

INSPECTION REPORT

THE HOLY TRINITY SCHOOL

Gossops Green, Crawley

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 126098

Headteacher: Mr P Wickert

Reporting inspector: Philip J H O'Neill
3612

Dates of inspection: November 4th – 7th 2002

Inspection number: 249858

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Buckswood Drive Gossops Green Crawley West Sussex
Postcode:	RH11 8JE
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Bowen
Date of previous inspection:	September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities (sixth form)	Aspect responsibilities (sixth form)
3162	Philip J H O'Neill	Registered inspector	Theatre Studies	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are students taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9052	Helen Barter	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Students' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1068	Jan Allcorn	Team inspector	Mathematics	
1888	Jan Boulton	Team inspector	Sport Studies Health and social care	
30433	Chris Corp	Team inspector	Biology	
1249	Joseph Edge	Team inspector	Physics	
12331	Vera Grigg	Team inspector	Art Design and technology Special educational needs English as an additional language	
1085	John Laver	Team inspector	English	
31705	John Mason	Team inspector	German Music	
10895	David Wasp	Team inspector	History Psychology	How good are curricular and other opportunities

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Holy Trinity CE school is a Voluntary Aided comprehensive for students aged 11-18 years. There are 1106 students on roll, of whom 227 are in the sixth form. The school is larger than other secondary schools and the sixth form is larger than other sixth forms. Overall, there has been a steady rise in the numbers attending the school. Most students are from a white, UK heritage, background. The proportion of students coming from homes where English is an additional language, at 5.3 per cent, is higher than in most other schools and has been increasing over the last four years. The percentage of students judged to have special educational needs, at 2.5 per cent, is well below the national average; the percentage of these students for whom a statement of special educational needs exists, 1.3 per cent, is below the national average. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals, at 4.2 per cent, is below average. By national standards, however, the intake of the school is not significantly advantaged or disadvantaged. Students join the school with around average levels of attainment. A high proportion of students continue in education after GCSE. The proportion of students leaving the sixth form and continuing into further and higher education is also relatively high.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The Holy Trinity School is a good school where students become independent and responsible members of the community. Standards and behaviour are good and have improved since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is good overall and particularly good in the sixth form. Students are effective learners and achieve well. The headteacher, supported by a very strong team of senior colleagues, provides clear educational direction to the work of the school, ensuring that it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching overall is good and very good in the sixth form, leading to above average standards in many subjects.
- The school is very good at promoting independent learning and instilling in students the desire to learn and a positive attitude to their work.
- The sixth form is a strength of the school, offering lively and challenging courses.
- The headteacher has led the school well in the short time he has been in post and established a clear sense of purpose and direction to its work. He is very ably supported by his deputies and other senior colleagues.

What could be improved

- The administration of what is provided for students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory.
- There are not enough computers in the school to support students' independent learning and the library is not used effectively as a learning resource.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory in design and technology, theatre studies, physical education, vocational courses in the sixth form, administration, dining and changing facilities.

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 September 1996. It has made significant strides since then in addressing the key issues raised at the inspection. Overall standards of attainment have improved. In relation to schools in similar circumstances, the school now achieves well above average results in the GCE A Level examinations. In relation to schools in similar circumstances, results at GCSE are average. However, the most recent unconfirmed results point to further significant improvement.

Development planning is now more sharply focused on emerging needs, providing a useful tool for managing change. The school's work in keeping track of how students are getting on is now more effective. The statutory requirements for teaching design and technology are met, but the

requirements relating to the teaching of information and communication technology are not yet met fully. There remains a shortage of computers. In the short time that the headteacher has been in office, he has done much to accelerate the development of the school, particularly in the measures taken to improve teaching and support teachers in their work. The school has the drive and enthusiasm to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	C
A-levels/AS-levels	A	A	A	

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

Students join the school with average standards of attainment. The above table indicates that in 2001, the GCSE results were well above those of most other schools nationally, although in relation to the performance of schools in similar circumstances, these results were average. Of the subjects taken by the students, the best results are achieved in English Language, design and technology, geography and history, whilst students do far less well in German and religious studies. Boys did better than girls and have been doing so for the last four years, against the national trend where girls do better than boys. There is no clear reason for this difference. The school's results are improving more rapidly than in most other schools.

In the 2001 tests at the end of Year 9, standards in English were well above average and above average in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, standards were above average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. The most recent results show a considerable improvement and confirm the general rising trend in results. The difference between boys and girls broadly follows the national pattern in Year 9, where girls outperform boys. The school sets and meets challenging targets for attainment. In the lessons and work seen, students reach standards that exceed national expectation in most subjects at the end of Years 9 and 11. Students achieve well in relation to the standards they demonstrate when they join the school.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Students have very positive attitudes to learning. They work hard, maintain concentration and listen attentively. They participate enthusiastically in what the school provides for them outside lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Students behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and friendly to each other and to visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Students respond well to the school's progressive challenge to take responsibility for their own learning and to participate in school life. They work well together, sharing ideas and supporting each other's learning.
Attendance	Attendance overall is very good. There are a few students in the sixth form whose attendance is less regular and their learning is thus impeded.

The students' good attitudes are rooted in their confidence that the school serves their interests well. They value the commitment of the teachers to their learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is good and is very good in the sixth form. This accounts for the good progress made by the students as they move through the school from their average attainment when they join. English, mathematics and science are taught well. One of the strengths of the school is the consistency in teaching across departments. This has resulted from systematic monitoring of lessons and good support for teachers. Literacy and numeracy are well taught. The teachers know the students well, not only their levels of attainment, but their little foibles that occasionally get in the way of good progress. The school's concern for the inclusion of all students to the full extent of their competence shows itself clearly in the work of the teachers, particularly in the quality of questioning and in the care they take to explain ideas and tasks. Students are good learners and show a real determination to come to grips with demanding ideas. They generally present their work neatly and in practical work are persistent in seeking to refine and improve the quality of what they do. Teachers work effectively in supporting students with special educational needs. Their efforts are occasionally hampered by the lack of clearly-defined individual education plans. Weaknesses in teaching occasionally arise when activities are not progressively challenging, with the result that the pace is slowed down. There are times, too, when the students are not given enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. This happens, for instance, when questioning does not encourage students to present extended answers.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is a good range of learning opportunities, including extra-curricular opportunities, and the curriculum is well structured to meet the needs of the students. The access to information and communication technology is inadequate to meet the legal requirements. A positive start has been made to the teaching of citizenship.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Provision for students with a statement of special educational needs is satisfactory. Staff support students on the school's register of special needs effectively, but these students generally make slower progress in relation to their earlier attainment than do their peers. Teachers' efforts are occasionally hampered by the lack of clearly-defined individual education plans.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	The needs of students identified as requiring support in acquiring fluency are well met. However, language needs are not always correctly identified.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for students' personal development is good overall, with strengths in the development of social skills and personal responsibility. Opportunities to reflect on issues of deep personal significance are not developed enough.
How well the school cares for its students	The school offers a very good level of care for its students. The house system enables staff and students throughout the school to know each other well and ensures a high degree of pastoral support.

