)*
 - *Developing the role of middle managers to become more effective leaders by providing training in carrying their duties of monitoring their departments (paragraph 11)*

- (3) Provide for all pupils to achieve well by:
 - *Making certain that all staff play a responsible part in applying the behaviour policy (paragraph 10)*
 - *Adopting teaching strategies which take account of the many ways in which pupils learn (paragraph 12)*
 - *Introducing courses, particularly in Years 10 and 11, which will engage and motivate the less academic pupils and allow them to gain recognised qualifications when they leave school (paragraph 12)*

- (4) Improve the fabric of the building and the quality and amount of learning resources so that pupils, students and staff enjoy an increased sense of pride and motivation in their work. *(paragraph 13)*

- (5) Implement the statutory requirements for ICT, citizenship and religious education in Years 10 and 11 by:
 - *Completing the arrangements already started to teach ICT to all pupils in Year 7 to 9 (paragraph 14)*
 - *Providing enough computers for the teaching to take place (paragraphs 13 & 14)*

Sixth form

- (1) Bring all teaching up to match the standard of the best practice in sixth form teaching to promote independence and responsibility by:
 - *Evaluating and sharing best practice*
 - *Providing training for teachers in methods which best prepare students for higher education*
- (2) Provide more computers in school so that students improve their learning skills and do not have to rely on computers at home to complete their work (*paragraph 31*)
- (3) Meet the needs of all students, both present and future by:
 - *Offering courses other than A-level (paragraph 20)*
 - *Introducing a form of tutorial in which students take a more active part (paragraph 22)*
 - *Arrange for all students to take part in physical education (paragraph 22)*
- (4) Teach religious education to all students in order to meet the statutory requirements (*paragraph 22*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	32
	Sixth form	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		46

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 - 11							
Number	2	7	14	7	2	0	0
Percentage	6	22	44	22	6	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	3	12	12	6	1	0	0
Percentage	9	35	35	18	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages as each lesson represents three 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	734	186
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	29	0

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	71	0

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	46

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	34

Attendance

Authorised absence

	per cent
School data	8.4
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	per cent
School data	0.6
National comparative data	1.2

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	70	85	155

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	57	54	62
	Girls	73	72	71
	Total	130	126	133
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	85 (93)	81 (71)	86 (77)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	57 (64)	69 (63)	65 (48)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	61	55	62
	Girls	77	73	72
	Total	138	128	134
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	89 (91)	83 (80)	86 (85)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	66 (56)	68 (65)	55 (54)
	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	53	95	148

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	40	49	50
	Girls	71	89	91
	Total	111	138	141
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	75 (74)	93 (96)	95 (96)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	47.7 (48.9)
	National	39.8 (39)

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

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

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

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	37	52	89
	Average point score per candidate	16.3	18.1	17.4
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.7	17.4

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	37	52	89	-	-	-
	Average point score per candidate	16.3	18.1	17.4	-	-	-
National	Average point score per candidate	*	*	*	*	*	*

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

International Baccalaureate		Number	per cent success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0	0
	National		81

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
833	48	4
2	0	0
22	0	0
3	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
13	0	0
5	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	4	1
0	0	0
10	0	0
16	0	0
2	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	46.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.7

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	275

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Per centage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	80
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Average teaching group size: Y7– Y11

Key Stage 3	24
Key Stage 4	23.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	2,780,720
Total expenditure	2,702,225
Expenditure per pupil	3,022
Balance brought forward from previous year	1,976
Balance carried forward to next year	80,471

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	37.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	39.4
<hr/>	
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	7.4
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

Number of questionnaires sent out	920
Number of questionnaires returned	182

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	37	51	7	3	2
My child is making good progress in school.	32	52	12	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	8	47	23	18	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	55	21	6	2
The teaching is good.	18	53	21	2	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	47	26	4	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	42	11	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	41	47	11	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	16	46	33	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	13	44	26	10	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	22	63	10	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	49	12	4	10