The school works well with parents and encourages their involvement in their children's education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides a clear direction to the work of the school and is very well supported by the complementary skills of a very strong team of senior colleagues.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have not yet established themselves securely enough to hold the school to account for what it provides. However, they are well led in seeking to work out the best way to work effectively with the headteacher and have made a start in defining their different roles.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is assiduous in monitoring its performance and directing its efforts successfully towards improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Although the school is careful to direct its resources towards its agreed priorities, the funding for special educational needs is not used to best effect, the library is not effective in supporting independent learning, there are not enough computers and the home economics room offers some health and safety concerns.

There is a very good range of qualified and experienced teachers to teach the curriculum. There is an adequate supply of learning resources to support the students' work. Accommodation is unsatisfactory in design and technology, theatre studies, physical education, vocational courses in the sixth form, administration, dining and changing facilities.

The school is careful to compare what it achieves with the achievements of other schools in the area and in the county. It gives due consideration to questions of cost and value in all significant expenditure.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> behaviour is good their children like school and make good progress the school expects their children to work hard and do their best at all times the school is helping their children to develop mature and responsible attitudes the quality of teaching their children experience they feel comfortable about approaching the school when they experience difficulties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the work provided for their children to do at home the way the school works with parents to support their children's learning the information provided about their children's progress.

The inspection agrees with the positive views expressed by the parents through the questionnaire and at the public meeting held for parents. Of those, who commented on homework, the majority believes that the amount of homework provided is excessive. The inspection findings are that the homework provided is relevant, supportive of learning and consistent with the homework timetable. The inspection judgement is that the school makes good efforts to work with parents and encourages them to maintain contact with individual teachers. The information about students' progress is currently satisfactory and the school is in the process of reviewing its arrangements for reporting to parents.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form has 184 students and is steadily expanding. There are a few students from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school provides a wide range of A Level, AS Level and vocational courses, enriched by many opportunities to pursue individual interests. Though most of the students in Year 11 continue on into the sixth form, an increasing number come from other schools. All students either follow a two-year course leading to A Levels or the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education or a one-year course leading to an intermediate General National Vocational Qualification.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form is a strength of the school. Students reach above average standards overall. The quality of teaching is very good overall and students achieve very well. Great care is taken to meet the needs of all students and direct them to the most appropriate courses. The students' attitudes to the school and to their learning are mature and sensible and contribute very positively to their achievement. The sixth form is excellently led and managed, is cost-effective and has improved on many fronts since the last inspection.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is very good overall and leads to above average standards in examinations.
- Students are very well supported in acquiring independent learning skills and a high level of personal responsibility.
- Students' attitudes are very good and contribute positively to their learning.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form are excellent.

What could be improved

- The advice provided for students about the full range of future options is not always sufficiently refined.
- Accommodation for teaching is unsatisfactory and resources to support learning are unsatisfactory in some areas.

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

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Very good. Results in examinations are good, being well above the national average for A Level in 2001. Teaching is good with a significant number of strong features. The students work hard, which, in addition to high expectations of their performance, ensures good standards and progress. The subject is managed well.
Biology	Very good. Students attain well above average results at A Level. They are taught very well through clearly-planned lessons. The students' good attitudes to their work and their determination to succeed lie at the heart of the rapid progress they make in their work. The subject is very well led and

	managed.
Physics	Very Good. Results at A Level are well above average. Students are supported through very good teaching that challenges them all to achieve to the full extent of their competence. The subject is very well led and managed
Design and technology	Good. Teaching is consistently very good and supports students in achieving well. The subject is very well led. The unsatisfactory nature of the accommodation holds back the development of the department.
Physical education	Very Good. Students' attainment is above the national average and they achieve well as a result of very good teaching. The subject is very well led and managed.
Health and social care	Good. The students reach above average standards and work hard to succeed. Good teaching supports independent learning. The area is well led and managed.
Art	Very good. Students reach good standards in their work in relation to their attainment on joining the courses. They are taught well and generously supported in their work. The department is very well led.
Music	Good. Students enjoy music and achieve well in relation to their earlier attainment. They are taught well through some inspiring lessons. The subject is well led and managed.
Theatre studies	Good. The students are well served by good teaching and effective support. They achieve good standards, particularly in their practical work. Leadership and management are good, but the department's development is hampered to some extent by the unsatisfactory accommodation.
History	Very good. Students reach high standards in examinations and achieve well. Teaching is very good and students take a real interest in the subject. Leadership and management are very good.
Psychology	Very Good. Students reach above average standards at A Level, but standards are improving through very good teaching. The students enjoy the subject and work hard. Leadership and management are good.
English	Very good. Students achieve above average results in response to good teaching and are very positive in their attitudes. Leadership and management are very good and the department has adapted well to the requirements of relatively new syllabuses.
German	Good. Students perform well in examinations. The standards of their work are above average. Teaching is good and students learn well as a result of the teachers' excellent knowledge of the subject. The department is well led and managed.

In chemistry, the examination results were well above average in 2001 and this was maintained in 2002. In the lesson observed, the teaching was very good. The AS level course in public understanding in science is new to the school and was only introduced this year in Year 12. In the lesson observed, the teaching was good with a very effective use of technology to present the students with the historical background to air pollution. In economics, excellent teaching helps students to build very quickly on their earlier knowledge. In the Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education in information and communication technology, students are taught well and build quickly on their skills.

Students on the Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education in travel and tourism make good advances in learning as a result of very good teaching and reach good standards in their work. The media studies course is taught satisfactorily and students, for example, show a sound grasp of key

ideas. In geography, standards are above average as a result of very good teaching. Students are taught very well in law and achieve good standards in examinations in relation to their attainment on joining the course. Standards in sociology are above average as a result of very good teaching. In the one lesson seen in French, the students were taught well and reached good standards in their written and oral work.

The Advanced Level examination in English language was introduced in September 2000, too few sat the examination in 2000 to make sensible national comparisons, but the 12 students, who took the examination in 2002, achieved results (yet to be confirmed) above the national average.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Students feel at ease with their work because they are offered very good pastoral support. Teachers are generous with their time in helping students to overcome both personal and academic difficulties. The advice and support provided in order to help students anticipate life beyond school is not always refined enough to be helpful.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The sixth form is excellently led and driven by a clear sense of purpose and direction. Concern for the interests of the students lies at the heart of its success. It is informed by imaginative thinking, effective planning and the quest for excellence in all it provides.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What some students feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The choice of courses suits their talents and aspirations • They are provided with clear and helpful information to support their learning • They are taught very well and the teachers are very accessible for help • They are helped to study independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They do not always receive helpful advice about life beyond school • They are not well informed about their progress • They do not have access to many extra-curricular activities

Inspectors are convinced that the students' overall very positive view of the sixth form is justified. They agree that the students are not always provided with the right level of advice about their options beyond school. They do not concur with the view expressed by students that they are not well informed about their progress. The inspection evidence suggests that students get a good level of support in finding out how they are doing and about how to do better. With regard to extra-curricular activities, there is a limited range available.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The quality of teaching overall is good and very good in the sixth form, leading to above average standards in many subjects.