PART D: THE SIXTH FORM

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

15. Students' level of attainment when they enter the sixth form is above average. Most students have at least four or five GCSEs at grade C and above, which gives a solid base to A-Level study. In 2001, for which there are the latest available comparative figures, results were above average. In A-Level biology, physics, media studies, French and physical education they were well above average, while English literature results were very high. In these subjects the proportion of A/B grades matched or exceeded the national average. At AS, students exceeded the national pass rate and gained average points above the national figure in most subjects.
16. In 2002 results improved in history, business education, and for female students in AS English. They were greatly improved in geography. Results dipped in A-Level English, but reflect a broader range of attainment on entry and therefore represent good achievement. In physics, AS results were poor, reflecting both a lower level of attainment on entry to the course and an element of underachievement among many students.
17. Standards of work seen in lessons are also above average, and in Spanish they are well above. Students follow their teachers' excellent example and speak fluently and confidently. Elsewhere, good achievement is a direct response to good teaching. From early in Year 12 students and their teachers know what can be expected of them based on their GCSE results. Because progress is monitored and teachers have high expectations most students, but especially those of above average ability, reach their potential.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Students' attitudes to school are very positive. They express their views very well and play an important part in the running of the school. Relationships between students and with members of staff are very good. Students speak warmly of their teachers and the advice and support they receive from them. Students' personal development is very good. They respond very well to the many opportunities for responsibility. They run the house system which not only gives them valuable experience as leaders and role models but also helps younger pupils to enjoy a broad range of extra-curricular activities. Students working towards Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award work with the teacher in charge of the scheme to support younger pupils in achieving their Bronze and Silver Awards. However, a minority of students are less tolerant of pupils who do not conform to their own values and views on behaviour. Attendance is good. Students value the trust placed in them and sign in and out during the school day, as required.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. Teaching is good with almost half the lessons seen very good or excellent. All the lessons in modern foreign languages are consistently very good or excellent. Teachers know their subject well and enthuse students who respond with a level of maturity and independence expected of sixth formers. Teachers plan lessons well and use a good range of methods. This promotes good learning because students are allowed to find things out for themselves and to learn from experience. In science a tutorial approach works very well and leads students to independence. In English most of the teachers are involved in teaching in the sixth form. Students benefit from their collective breadth of experience which is put to good use by sharing the planning. Teachers have high

expectations of their students and keep them informed about how well they are progressing. In a small number of lessons, too little is expected of students in terms of participation in the lesson. This was particularly observed in personal and social education and general studies.

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

20. Curricular provision is satisfactory. In trying to meet the demands of students the school offers a many more A-Level courses than is often found in a school of this size. The desire to offer students as much choice as possible results in some small teaching groups. However, not all pupils at Guildford County School are suited to the pursuit of A-Level and for them there is no alternative and so they leave at the end of Year 11. The school does, however, have plans to introduce a vocational course in Year 12 in 2003 in an effort to broaden the scope of post-16 opportunities.
21. After students in Year 12 make their choices subjects are grouped together in blocks. The continuity to A2 is good and when group sizes reduce as students cut down on the number of courses they follow, in most cases groups are combined to make viable class sizes.
22. In common with the main school there is a full tutorial programme for all students. During these sessions students receive information about future options. A broad range of topics relevant to preparation for the next stage of life is on offer, but the instructive method used by teachers does not allow them to take a very active role. Most useful for students is the progress interview which they have at key times during the year with their tutor. There is no organised enrichment programme or timetabled physical education, but there are plenty of activities such as Young Enterprise, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and the house system which give students a breadth of experience. However, there is no provision for the studying of religious education in the sixth form. Key skills are not taught separately and although most students demonstrate good levels in most areas the lack of development in ICT is an issue.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

Assessment

23. Procedures for assessing students' work are satisfactory. Form tutors are central to the target-setting process and carry out progress interviews, when they check that students are keeping up with their targets. Formal methods are used to calculate target grades which are then agreed with form tutors and students. Subject teachers are not always clear how the target grade has been arrived at or understand how to assess how much value they are adding. English, geography and modern foreign languages have good assessment procedures but in mathematics there is no formal assessment policy and a variety of practice in use.
24. The progress interviews are very popular with students and their parents in providing an overview of students' progress. Reports are informative and add to the information which students receive on how to improve their work.

Advice, support and guidance

25. Students receive good advice about their progress and about the routes open to them after they leave school through the tutorial programme. The head of sixth form has a wealth of knowledge based on his experience of past students entering higher education. He encourages students to visit universities and gives them valuable advice on how to choose the best course and location. Students receive good advice on careers from the

head of careers in school and from teachers. The careers adviser who visits the school has only limited time but is available to students by appointment. At the heart of the good pastoral care is the tutor who has a rounded picture of students' personal and academic progress. Tutors are encouraged to set targets with their students for personal as well as academic progress.

26. Students are provided with a handbook which sets out the school's expectations of them and the help and support that they can expect to receive in return. Before they join the sixth form they are given detailed information about courses so they can make informed choices. Despite the poor state of the school buildings there are no identified hazards which could affect the health and safety of students.

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

27. Students and their parents are kept well-informed through academic review days and through the good quality of the reports. Parents are very appreciative of the availability of teachers when they need to discuss any concerns they have. The school has listened to students' views about how they spend their personal study time and implements a signing-out arrangement. This helps to relieve the pressure on space for private study but at the same time the school knows which students are on the premises.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

28. The head of sixth form is a member of the senior management team and gives good leadership to staff and students. By example he sets the tone and ethos of the sixth form. Management is good: tutors have a comprehensive handbook which guides them through the tutorial programme. This is particularly valuable this year as many of the form tutors in the sixth form are new to the role or indeed to the school. Having a reference document is crucial to ensuring consistency and a common approach. The school provides only A-Level courses and so applies selection criteria when admitting students. This means that while the courses on offer suit the academic students there is nothing on offer for those who do not meet the requirements, that is, the students who would benefit from the sixth form's good pastoral care to support their further education.
29. The monitoring of teaching is not undertaken consistently and rigorously. Performance management is in place but objectives are not specifically linked to professional development. Very few teachers have taken part in training that is expressly focused on sixth form teaching, beyond the courses run by examination boards. However, on an individual basis departments do share good practice, a characteristic feature of the English department where most of the teachers contribute to teaching in the sixth form.
30. The sixth form has its own area in the school where students meet for tutorials, recreation and private study. Most lessons are in the specialist accommodation in the main school where students and teacher experience the same shabby environment. Students themselves say they prefer the school to spend its finances on good quality teachers rather than decoration, but the situation is becoming critical as parts of the fabric of the building become unsafe.