1. Good and very good teaching permeates the work of the school. Of the lessons seen, almost all were at least satisfactory and nearly three-quarters were good or better, with over one-third very good. The great strength of the school is the extent to which the teachers work with a common sense of purpose and commitment to providing the students with the best deal possible. This accounts for the good progress made by the students as they move through the years from average attainment when they join. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is a particular strength. Another strong feature is the consistency in the quality of teaching across departments, which, year-on-year, reduces the differences between attainment in different subjects.
2. The programme of monitoring and departmental reviews sharpens the monitoring of lessons and the support for teachers. The teachers reveal growing refinement in the way they explain tasks or demonstrate key ideas. This ensures that students engage with lessons from the start and see the point of the proceedings. Literacy and numeracy are well taught. There is a good emphasis on speaking and listening, showing itself in the confidence with which the students speak about their work. The teachers are good at building on the students' ideas and leading them to respect what they have to say. They are equally good at demanding reasons for opinions. They know the students well. They are good at detecting difficulties in learning and identifying with the students what needs to happen in order for them to progress in their work.
3. The school's concern for the inclusion of all students to the full extent of their competence shows itself clearly in the work of the teachers and that of the learning support assistants. They overcome some difficulties in the central management of provision for students with special educational needs and support these students effectively. Their efforts are occasionally hampered by the lack of clearly-defined individual education plans. Teachers are good at helping students to understand more demanding ideas by the quality of questioning and the clarity of explanations, constantly checking to see if the students understand the key ideas.
4. The most outstanding feature of most lessons is the supportive environment for learning. This shows itself in the positive management of behaviour and in the ways teachers relate what they teach to the interests and sensibilities of the students. These, and many other, skills were a feature of a mathematics lesson in Year 9, for instance. The lesson dealt with some demanding work in algebra. The teacher's lively manner and confidence in the subject engaged the students immediately with their tasks, which were challenging, but interesting. There was an abundance of clear demonstrations of basic ideas through the use of illuminating examples. The students took a real interest in their work and made significant advances in their understanding and in the accuracy with which they tackled problems. This skill in capturing the interests of the students characterised many other lessons.

The school is very good at promoting independent enquiry and instilling in students the desire to learn and a positive attitude to their work.

5. The students show a high level of enthusiasm for their work. They demonstrate, too, a sustained commitment to achieving the highest standards of which they are capable. Their very good behaviour is one of the key features in the school's success. This does not always come by nature, but results often from the teachers' skill in channelling

exuberant energy into purposeful learning. Students are receptive to new ideas; they are alive with curiosity, particularly when they are working with issues that touch their daily lives and sensibilities. Students work very productively together when they are appropriately challenged by the work. In a Year 9 French lesson, for instance, when the teacher's expectations for responsible and mature engagement with the work were high, students rose to the occasion by organising themselves very effectively, making significant gains in knowledge as they supported and questioned one another in French about a visit to a theme park. This was learning at its best, resulting from very good teaching.

6. The students' capacity to concentrate and keep going even when they experience difficulties sustained the very good pace of many lessons. Another defining characteristic of the best lessons is the students' persistent use of the appropriate technical language. This arises to a great extent from the teachers' work on literacy. A significant feature of many lessons is the way the students take notes and use them for revision. These very good attitudes are demonstrated right across the school.

The sixth form is a strength of the school; offering lively and challenging courses.

7. The sixth form is a thriving community of learners achieving high standards. It is regarded highly by parents, students and the wider community. Its depth and breadth of provision gives students an intellectual and personal education that helps them to become mature self-critical adults. The students respond with interest and enthusiasm to their work and are proud to be part of the school. The quality of teaching is a real strength, though the teachers often have to battle against inadequate accommodation.
8. The range of courses offered suits the interests and enthusiasms of the students. Everybody is given a chance to succeed. The opportunities for more vocationally-oriented courses are a real strength. The work on collaboration with other providers has born some fruit, but this sixth form has a strong future in its own right. The high quality of management, leadership and administration, allied to the commitment and dedication of the teachers, lies at the heart of its success. The sixth form is clearly cost effective and gives very good value for money.

The head teacher, in the short time he has been in post, has led the school well and established a clear sense of purpose and direction to its work. He is very ably supported by his deputies and other senior colleagues.

9. There has been a rapid acceleration of the school's development in the short time the headteacher has been in the school. The already improving standards have been further raised through rigorous monitoring and support for teachers. The system of departmental reviews has been a particular strength. They provide opportunities to those, who lead subjects, to explore in a constructive and supportive way where the main strengths lie and where further development could be nurtured. The headteacher is very ably supported through some excellent work by his deputies and other senior colleagues. He brings to the post a calm and self-assurance that paces change well, so that, in the main, the staff experience change as a benefit and not as an added burden. The governors are well led in shaping themselves into a more cohesive team. It has taken some time to develop a working relationship with the headteacher that respects his professional role, whilst holding the school to account for the quality of what it offers students. Governors are now eager to move into a relationship with the school where all parties feel secure in their complementary roles. The headteacher has been particularly effective in sustaining the Christian atmosphere of the school through well-organised assemblies. The strong sense of community that communicates itself to the visitor is in no small measure a result of the clarity with which the school articulates its agreed purpose and direction. The school has the will

and the capacity for further significant development.

Sixth Form

The quality of teaching is very good overall and leads to above average standards in examinations.

10. Teaching is very good in the sixth form. Nearly all the lessons seen were good or very good, with a small proportion excellent. The most striking feature of most lessons is the teachers' knowledge of what they teach. This gives the students the confidence to ask the most demanding questions with the assurance that the answers will be sophisticated and illuminating. For example, this was a feature that characterised an excellent lesson in economics dealing with labour markets. The teacher's confidence in her subject and her high expectations for clearly-defined ideas helped students to acquire considerable sophistication in the way they expressed themselves. The teacher was very careful, too, to check for understanding, whilst at the same time encouraging the free flow of ideas.
11. The very good relationships between students and teachers are another impressive characteristic of all teaching. What comes across in lessons is the sense that the quest for learning is a joint enterprise. There is little evidence of undue dependence on the teacher. The use of questioning to ensure that all students are included and attentive strengthens many lessons. This is often a feature of the setting of homework. Great care is taken to ensure that the students see the full significance of the work set, with the consequence that it is a very well worth while use of time and an effective stimulus for independent learning.
12. Clear demonstrations and the use of practical activity to embody key ideas is another feature of the very best teaching. This was a real strength in an excellent art lesson for Year 13. The teacher used a variety of activities and stimuli to create the atmosphere the students exhibited in their paintings. The teacher's conviction, inspiration and depth of knowledge generated an abundance of creative ideas and focused work. The use of the students' ideas and the respect shown for them encourages students to take risks and defend their views. This was a key characteristic of an excellent lesson for Year 13 in personal and social education. In this lesson, the students' own newspapers were used to explore layout content and political bias of different papers. What was particularly impressive in this lesson was that it was a group of mixed attainment and from different disciplines, teasing out together demanding ideas. All the students made significant advances in their sophistication in handling ideas.

Students are very well supported in acquiring independent learning skills and a high level of personal responsibility.

13. A strength of the sixth form is the way that students are given the confidence to work independently. Teachers use a good range of teaching approaches, combining the presentation of ideas skilfully with independent exploration of themes and topics through extended reading and enquiry. They make good use of the library and the Internet for independent study. The quality of discussion in many lessons encourages students to take up a position and defend it and to respect their capacity for contributing to the world of ideas. This independence of mind was exercised to very good effect in students' contribution to the model United Nations conference where they gave a very good account of themselves. The capacity for independent thinking came across, too, in discussions with the students about their views of the school. They showed a strong loyalty to the school, whilst exercising a constructive, critical voice. There are many opportunities for the exercise of responsibility. For example, the process by which the head team (a group of sixth form students with specific

responsibilities) is constituted provides a very good opportunity for all sixth formers to apply for various positions and to be persuasive in doing so.

Students' attitudes are very good and contribute positively to their learning.

14. The students' enthusiasm for their work and their willingness to continue to refine and improve their first efforts is a key factor in the standards achieved. They persist, even when they experience difficulties with their work. They behave very well in lessons and support one another. They act not from the constraint of rules, but as a matter of principle. They have come to learn that the purpose of lessons is not just to acquire knowledge, understanding and skill, but also to come to respect their own ideas and their capacity to change the world. They appreciate the rightful demands placed upon them by the teachers towards the achievement of this purpose. However, they also value the lightness of touch that often tempers the teachers' serious intentions.
15. The students' interest in doing well and in achieving to the full extent of their competence is very evident in their work. They are good listeners in lessons and engage with gusto in debating issues and relish the discipline of supporting assertions with reasons. They show a genuine interest in going beyond the basic requirements of courses. Most students have a very good capacity for sustained work and for taking responsibility for ensuring they meet course deadlines. They work well in groups or individually in independent work.

The leadership and management of the sixth form are excellent.

16. What is immediately striking about the sixth form is that it is driven by a clear sense of moral purpose. The clarity of vision and deep personal concern for all the students lies at the heart of its success. The head of the sixth form, supported by the headteacher and governors, has secured a commitment to excellence and to continued improvement. There is a strong emphasis on the improvement of learning and the quality of teaching. The fruits of these efforts are revealed in the quality of the teachers' work, both in lessons and in the support provided for the students. The sixth form is efficiently run. Teachers are not overburdened with paperwork, but are supported by the right level of appropriate documentation. Teachers are very well supported in what they do and continue to improve their already high level of expertise by attending appropriate in-service training.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The administration of what is provided for students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory.

17. The headteacher, other senior managers and governors have worked hard to overcome the difficulties in this area. The governor with designated responsibility has been particularly effective in voicing her concerns and in ensuring that there are improvements in the way that needs are identified and individual education plans drawn up and used. There have been significant improvements, but the management of provision remains unsatisfactory and governors and staff realise that much more needs to be done. What must be said, however, is that individual teachers and, in particular, the learning support assistants do all they can to ensure that students with special educational needs get a fair deal.
18. Communication between the special educational needs co-ordinator and other members of staff is ineffective. There are not regular meetings with heads of departments to ensure that individual education plans are used appropriately across the school. The progress made by students with special educational needs is not monitored, with the consequence that they generally make slower progress in relation to their earlier attainment than do their peers. Appropriate and accessible records are

not kept for students receiving special help, apart from those, who have statements.

There are not enough computers in the school to support students' independent learning and the library is not used effectively as a learning resource.

19. The number of computers available for the students use is below average. Computers are not always used well enough in subjects so that students are sometimes slow to develop their skills in applications in different subjects. Many students make use of computers at home to make up for the deficit in school. One of the difficulties experienced by the school is the lack of appropriate accommodation to house more computers as the school expands.
20. The library is a large area and has a reasonable stock of books. It tends to be used for teaching and for access to computers. It does not function as a place for independent learning where students can browse and work in silence. The arrangements for the management of the library do not work well.

Accommodation is unsatisfactory in design and technology, theatre studies, physical education, vocational courses in the sixth form, administration, dining and changing facilities.

21. In design and technology, the accommodation for food technology is very poor. The lack of appropriate worktops makes it difficult for students to put their own ideas into practice. The facilities for the storage of ingredients are in poor repair and unhygienic. There are plans afoot for the improvement of the accommodation. In the meantime, however, teachers work very hard to adapt their work to the unsatisfactory conditions. The studio for theatre studies limits the possibilities for production and the use of audience. Many lessons take place in uninspiring classrooms where it requires a monumental effort to sustain the right kind of atmosphere for developing drama. The main hall, though large, is designed in such a way that there is no appropriate staging space. The lighting is far out of reach for adjusting and requires circus-like feats to get access to regularly used lights.
22. The teaching of examination courses in physical education is impeded by the lack of a designated space with facilities for using information and communication technology. The changing facilities are inadequate. They are difficult to clean and do not provide adequate privacy for those that use them. The office used by the school administrative staff is very cramped. It offers little storage space and is poorly ventilated. The dining facilities are particularly poor. The catering staff and teachers perform minor organisational miracles in providing food in an orderly way. This area requires radical re-designing.

Sixth form

The advice provided for students about the full range of future options is not always sufficiently refined.

23. Students are high in their praise of the availability of teachers when they need help and value the help they received when choosing their courses. They expressed some concerns, though, about the quality of advice they get concerning their destinies beyond the school. This was not seen as seriously debilitating to their state of mind, but gave them some nagging doubts about what they might do next. The careers library provides some good information, but students rightly state that this kind of material does not speak for itself. They justifiably feel that more one-to-one discussion, along the lines that already exist in relation to their work, would fill the gap in this area.

Accommodation for teaching is unsatisfactory and resources to support learning are unsatisfactory in some areas.

24. In addition to matters raised above about accommodation in the whole school, there are some matters that relate specifically to the sixth form. The sixth form is steadily expanding as a result of its popularity and reputation for good standards and the quality of teaching. The new block has done much to provide some appropriate space. The students' common room is particularly attractive, albeit very crowded when all the students assemble. The main weakness lies in the lack of adequate teaching rooms. There are some cases where teaching is conducted in inappropriate spaces, for example theatre studies and physical education. This limits the capacity of teachers to provide the best atmosphere for learning. Learning resources, including computers, are in short supply and the library, as already stated, does not function as a stimulus for independent learning. Design and technology, health and social care and psychology suffer most from a lack of adequate resources to teach the subjects.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to continue to sustain the current rate of improvement and improve standards even further, the governors and staff should:

Continue to address weaknesses in the administration of provision for students with special educational needs by:

senior managers taking further steps to improve the communication between the special educational needs co-ordinator, the teachers and learning support assistants;

ensuring that regular meetings take place between the special needs co-ordinator and heads of departments to ensure that individual education plans are used appropriately across the school;

ensuring that the co-ordinator of special educational needs monitors more carefully the progress made by students with special educational needs;

ensuring that appropriate and accessible records are kept for students receiving special help.

(paragraphs 3, 17, 18, 32)

Increase the number of computers in the school to support students' independent learning

(paragraphs 22, 27, 58 and summary on school improvement)

Explore ways to make the library a more effective resource for learning by:

developing a clear plan for its more effective use as a resource for learning;

reviewing the current staffing arrangements, which do not work well.