Resources

31. In common with the main school the sixth form is short of resources. In particular, the shortage of computers hampers the learning skills of some students. Equipment in science is serviceable but old-fashioned. Spending on learning resources is much lower than in other secondary schools in the country.

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 2002

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	per cent gaining grades A-E		per cent gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	8	38	*	88	*	4.4	*
Biology	2	100	*	50	*	3.0	*
Art and design	2	100	*	50	*	3.5	*
English	1	100	*	100	*	4.0	*
Economics	1	100	*	0	*	3.0	*
Psychology	1	100	*	0	*	1.0	*

GCE A-level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	per cent gaining grades A-E		per cent gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	23	87	*	65	*	7.2	*
Biology	19	95	*	47	*	5.9	*
Chemistry	13	100	*	54	*	7.7	*
Physics	9	100	*	78	*	7.3	*
Design and technology	6	100	*	83	*	8.3	*
Home economics	5	100	*	20	*	4.4	*
Business studies	5	100	*	0	*	3.2	*
Economics	8	88	*	25	*	5.3	*
Physical education	7	100	*	29	*	6.3	*
Art and design	16	100	*	50	*	7.0	*
Music	5	100	*	20	*	4.0	*
Music Technology	3	100	*	33	*	7.3	*
Classical studies (<i>Latin</i>)	1	100	*	0	*	2.0	*
Geography	12	100	*	83	*	8.0	*
History	24	100	*	96	*	9.1	*

Religious studies	3	100	*	0	*	4.7	*
Sociology	8	88	*	38	*	5.5	*
Psychology	14	100	*	57	*	6.3	*
English	28	96	*	36	*	6.0	*
Communications studies	16	100	*	38	*	6.3	*
French	9	100	*	33	*	6.2	*
Spanish	1	100	*	0	*	6.0	*

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

32. Subjects inspected in detail were physics and mathematics. Human biology was also sampled. The lesson seen involved one student and followed a tutorial style approach: an informal teaching style coupled with a very good student–teacher working relationship. Very good teaching by a very knowledgeable tutor emphasised the key points of the topic and encouraged student discussion in the work. The questioning of the student was very effective and challenging, leading to the development of higher order learning skills. As a result, the student is making impressive progress.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Students achieve examination results that are above the national average.
- The quality of teaching is good with very good or excellent features.
- Students feel secure in their study of the subject.
- The department is well led and managed.

Areas for improvement

- A policy and programme for assessing the academic progress of students.
- Increased professional support for the head of department to facilitate the further improvement in management and leadership of the department.
- An expansion of the range of courses available for students.

33. At the end of the sixth form standards are above average in relation to national standards. Students are well motivated and show genuine interest in the subject. They feel secure in their studies as a consequence of the good relationships that exist between them and their teachers. Work seen is above average and provides evidence that students are making good progress, with those who are most able achieving the highest standards. However, at present there is no overall policy for assessing the learning of students as they progress through their courses.

34. Examination results at advanced level are above average. In the 2001 A-Level examinations, 53 per cent of those entered achieved results that were in the higher grade categories. During the past three years the results have been consistently above average with female students achieving better than males. The department is aware of this and is closely monitoring the situation. Students have found the mathematics examination marginally more difficult than their other subjects. Those who are most able

take the further mathematics examination. In the past only a few students have been entered for the AS examination at the end of their first year studying the subject. However, in future students will have the opportunity to be entered for this examination after the first year of study.

35. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good with elements that are very good or excellent. Teachers prepare their lessons thoroughly and structure their teaching well so that students fully understand the units of work. The relationships that exist between the students and their teachers allow the students to feel secure in their learning. The marking of students' work is undertaken with care and used both to encourage, with comments such as "superb – model solutions", and to reinforce the learning of a particular topic by providing a written reminder of the key teaching point.
36. The leadership and management of the department are good with the potential to become better. The head of department is only recently in post but has already begun to implement improved strategies and planning; for example, changed arrangements for preparing students for the AS examination and planned procedures for improvements in the assessment of students' progress. She is aware also of the fall in the number of students choosing to study the subject at A-Level. She is taking specific action to improve this situation by actively promoting the subject amongst students in Years 10 and 11. In order to assist her in management and organisation there is urgent need for the senior management team to arrange for increased professional support within the department.
37. The range of courses currently offered by the department is designed mainly for the more able mathematicians. A wider range would provide opportunities for those of average ability to pursue their interest and enjoyment of the subject further. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Physics

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

Strengths

- Teachers are dedicated and have good subject knowledge.
- A-Level results are well above the national average.
- Student–teacher working relationships are good.
- The forward thinking head of science supports the department well.

Areas for improvement

- Standards obtained at AS Level.
- A greater variety of teaching methods which meet the needs of all students.
- Methods to identify the reasons why some students underachieve and to give continuing levels of support.
- Use of examination data to monitor the value being added.
- Use of ICT in lessons.

38. Results in the 2001 A-Level examinations were well above the national average for the subject and were similar in 2002. In both years a hundred per cent pass rate was obtained. These results compare well with those of biology, chemistry and mathematics and have shown a steady improvement in the past four years. The 2001 AS results showed that the more able students performed well, but 22 per cent of the group failed. In 2002, the AS results were very poor. This was not unexpected, based on GCSE

results, and the majority of the students did not do even as well as expected. There is no significant difference in the grades obtained by male or female students. About half the students continued to study physics in Year 13 in 2001 but significantly less in 2002. These figures suggest that the course is not fully meeting their expectations, interests or abilities.

39. Overall, the quality of work seen in Year 13 is above average and reflects the high expectations of the teachers and the good teaching. The achievements of these students are at least equal to expectations based on previous AS and GCSE results. Year 13 students have a good understanding of the subject and apply their knowledge to new situations, as shown in a lesson involving magnetic principles and electromagnetic damping. Students in Year 12 are working well, according to the targets set based on their GCSE results. Teachers have identified more able students and provide well for them in their teaching. The more able students have a positive attitude to the course. They find the subject intellectually stimulating and challenging and thrive in the learning environment created by knowledgeable teachers. An example of this was in a lesson where the students gave talks on various uses of radio-active isotopes in medical physics. Students of lower ability are given additional help as required. Experimental work chiefly concerns traditional investigations, although the use of sensors and the data-logger coupled to the department's computer is raising the modern profile of such work. Experiments are described well and students are particularly skilled in producing accurately drawn graphs.
40. Overall, the quality of teaching and the learning it generates is good, although one of the three lessons seen was unsatisfactory. This was due to the didactic style with little direct opportunity for students' involvement in the learning process. The better lessons contained examples of very effective use of questioning to test the students' knowledge and understanding, and also opportunities to develop group work and discussion. As a result, students' learning is securely based. The scheme of work adequately deals with the development of the students' key skills and the good quality of teaching further improves such areas. Homework is regularly set, marked well and used to reinforce the teaching and learning. Appropriate records of students' homework grades and performance in the various course modules are kept. These are used to identify weaknesses in students' progress and in teaching, and to identify further learning.
41. Since the last inspection, satisfactory progress has been made in dealing with the points raised. A-Level results have improved and are now very good overall, although the 2002 AS Level results are a concern. Above average ability students are now achieving high standards, but there still appears to be some measure of under achievement by students of average ability. Difficulties exist concerning the availability of science computers and access to computer suites, limiting teaching and learning in this area. Teaching styles retain didactic aspects but are now becoming more varied, challenging and directed towards students' needs.
42. The management and leadership of the physics department are satisfactory. Records and documentation are up to date and thoroughly kept. The physics preparation room is particularly well organised. Levels of equipment are adequate, although much is dated. Continued expenditure is needed to provide fully for new syllabus requirements, particularly relating to ICT work. A good working relationship exists with the supportive head of science and other science teachers. The physics department has its own technician who serves the department well. The dedicated physics laboratory meets the immediate needs of the A-Level course in terms of accommodation, although it is rather small for whole class investigations. The department is slowly adapting to modern requirements. The leadership style in physics lacks the dynamism to promote initiatives,

both within the physics department itself and to contribute to the science faculty's own development and its role as a major department in the school.

BUSINESS

43. The focus subject was business education but economics was also sampled. Examination results for the AS economics course reflect an improving trend from 2001 to 2002 although the A-Level results dipped slightly in 2002. Numbers are too small to allow meaningful comparisons with national averages.

Business education

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

Strengths

- Leadership and management of the subject are good and ensure that students are offered a coherent route through a difficult subject.
- Teaching is good and contributes significantly to the rising standards across the department.
- The students' positive attitudes result in good learning.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of achievement and attainment for some students.
- Opportunities for teachers to observe each other and to share the best ideas and teaching strategies.
- The continued encouragement of female students to choose courses with a business focus.

44. At the end of sixth form standards are above average in relation to national standards. All students who took the AS and A-Level examination in 2002 in business studies passed, although numbers are too small to allow meaningful comparisons with national averages. This was an improvement on the 2001 results both in terms of the number of passes and students gaining the higher grades of A or B.