(paragraphs 104, 115, 120, 134)

Continue to press for funds to address the significant weaknesses in accommodation in design and technology, theatre studies, physical education, vocational courses in the sixth form, administration, dining and changing facilities.

(paragraphs 33, 45, 49, 77, 84, 110, 127, 134)

Sixth form

- **Improve the advice provided for students about the range of future options by:**
working out with students the precise nature of their needs;
providing more opportunities for one-to-one advice and counselling about options beyond the sixth form.
(paragraph 42)
- **Press for the funding to improve accommodation and resources to support learning.**

(paragraphs: accommodation: 33, 45, 49, 77, 84, 110, 127, 134
: resources: 43, 58, 79, 84, 110, 115, 120, 127)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7-11	23
	Sixth form	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		53

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

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

Number	0	7	11	4	1	0	0
Percentage	0	30	49	17	4	0	0

Sixth form

Number	4	22	22	7	1	0	0
Percentage	7	39	39	13	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	879	227
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	34	

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	10	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	65	2

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	72

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	37

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4

National comparative data	8.1
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National comparative data	1.1
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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
	2001	94	105	199

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	77	69	67
	Girls	101	82	81
	Total	178	151	148
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	89 (71)	76 (78)	74 (82)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	55 (32)	54 (56)	44 (49)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	69	72	73
	Girls	91	88	82
	Total	160	160	155
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	80 (83)	80 (87)	78 (83)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	41 (47)	48 (64)	39 (43)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	122	73	195

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
	Boys	75	120	122

Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Girls	50	68	70
	Total	125	188	192
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	64 (58)	96 (96)	98 (97)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	47.2 (44.6)
	National	39.0 (38.4)

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

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

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

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	39	49	88
	Average point score per candidate	20.4 (18.7)	21 (17.7)	20.8 (18.2)
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9 (17.1)	18 (18)	17.5 (17.6)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	39	49	88	2	4	6
	Average point score per candidate	19.7	19.8	19.8	12	15	14
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	17.9	17.4	9.8	11.4	10.6

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

International Baccalaureate	Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0
	National	81.0

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	960	64	8
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	10	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	97	3	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	9	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	5	0	0
Black or Black British – African	8	3	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	8	2	0
No ethnic group recorded	2		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	69.68
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.7

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	17
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Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	3123458

Total aggregate hours worked per week	474
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Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.7
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	23.2
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Key Stage 4	19.8
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Total expenditure	3118848
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Expenditure per pupil	2934
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Balance brought forward from previous year	258051
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Balance carried forward to next year	262661
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Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	14.7
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Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	25.4
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Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
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Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
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Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1106
Number of questionnaires returned	331

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	41	48	7	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	43	47	2	0	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	56	5	1	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	59	12	4	2
The teaching is good.	37	54	2	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	46	17	2	13
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	45	7	1	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	31	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	21	50	16	3	10
The school is well led and managed.	47	43	2	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	50	2	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	42	8	2	20

Other issues raised by parents

There were no issues raised that are not represented in the response to the questionnaire.

PART D: THE SIXTH FORM

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

25. In the sixth form, the average points achieved by both male and female students taking two or more A Levels was well above the national average for sixth forms and for all providers of post-16 education. A Level results show a rising trend and the most recent unconfirmed results point to a continuation of this trend. The highest-attaining subjects at A Level in 2001 were English literature, biology, French, geography, mathematics, physics, sociology and physical education, which were well above average. Students taking the Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education in business also reached above average standards. The lowest-attaining subject was religious studies, where students' results were below average. Students persist with their courses and almost all of them complete the courses they choose. The school sets challenging targets for improvement and generally exceeds them. Indications from the most recent unconfirmed results show that the school has far exceeded its expectations.
26. In the subjects that were inspected in detail, the evidence from inspection is that standards are very good in biology and physics and good in all other subjects, apart from history, where students reach average standards. Many students in these subjects show a high level of skill in the analysis of key concepts. In those subjects that were lightly sampled, there were very good standards in chemistry, economics and sociology. Students also revealed good standards in their work in geography and French, whilst standards in media studies are sound. There was evidence of good standards in the advanced vocational certificates in travel and tourism and in information and communication technology. Differences across subjects are, in the main, a result of differences in the quality of teaching and in the level of the students' enthusiasm for their work.
27. Students achieve very well in relation to their attainment on entry to the sixth form as they move through Years 12 and 13. Skills in information and communication technology are satisfactory when students join the sixth form, but build up steadily as they experience increasing access to machines. Achievement in biology, physics, design and technology, art and psychology is very good. Students are very quick to acquire a deep knowledge of these subjects as a result of the teachers' very high level of knowledge and their skill in communicating it. Achievement is good in the remaining subjects. The teachers' care in supporting and guiding students in their work ensures that all reach standards that are at least consistent with their results at GCSE.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

28. This is a community where the students enjoy a friendly and truly Christian environment. Teachers and students relate very well together, whilst maintaining a clear understanding of their different roles in the school community. The school's behaviour policy is rooted in a common understanding of the importance of listening to others and respecting their feelings. Students clearly behave very well out of principle. Students feel that should they cross the boundaries of what is permitted, they will be forgiven and embraced by the school community. This open, but structured, environment allows students' imaginations to thrive. The students are eloquent in their appreciation of the convivial world the school represents for them.
29. The students feel at home in lessons and are willing to take risks with their opinions and suggestions. They are eager to produce their best efforts in all their work. The work inspected during the inspection reveals much that is well ordered and neatly

presented, showing great attention to detail. Lessons are often hives of purposeful activity, with students vying with each other in a constructive and friendly way. There are many examples across the years of students undertaking independent study, for example, using the Internet to research their assignments.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

30. Students joining the sixth form stand a very good chance of being taught very well. The overall quality of teaching in the sixth form is very good and has improved over recent years. There is a consistent pattern of good to very good teaching across the subjects. In the subjects that form the main focus for the inspection, teaching is very good in biology, physics, design and technology, physical education, history, psychology and English. In mathematics, art, music, theatre studies and German, the quality of teaching is good. In other subjects, there are many strengths in teaching, with some excellent features in economics and in some lessons in art. There is also some very good teaching in law, sociology and in travel and tourism. This pattern of effective lessons results from rigorous leadership and management, allied to the professionalism of the teachers, who form a cohesive self-critical group committed to excellence. There are rare significant weaknesses in teaching arising, in the main, from too slow a pace and inadequate questioning.
31. In nearly all lessons, teachers' knowledge of what they teach is particularly striking. The students appreciate the teachers' depth and breadth of knowledge and avail of it well to broaden their own minds, whilst focusing on the more specific requirements of their courses. Explanations of key concepts are clear and amenable to students at all levels of attainment. The teachers' openness to questioning from the students encourages the productive flow of ideas and the development of logical minds. Teachers have clearly made the change from teaching at GCSE to teaching at A Level. There is constant attention to moving the students from describing the world to evaluating it. In history, for instance, there is a strong emphasis on the evaluation of ideas and on rescuing students from lazy ways of thinking.
32. The teachers are diligent in attending to the needs of all students. They do this against the backdrop of weaknesses in the management of provision for students with special educational needs. They compensate well for the difficulties created by a lack of precision in the development and distribution of the students' individual education plans. The classroom support assistants provide good support in lessons and work well with the class teachers in reaching a common understanding about what individual students require in order to keep pace with their peers. The teachers take good account of the needs of students for whom English is an additional language when they reach the sixth form. Boys and girls fare equally well in the quality of support they get. Pupils with particular talents are catered for very well: they are encouraged and supported effectively in nurturing their distinctive talents.
33. The school has been diligent in developing students' skills in communication, application of number and information and communication technology. However, in the case of the latter, there are limitations to what teachers can achieve because of the difficulties in accommodation and the consequent difficulties about the availability of machines. Key skills are well taught as part of a combined key skills and personal and social education programme. The strength of this work is that it places the acquisition of key skills in the wider context of the students' social and personal development.