45. The achievement of students in the sixth form is good. Many of the students who choose to follow either the business studies or economics course have no previous knowledge of the subject. Evidence gathered during the inspection week indicates that standards in both subjects are in line with course expectations. Students analyse data effectively and make predictions based on the results of this analysis. This was clearly seen in a Year 13 economics lesson where students were expected to investigate the effect of inflation on aggregate demand. To complete this exercise they had to carry out a number of high level mathematical calculations and then plot on a graph the effect of inflation on aggregate demand in relation to both investment and exports. Students of all abilities were able to complete this complex task because the teacher provided good individual support and encouragement.

46. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good. The teachers who teach the courses in Years 12 and 13 have different teaching styles and areas of expertise. All courses are well planned and regularly reviewed to ensure that the subjects offered meet the needs of the students. Students are involved in a range of learning activities to undertake both in class and at home. However, learning in lessons is limited by the lack of access to ICT and the absence of a dedicated teaching area. The support for students, both in and out of lessons is very good. Staff are approachable and always ready to offer guidance. However, the department needs to ensure that all lessons are planned and delivered so

that students identified as capable of attaining the highest grades are given every opportunity to do so. The department does not arrange for teachers to observe each other as a way of sharing good practice.

47. The leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department has been in post since September 2002 and plays a full and active role in the teaching of all subjects offered within this curriculum area. In September 2002, a very detailed analysis of the examination results achieved over the last three years was undertaken. This revealed that there was significant underachievement in two key economics modules. As a result extra revision sessions for current Year 13 students have been built into the scheme of work. The department is aware of the significant gender imbalance in all post-16 groups. Recruitment at GCSE level for the business and communication course attracts both boys and girls. This picture changes in the sixth form and over the last three years the gender bias towards male students for both business and economics courses has been more pronounced than the national picture, ranging from 100 per cent to 75 per cent. There were no issues reported at the time of the last inspection.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical education was the focus subject and the only subject taught in this curriculum area.

Physical Education

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

Strengths

- Students' attainment is above average.
- Teaching is good and most teachers use interesting and varied ways to help students to progress.
- Students are very positive about the courses and they have very good relationships with their teachers.
- Students' involvement in extra-curricular activities is very good.

Areas for improvement

- The monitoring of students' files to be consistent and thorough across all units.
- The provision of a regular teaching base with networked computers.
- Further analysis of results and assessment data to establish students' achievement and to improve curriculum planning.

48. Results in A-Level examinations were above average in 2000 and 2001. Unconfirmed results in 2002 followed a similar pattern. No students attained grade A in 2002 but two students attained B grades and all students achieved well in relation to their previous learning. There was a direct correlation between boys' and girls' attainment at GCSE and their final A-Level grade. Results in AS examinations are not consistent. The 2001 results were well above average but in 2002, two of the 10 students entered failed the examination.

49. The standards reached by the majority of students in Years 12 and 13 are above average and their achievement is good. Two students in each year group are working at the highest levels of attainment and the majority of students' work is above pass standard. Most students attain high standards in and have a very good knowledge of, the sports in which they participate. Students in Year 13 use specialist vocabulary confidently both in their written work and in discussion. They extract information

accurately and learn from a variety of sources including ICT. Students in Year 12 have successfully moved on from their GCSE work and are showing greater depth of knowledge and understanding about anatomy and physiology. Students in both year groups work extremely well together co-operating on tasks, for example, when analysing in what ways the Olympic Games reinforce nationalism. Lower attaining students do not use enough detail when analysing movements made in specific sports. Male and female students' work is well presented and files are well organised. There were no students with special educational needs or for whom English was their second language in the groups observed.

50. Teaching is good overall with some very good features. The subject expertise of most teachers is very high. The best lessons are well prepared with a wide range of activities that motivate and challenge students of all abilities. In these lessons, very good opportunities are given to students to learn independently, linking practical elements to theory aspects. This helps students to understand the theoretical components through their own experiences. In less successful lessons teaching is too directed and gives students few opportunities to research independently. Homework is used well to give students experience in answering examination questions. Students are very positive about physical education, have very good relationships with their teachers and spend time in the department helping with practices, house competitions and matches. This extra-curricular participation helps their learning. The marking of students' tests and essays is good and provides information about how to improve their work. However, students' files are inadequately monitored in most units to ensure they provide a high quality learning resource for the future. There is no dedicated teaching base and therefore no access to subject learning resources including display and computers. This limits the way some topics are taught and has a negative effect on students' learning. However, it is clear that students do use the Internet to assist their learning, their portfolio production and their research.
51. Leadership and management are good. Responsibility for the examinations is shared by two teachers who presently lead the department. They have attended professional development courses relating to the examinations and are an effective and enthusiastic leadership team. Record keeping is good; analysis of examination results and target setting is less effective. Since the previous inspection the AS course has been established and courses have enrolled increasing numbers of students. Students report how much they value the courses because they provide an accreditation linked to their proposed careers in sports science, for example. Progress since the last inspection is good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

52. No subject was inspected in depth in this curriculum area, but one music lesson was observed. Teaching and learning were excellent, with students' attainment in the lesson on listening and aural perception being above average.

HUMANITIES

History and geography were inspected in detail. No other lessons were sampled.

History

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

Strengths

- Teaching is very good: it is enthusiastic, planned well and reflects high expectations of students.
- Positive relationships with students promote good learning.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good resulting in a significant rise in standards over the last three years.

Areas for improvement

- The range of learning opportunities for students in lessons through greater access to ICT
- Procedures for regularly assessing students' attainment and progress to enable early diagnosis of individual learning needs.

53. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is very good and results in very good learning. Lessons are lively, well structured and based on confident subject expertise. Particular strengths of teaching are the clear structure and guidance given to students within a framework of independent learning. As a result of this very good teaching, students show enthusiasm for their learning and feel well supported by all their teachers. They are supportive of one another and classroom relationships are very positive. However, the lack of access to ICT and specialist teaching facilities for sixth form history limits the range of learning resources available for students to use on an individual basis in lessons. For example the lack of access to any form of ICT in a Year 13 lesson meant students were restricted to simply reading from their notes. Access to ICT would have allowed them to present their excellent research findings in a less didactic way. The work produced by all students is carefully and regularly marked with examination board mark schemes used where appropriate. Regular formal assessment is not firmly in place to chart progress against students' individual final predicted grades.
54. At the end of the sixth form standards are above average in relation to national standards. Of the 26 students who sat the new AS examination in 2001 all passed with 90 per cent gaining either an A or B grade. Of the 20 students who then chose to continue with their studies all gained an A-Level pass in 2002 with 95 per cent gaining either an A or B grade. All 20 students who sat the AS examination in 2002 achieved a pass with 65 per cent gaining either an A or B grade. The A-Level results for 2001 were well below the national average. Despite having conducted a thorough analysis into possible reasons for this sharp decline no one factor could be identified.
55. The achievement of all students during the sixth form is good. There is no significant difference in the achievement of male and female students, those with an identified special educational need or those for whom English is an additional language. Inspection evidence confirms that current students' standards are above course expectations. Students analyse sources carefully and evaluate a wide range of evidence to produce well-balanced and convincing conclusions. This was evident in a Year 13 lesson where students analysed effectively the reasons for the rise and fall of five 'royal servants' of the Tudor government. This is because the teacher worked hard to motivate and encourage the students and gave them a clear framework to work within. Students' written work is carefully organised and comprehensive. Students learn effectively in their

courses in sixth form history and they show good progress in both thinking and writing. This very good learning results from both the experienced teaching in the department and from the positive attitudes students have towards their work.

56. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The subject benefits from strong leadership, effective management and a clear sense of direction. Efforts have been made to ensure that the curriculum is relevant to the needs and interests of the students. Examination results are very thoroughly analysed and outcomes are used to make changes to the teaching programme for the following year. The lack of specialist accommodation makes it difficult to use effectively the full range of teaching strategies. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Geography

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

Strengths

- A-Level results in 2002 were very high.
- Students achieve well where teaching is very good and expectations are high.
- Lessons are interesting and students are keen to learn.

Areas for improvement

- Use of ICT to increase independent learning
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning

57. At the end of the sixth form standards are above average in relation to national standards. Results in A-Level examinations in geography vary from year to year. In 2001 A-level results were well below the national average when six of the 18 students entered for the examination gained an A or B grade and four were unsuccessful. In 2000, the overall standards at A-level were similar to the national ones. However, in 2002, results in the new A2 examination were very high. All of the students who took the examination achieved A-E grades and ten of the 12 students, including all of the boys, achieved an A or B grade.

58. In 2001, students were entered for the first AS examination and results were low. This was not unexpected, based on GCSE results. Results were higher in 2002 when seven students achieved an A or B grade and almost all achieved a pass grade. Results for A-Level and AS Level compare well with the rest of the school for 2002. Most students achieve well, in terms of their previous attainment in GCSE examinations. The majority of students in Year 12 continue to study geography to Advanced level successfully.

59. The achievement of students during the sixth form is good. Work seen during the inspection confirms that standards are above average and achievement is good. Attainment in Year 12 is similar to that expected nationally in physical geography although students are more enthusiastic and keen to study aspects of human geography where standards are above and well above average.

60. In Year 13, work in class and written assignments show an excellent knowledge and understanding of geography. For example, when students discussed population pressure and resource management in France they made very good oral deductions from statistical information to determine the success of the French pro-natalist policy. Extended writing is of a high standard and some students do very well.