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

34. The range of learning opportunities provided is good. They match the students' individual needs, interests and aspirations very well. The school offers a wide range of academic and vocational courses. There is a reasonable range of enrichment opportunities both within the taught curriculum and also as extra-curricular activities. Students talk enthusiastically, for example, about opportunities for personal expression in art and for lively discussion in personal and social education. A number of sixth form students excelled at the model United Nations conference. Other students support younger students in their work. The person and social education course offers all students access to the key skill of communication as well as time for discussion and reflection on issues pertinent to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education as well as religious education and citizenship. Care is taken to ensure that all students have the right level of skills in the application of number to pursue their courses. This is eminently the case in the teaching of economics. Students' programmes are carefully planned and monitored to ensure that they build on existing knowledge, skills and understanding so that they do not undertake courses where they struggle to survive. There is strong emphasis on the productive use of private study time and this is planned well. There is some effective shared work with other providers of post-16 education, which is still in its early stages of development. The school is planning to extend this in order to widen further the range of courses and other learning opportunities.
35. Expectations for information and communication skills are appropriate for this age group. For example, students cover and extend ideas and skills learned in Years 10 and 11, where there are weaknesses in provision. The sixth form fares better than the rest of the school in the accessibility of computers. Careful thought is given to the phased allocation of study time. The curriculum is structured in order to give all students a fair deal and ensures equality of access and opportunity.
36. The school makes good use of the learning opportunities provided by the local community. This is particularly true of the vocational courses. The range of opportunities has been significantly extended since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

Assessment

37. The school's work in developing systems of assessment and ways of using the information gathered to help to guide teaching and learning is very good. The analysis of GCSE results, for instance, has helped to guide students towards appropriate courses and give them some useful indications of what they need to do to succeed in different courses in the sixth form. In the sixth form, students are given targets to achieve that are based on accurate analysis of attainment. There is regular communication between students and teachers about their targets and what they need to do to improve. Students vouch for the quality of this work and its consequences for them in their work. They grow steadily in their understanding of how well they are doing in their subjects as the information given to them about how they are getting on is refined and helpful. Indications about where students stand in relation to their predicted grades are regular and effective in re-focusing effort.
38. There is very useful information gathered on the results of tests, which is analysed thoroughly and used well in monitoring students' overall progress. Furthermore, teachers give generously of their time, helping students with their work and in their personal lives. In lessons, assessment is used well to find out how individual students are getting on. This arises, in the main, as teachers manage lessons in such a way that makes it possible for them to spend time with individual learners in order to get a more accurate picture of their attainment and of where they experience difficulties. In

the monitoring of teaching and learning, there is a strong emphasis on the students' learning in order to be clearer about the impact of teaching.

Advice, support and guidance

39. The school stands clearly for Christian values, placing a strong emphasis on the development of the students in relation to Christian ideals. This distinctive feature attracts many of the new students to the sixth form and is an important factor in the decision of many Year 11 students to remain. Their parents share this well-deserved view of what the students experience. Overall, the educational and personal support and guidance provided for students are good. The induction for new members of the sixth form is extensive and well planned. Students overwhelmingly agree that the school has helped them to settle well. The school is aware that there is much competition in the area and while it seeks to attract students it also takes care to ensure that prospective students are making the right choice. Questionnaire results confirm that almost all students are satisfied with the choices they have made. The head of the sixth form meets regularly with a representative group of students to share with them their concerns or suggestions.
40. The quality and accessibility of information and advice for students are very good. Students often get good advice about the planning, organisation and improvement of work. The teachers are generous in the time they give to helping students to improve their performance. Students value the friendly and positive atmosphere provided by the teachers and their willingness to help them overcome difficulties and improve.
41. The personal support provided for students is good, though students say that they tend to seek one another's counsel when in need. However, they know that the teachers would be willingly available to supplement the help they get from their peers.
42. The effectiveness of careers guidance is sound. Across the whole calendar year there are events to provide advice and practical help for students in both Years 12 and 13. These range from interviews, workshops and using outside speakers from industry and the professions. All students value the quality of printed information available to them. Students make regular use of the Internet to secure information about careers and higher education. However, a sizeable minority of students feel they are not well advised about future options. During the inspection, students expressed a specific concern about the effectiveness of the guidance they get on where they go after sixth form. The school has taken this on board and plans to offer more one-to-one advice and counselling.
43. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Registers are monitored carefully, as is the effectiveness of students, who pursue their work at home during study leave. The school's efforts in this area support the very good, prompt attendance of the students. There are thorough detailed procedures in place to ensure pupils' welfare. The school continues to offer the good quality of guidance and support noted at the last inspection.

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

44. Parents are generally strongly supportive of the school and have a particularly high regard for the sixth form, which they believe has a justifiably good reputation. Parents are very satisfied with the high expectations the school has for their children and the progress they make as a consequence. Parents say that they find it easy to approach the school with questions and concerns and that the school responds well to these.
45. The reputation of the sixth form is such that most students in the school aspire to join it when their time comes. Those students already in the sixth form clearly enjoy being there and would readily recommend it to others. In particular, they like the choice of courses on offer, the challenge of the teaching, the accessibility of the teachers and the way they are encouraged to study independently. All this is consistent with the positive atmosphere observed in the sixth form during the inspection. Their main concern focuses on aspects of the support and guidance they are given about life beyond this stage of their education. The inspection revealed that this concern is justified to some extent. Some students are also dissatisfied with the range of extra-curricular activities offered. There is a reasonable range of activities in relation to that on offer in other sixth forms, but the limitations imposed by the accommodation imposes restrictions on what is possible. When questioned, students were ambiguous about the extent to which the school and themselves were responsible for enlivening their extra-curricular time and many felt that they could do more to help themselves.

HOW WELL IS THE SIXTH FORM LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

46. The sixth form is well led in providing the students with a rich educational experience that helps them to attain good standards and to come to know themselves and one another in a supportive moral and spiritual environment. The sixth form makes a strong contribution to the school's overall climate for learning. It is this that convinces staff, governors, parents and students that the expansion of the sixth form must continue. The governors are very alive to the needs of the sixth form and are currently engaged in taking a sharp strategic look at where it is heading.
47. Much effort and time are invested in tracking the performance of the sixth form and in analysing the costs and benefits of running courses. Care is taken to ensure that numbers on courses do not fall below an unacceptable minimum. The induction of students to the sixth form is very well managed. What is not so well managed is the guidance and direction given to the students in reflecting on their careers. It is not that there is little done by way of guidance, but that what is provided is sometimes not sufficiently sharply directed at the needs of individual students, nor is its effectiveness monitored enough.
48. Planning for the development of the sixth form is closely tied to overall planning in the school. This is particularly the case in planning the use of resources. Budgeting is carefully geared to the advantage of all students. There is continued work done in comparing what the school offers to that of other providers and in ensuring that considerations of cost and value are invoked in the acquisition of staff and resources. As a result of astute monitoring of costs and the effective drive towards raising standards, the sixth form provides good value for money and is clearly cost effective.