61. In Year 12, students who achieve well, include the few visible minority ethnic students. They begin their written assignments with a clear and positive introduction to explain the causes and consequences of rural migration. Higher attaining students demonstrate a clear understanding of geographical terminology and their depth of reading is reflected in the quality of their writing. Geographical skills are well developed through fieldwork in preparation for a written examination paper. However, below average students do not have such clear thinking skills from which to better balance their arguments. Within their work are careless spelling errors and there is too little use made of information and communication technology.
62. Overall the quality of teaching and learning during the sixth form is good. Some teaching of lessons seen during the inspection was excellent and some very good where teacher expectations were high and the students were keen to learn. No lessons were unsatisfactory.
63. Crisp and purposeful, the carefully prepared and best lessons were clearly presented to smoothly combine different ways of learning and geographical skills. These provided the right level of pace and challenge for the range of student competence. Students achieve very well. However, in contrast, some lessons were rather dull. Student progress was at a gentle pace. Teaching became too reliant on the textbook and opportunities were lost to inspire student learning. Teacher questioning was insufficiently challenging to probe the depth of their understanding.
64. The leadership and management of the department are good. Departmental planning is well organised. The temporary leadership provides a good example to colleagues although, as in the last inspection, there is insufficient monitoring of classroom practice. Learning resources are unsatisfactory. This includes classroom access to information and communication technology.
65. Since the last inspection, improvement in the geography department has been satisfactory although examination results have continued to fluctuate. The established geography team is strong but in the long-term absence of the head of department students are not challenged sufficiently in all aspects of their courses.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

66. Subjects inspected in depth were English literature, French and Spanish. German was also sampled. Too few students have taken German in recent years to provide valid evidence about standards in relation to national expectations. One Year 12 lesson was observed. Students' attainment was above average. Teaching was very good, demonstrating meticulous planning and excellent relationships.

English

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

Strengths

- AS and A-Level results are consistently above average.
- Students make good progress because teachers plan for collaborative learning.
- Teaching is good, with very good aspects.
- Teachers assess and support the progress of pupils very effectively.
- Relationships between teachers and students are very good.
- Very good leadership and clear vision for the department has created a strong team spirit.

Areas for improvement

- Teaching resources.
- More opportunities for teachers to share planning.

67. The department offers English literature at A-Level and AS Level and is a popular subject with 58 students in total. At the end of the sixth form standards are above average compared to national standards. Results in recent years have been well above average, but a dip in 2002 A-Level literature results to just above average reflected a broader range of attainment on entry to the subject. In 2002, AS results were more in line with previous A-Level trends with results being above average, and the performance of female students being well above average at 90 per cent achieving an A or B grade. This is a reversal of the previous A-Level trend of males outperforming female students.

68. Students in Years 12 and 13 make good progress, and also achieve well in comparison with other subjects. Students have good oral skills and express themselves in a confident, logical and well-structured manner. This is helped by regular, planned opportunities to work together and share opinions. This is a significant factor in enabling students to develop personal views about texts they are studying, which in turn contributes to the quality of response in written work.

69. The majority of students have well-developed reading skills. There are frequent structured opportunities in lessons to read and analyse text and demonstrate good skills of critical evaluation. In Year 12, students are developing their awareness of literary form and language, with the majority of students producing well-argued personal responses. By Year 13, the standard of written work is very good. Students conscientiously plan and research to produce essays which are logically argued, often with very good reference to the text and to literary concepts.

70. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good, with aspects of very good teaching. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and lessons are very well planned in structured steps to provide collaborative learning for the students. This clear structuring, which includes a starter activity and review of learning at the end of lessons, means that time is used well and ensures a good pace of learning. Very good use is made of

targeted questions to reinforce learning, and this is most successful when students are given due time for reflection before response. An example of this was in a Year 12 lesson where careful explanation and probing questioning enabled students to develop understanding of some of the complex ideas in Keats' 'Ode to Melancholy'. Teaching is lively and engaging throughout, creating a purposeful attitude to learning.

71. Strength of the department is the very good relationships established between teachers and students. As a result, students are comfortable in exploring ideas and risking being wrong, which increases progression in learning. Work is marked in detail and diagnostic comments on students' work are linked to the syllabus assessment objectives. This is helpful to students in evaluating their own progress and knowing how to improve their work.
72. The department is very well led and managed. Staffing in the department has changed entirely over the last two years, but the strong leadership of the new head of department has created an excellent team spirit and has begun to create structures for more effective working systems, department documentation and developing the curriculum to attract more male students into the subject. Planning together is a recognised area for development. However, inadequate accommodation and too few resources provide an added challenge. Students' curriculum access to ICT is also limited. The last inspection report did not highlight issues for the sixth form, but the implementation of improved documentation, assessment tracking and a collaborative approach to learning in the classroom, means that good progress has been made.

Modern Foreign Languages

French

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

Strengths

- Very good teaching results in well planned lessons and high expectations
- The consistent use of French by teachers focuses students' attention and concentration
- Excellent relationships result in keen and well motivated students
- The high standard of students' spoken French helps them speak with confidence and enthusiasm

Areas for improvement

- Over reliance on the course book which limits the range of activities in some lessons
- Variations in the quality of students' written work resulting in errors of basic grammar

73. In French standards in the sixth form are above average. Evidence from lessons and from students' written assignments shows that the trend is towards further improvement. This is particularly true for the more capable students whose oral French is very good. In the last three years there have been variations in A-Level results. In general, attainment has been better than the national average. In 2000 and 2001, results were well above average. The most able linguists performed well in relation to their GCSE results. Results in 2002 were below average, attributed to significant changes in staffing beyond the control of the school.