Staffing, accommodation and resources

49. The sixth form is very fortunate in the range and quality of teaching and other staff assigned to the sixth form. The very good quality of teaching bears witness to the teachers' high level of expertise and commitment to their work. More importantly, they work as a team, fired by enthusiasm for their work and using their time very well.

Resources are excellent in music as a result of the acquisition of a new purpose-built music suite. They are very good in the sciences. They are poor in health and social care and unsatisfactory in mathematics, design and technology, physical education and theatre studies. There is a satisfactory supply of resources in the remaining subjects. Weaknesses in resources are often tied to problems with accommodation, which is unsatisfactory. It is poor in design and technology and unsatisfactory in physical education, theatre studies, English and German. The number of computers available to the students is less than that found in most other sixth forms, but limitations in accommodation make it difficult to extend the range of machines available.

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

In the inspection, 13 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

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

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art	9	44		100		45.6	
Biology	12	62		92		44.6	
Business Studies	7	20		70		26.0	
Chemistry	9	44		100		41.1	
Design and technology	7	43		100		41.4	
Economics	7	67		78		43.3	
English Language	13	7		93		32.1	
English Literature	24	58		100		49.6	
French	7	43		100		35.7	
Food Technology	3	25		75		32.5	
German	4	25		100		40.0	
General Studies	16	88		100		56.3	
Geography	6	29		86		28.6	
History	17	47		100		42.4	
Mathematics	18	60		90		42.0	
Music	8	11		89		32.2	
Physical Education	6	57		86		44.3	
Physics	12	58		100		46.7	
Religious Studies	13	50		93		37.9	
Sociology	19	29		90		31.9	
Theatre Studies	10	60		100		46	
AVCE Health & Social Care	2	0		29		10.0	

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E	% gaining grades A-B	Average point score
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		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art	5	100		40		84.0	
Biology	18	100		58		93.3	
Business Studies	18	94		17		71.1	
Chemistry	17	94		33		73.3	
Design and technology	4	100		50		80.0	
Economics	5	100		20		72.0	
English Literature	38	100		50		92.1	
French	8	100		63		97.5	
German	3	100		0		73.3	
Further mathematics	3	100		100		120.0	
General Studies	46	96		25		75.0	
Geography	8	100		63		95.0	
History	20	90		35		71.0	
Home Economics (Food)	5	100		20		68.0	
Mathematics	17	89		58		84.2	
Music	1	100		0		80.0	
Physical Education	9	100		33		84.4	
Physics	8	100		50		92.5	
Religious Studies	8	89		11		62.2	
Sociology	12	100		58		93.3	
Theatre Studies	9	100		33		82.2	

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Leisure and Tourism	12	92		50			

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

50. The focus was on mathematics, biology and physics, but chemistry and public understanding in science were also sampled. In chemistry, the examination results were well above average in 2001 and this was maintained in 2002. In the lesson observed, the teaching was very good and the Year 13 students were able to make good progress at a standard well above the average within a module on acids. The public understanding in science AS level course is new to the school and was only introduced this year in Year 12. In the lesson observed, the teaching was good with a very effective use of technology to present the students with a historical background to air pollution. The students were attentive and showed a good attitude to the subject, especially in the quality of their notes.

Mathematics

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

Strengths:

- Performance on advanced mathematics courses is significantly above that nationally.
- The very positive attitudes of the students and their high commitment to learning and doing well make a strong contribution to the good standards they achieve.
- Teaching is good, with questioning that encourages students to explain their results and probes their understanding being a particular strength.
- The support provided for individual students, such as those with English as an additional language or entering the A Level courses with lower than expected grades, is very good and meets their needs well.
- The most able students have good opportunities to achieve at the highest levels.
- Sixth form work is well led and managed with students' attainment and progress monitored closely.

Areas for development:

- The department does not yet evaluate sufficiently the quality of teaching in the classroom and how well students' achieve, given their GCSE results, in order to share the very best practice and to identify areas for further improvement.
- The range of teaching resources available is not good enough to support the best possible learning opportunities for students, both in and outside the classroom.
- The department has not explored the reasons for the low uptake of advanced mathematics courses by girls.

51. Performance in A Level examinations over the period 2000-2002 has been very good. It was well above the national average both in summer 2000 and summer 2001. The number of students gaining the highest A and B grades is particularly good. This represents good achievement. Preliminary national figures indicate that performance in summer 2002 in the new A2 examination is also significantly above that nationally. Results for the small number of students, who take the demanding further mathematics examinations, are high and represent excellent achievement. In summer 2001 and 2002, results in the new AS examination for Year 12 students were very good. They reflect the careful planning by the department for the introduction of the new advanced level courses. Fewer girls than boys take advanced mathematics courses, although the girls do achieve very well. In summer 2002, no Year 13 girls took the A2 examination. The department has not yet explored the reasons for this; for example, whether there is any direct connection between teaching and learning approaches in Years 7-11 and the current better performance of boys at GCSE, which is against the national trend.

52. Standards for students currently taking the A2 course in Year 13 are above average. Results in the AS examination in Year 12 show better than expected progress and these students continue to achieve well. They recall previous learning well. They show a good understanding of their work, although not all find it easy to explain the principles behind the problems that they tackle. Year 12 students have made a good start to their course, although their ability range is wide. Standards are at the level expected overall at this early stage of the course. Good recall of GCSE work on probability enabled a lesson on conditional probability and independent events to move at a good pace with the learning objectives for the lesson clearly achieved. Higher-attaining students in both Year 12 and Year 13 make particularly good progress. They take full advantage of the knowledgeable and competent teaching they receive and are able to work on their own at harder work needed for the further mathematics examination.
53. Students are clearly motivated. They listen well in lessons and work hard at the tasks set. Their files show conscientious homework and good attention to detail. Notes are good and work is well set out, such that it is useful for revision. This reflects the high expectations of their teachers as well as their own very positive attitudes. Students work well together in lessons and share solutions with each other outside lessons. This makes a good contribution to their learning. Students prepare well for lessons. A statistics lesson on the different methods of sampling was very effective because the students had completed research on the subject matter over the half-term break. The students had clearly given time and thought to this with some excellent notes being produced. As a result, the teacher was able to cover in depth the advantages and disadvantages of different sampling methods in the lesson time available because of the informed contributions the students made to discussion.
54. Teaching is good. Lessons seen ranged from the satisfactory to the very good. All teachers have very sound subject knowledge, good relationships with students and a commitment to the subject. They enjoy their subject and create a good climate for learning to which the students respond positively. Teachers plan their work well, for example, they prepare sets of notes for students in advance and use them alongside examples to illustrate new concepts and methods. Consequently, time in lessons is used for learning and not for copying notes. A significant strength is the good questioning of the teachers. In the very best lessons, this probes students' understanding by asking them to suggest methods of approach to a problem or to explain their answers. The teachers make it clear they expect the students to contribute by waiting for answers or by asking questions such as 'And so what does this tell us?' The students are not allowed just to sit and take notes or wait for the teacher to do examples for them. As a result, the students learn how to draw on knowledge from previous work, focus clearly on what they know already and decide what they need to find out to solve a problem. Such strategies support examination success. Where occasionally teaching is less successful, although still satisfactory, the teacher works through examples emphasising mostly the technique and with too few questions to check that all students understand the purpose of each step. As a result, the underlying mathematical principles are not always clearly understood.
55. Results on the GCSE retake course vary over the years and range from nearly half the group obtaining a grade C to only a quarter. A grade C, required for higher education courses, is the main aim of the students taking the course. This year's timetable ensures most students retaking GCSE can attend all lessons: a positive step to ensure all students achieve well. The course is well managed and taught and most students show a good commitment through regular homework and attendance. The students make good progress.