74. In Year 13 students' achievement is good. They are keen to speak French and they do so confidently, although with varying degrees of accuracy. Standards of pronunciation and intonation are well above average. Views and opinions are conveyed well. A key reason for this is students' participation in French exchanges and work experience

offered by the languages department. This has a significant impact on students' motivation, oral competency and knowledge of French culture and society.

75. There are some variations in the quality of students' written work. More able students write at length with very good accuracy. They are encouraged to work independently, using the Internet and other sources to develop their knowledge of key topics such as the French Resistance. They research very detailed content for their essays and achieve well in extending knowledge of vocabulary and structure. They use quite sophisticated language to support their points of view and have acquired a good range of expressions. However, some written work shows a more limited knowledge of vocabulary with basic grammatical errors still evident in the second year of study.
76. Achievement in Year 12 is very good. Nearly all students have made very good progress in building on their pre-sixth form French. They have a very good understanding of more abstract language and a wider range of topics. A major reason for this is the provision of carefully prepared resources by teachers. These help them develop good study skills such as note taking and help them bridge the gap between the requirements of GCSE and A-Level syllabuses.
77. Teaching is very good. Teachers speak excellent French and have an extensive knowledge of their subject. French is used almost exclusively throughout lessons. Students, therefore, focus their listening very carefully and understand that they too must respond in French. Lessons are usually carefully prepared and planned using a good range of different activities. These encourage students to acquire and practise language skills well. Resources are ready to hand ensuring good pace. The careful and detailed assessment of their work helps students evaluate and improve their performance. In a small number of lessons, however, teachers are less confident in using a wider range of approaches and rely too much on the textbook.
78. Students of French are very well motivated and interested in their subject. They enjoy their work and are keen to be fully involved. This is one result of the excellent relationships established by teachers through praise, encouragement and support for individuals.
79. The teaching of French benefits from the high quality of leadership and management of the languages department. Clear policies and procedures have been developed. There is excellent support for new staff together with a programme of lesson observation and monitoring of work. Joint planning and effective team approaches continue to enhance the already very good quality of work in much of this subject. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Spanish

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

Strengths

- The extensive use of Spanish by teachers provides good support for students' speaking and listening.
- Students are motivated by very good planning of lessons that use a wide range of activities.
- Students are keen to achieve their potential as a result of very positive relationships with their teachers.

Areas for improvement

- Support in Year 13 for students who require more help in understanding long recordings of spoken Spanish
- Further help in speaking at greater length for students whose responses are short.
- Attainment in Spanish in Year 13

80. Over the last four years not enough students have been entered for A-Level Spanish to make accurate comparisons with national examination results for all schools

81. Observation of lessons and analysis of students' work in Year 13 shows that students' achievement is good, particularly in listening and reading. There is accurate comprehension of teachers' fluent and rapid Spanish. Most of the key points of an article on Chile were read without difficulty. Students are confident in talking about what they have read for homework but they rely on the written notes they have prepared. In general conversation students are very willing to speak but their responses are short when they are not talking about familiar topics. They make good progress in acquiring new vocabulary and language content. With help from the teacher they paraphrase abstract concepts such as 'elite' and 'repression'. In writing, however, less competent students continue to make a range of basic errors in verbs and tenses.

82. In Year 12 achievement is very good and the numbers taking Spanish have increased significantly. As a result of teachers' carefully planned activities students progress well from their entry into the sixth form. They build up a very good range of new adjectives when describing the characteristics of the Spanish regions and their cultural differences. They understand their teacher's fluent and uncompromising use of Spanish throughout the lesson. This challenges them to listen very carefully and to reply in Spanish to the best of their ability. They speak with good accents and read aloud accurately. Higher attaining students write about a range of topics such as holidays and personal well being using different tenses well and translating with accuracy. Some of these students produce written work with very few errors.

83. The teaching of Spanish is very good. Detailed marking of written assignments helps students improve through learning from past mistakes and setting targets for better work. Lessons have clear aims. The teachers, who have excellent linguistic expertise, use very little English. Most lessons are planned to include a varied range of tasks and activities including some that are simple but imaginative, drawing on the best of practice in language teaching. In a few lessons some of the tasks set for students are too demanding. They need more help in listening to long passages of Spanish and in developing the length of their oral answers.

84. Relationships between teachers and students are very positive. As a result students are keen to participate in discussion and achieve very well in relation to their ability. Resources produced by teachers help them to evaluate their own work and develop the skills to work independently. They prepare and research their written and oral presentations well, showing consistently positive attitudes.
85. The teaching of Spanish is well organised and managed. There is good understanding of what constitutes high quality teaching in this language. Staff also benefit from the overall leadership of the languages department which provides a clear and well planned framework for effective learning to take place. The overall trend is towards a subject which is increasing in popularity and improving standards. There were no issues reported at the time of the last inspection.