56. The numeracy skills of students in the sixth form are sufficient for work in other advanced level courses. In geography, they use graphs and handle data well. In science, students receive good systematic support from their teachers and cope well with the mathematical requirements of the course. The science department provides a mathematics course for those scientists not taking an advanced mathematics course, which is appropriate and helpful. The delivery of the key skills course has been revised for this school year. Students are expected to identify the numeracy skills achieved from their work in subjects across the sixth form curriculum to complete their key skills portfolio. They do not have specific numeracy lessons.
57. The support and guidance given to individual students are good. A few Year 12 students have only a GCSE grade C at the intermediate level. This is not usually good enough for an AS course. To give them the best possible start, the department provided additional lessons to cover algebraic techniques not studied in depth at GCSE. One student with English as an additional language had the opportunity to take a different combination of modules for AS because the reading and comprehension skills required for the statistics module were much more demanding than for other modules. The student achieved A grades.
58. Sixth form work is managed well by the head of department and the teacher in charge of the sixth form courses. A clear scheme of work is in place, although it does not yet provide enough guidance for teachers on the best approaches, strategies and resources to use. Teachers monitor students' progress regularly through homework tasks and tests and students know the grades they are expected to achieve. Specific targets to help them improve are still a developing aspect of the department's work and not clearly in place. The students use graphic calculators competently and most explore the menus with ease to find the process they need to use. However, a wider range of information and communication technology resources, such as videos and computers, including the use of the Internet, has not yet been fully explored to support students' learning both within and outside lessons. Monitoring of practice is developing well. However, the observation of teaching to identify and share the best practice is not yet part of this.
59. At the time of the last inspection, A Level standards were very good. Students continue to do well. Improvement has been satisfactory, with better management of courses and improved monitoring of students' attainment and progress.

BIOLOGY

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

Strengths:

- The attainment of the students is well above the national average at A Level.
- The teachers are experienced and well qualified.
- The courses are well planned.
- The students show a very good attitude to the subject.
- All students make very good progress.

Areas for development:

- The number of male students is low in the AS course.

60. A level examination results were well above the national average in 2001 and this standard was maintained in 2002. These results have been consistently well above the national figure for the past five years. The AS examination results were lower than the A level results, but were above the national average. Male and female students did equally well in both examinations. Students generally achieve, at the least, their potential grades based on the extensive data held by the department on the individual students. Most students show very good achievement regardless of their previous GCSE results.
61. The standard of work seen in Year 13 is well above average. Students discuss the process of nerve impulse or photosynthesis in detail and show a good understanding of basic ideas. They ask questions confidently when they are unsure of a topic and join in with class discussions in a co-operative manner. The students have made very good progress from the AS course. In Year 12, the students, who have recently started the course, demonstrate a wide range of standards, but were close to the average expected. The wide range in attainment is due to the fact that the department is willing to take students, who obtained lower grades at GCSE. In the lesson observed, all students made good progress while studying cell structure.
62. Teaching overall is very good and students learn very well as a result. The major strengths of the teaching were well-planned lessons with good pace being delivered by experienced and well-qualified staff. Each lesson observed was based on several separate activities that enabled the students to work both independently or as a group. The teachers have very good subject knowledge and were able to use this effectively when explaining such concepts as detailed leaf structure and the mechanisms of nerve impulses. The use of computer demonstrations was used very effectively as it enhanced the lesson with a clear demonstration of leaf structure.
63. The attitudes of the students are very good. In all lessons, there was a very pleasant working relationship between teachers and students. Students worked together in a co-operative manner and performed practical activities well. The students showed a sensible, mature approach to the subject and were very well supported by the teachers. The students produce very good notes and assessments that reflect a very good overall approach to the subject and their learning.
64. Students are fully aware of their potential and know what progress is being made based on the extensive assessment process carried out by the department. The teachers are prepared to discuss the individual needs and identify future targets. In discussions, the students appreciated the support and guidance given by the teachers and the fact that the teachers were prepared to help and assist outside lessons. This guidance and support is effective as it is often performed on a one-to-one basis. The assessments and homework for students are marked in detail with many constructive narrative comments being made. The combination of the very good teaching, very

good attitudes and the individual support enable all students to make very good progress.

65. The management of the department is very good. The teachers work as a team and have produced a well-structured course with detailed lesson plans. They have a good knowledge of examination board requirements and these are integrated into the lessons. There are many opportunities for extended writing, oral work and work with number. The department uses computers within the lessons well and has plans to introduce even more information technology to support learning in the near future. There is, however, a need for the department to examine the reasons why the number of male students is relatively low for the AS course.

Physics

The quality of provision in physics is **very good**.

Strengths:

- A Level results are well above the national average.
- Current and recent standards are a very strong improvement on earlier results.
- The progress made by students during the two years of advanced study is very good.
- The learning of Year 13 students is very good.
- Students are given very good advice about how to improve.

Areas for improvement:

- The quality of teaching varies too widely.

66. A Level results in 2001 were well above the national average. This is very good improvement on the results of the two previous years. The unconfirmed results for 2002 suggest that these high standards were maintained. Standards in AS examination in 2001 were weak, whilst the unconfirmed results for 2002 are very good. Large numbers of students take physics at AS and A Level and numbers have increased dramatically in recent years. Retention rates are very good. A high proportion continue to full A Level from the AS course. All who start A2 complete the course. Students make very good progress from the standards they reached in the GCSE examination.
67. Current standards and achievements are very good. A key strength is the effective commitment to high standards for Year 12, created by the teachers and fully shared by the students. Year 12, in their first weeks on the AS course, show very wide variation in the extent of understanding and in rates of progress. Some students are struggling, and others are already working at the highest levels. The low-attaining students respond well to the clarity and structure of the lessons and the feedback about how to improve. High-attaining students thrive because they are very expertly shown how to use the most complex ideas, with precision and detail. Year 13 students all work at high standards in terms of their very good prior results in last year's AS, and most already attain the highest grades. For example, in experiments about resonance they understood the concept in detail, had mastered the practical methodology, and had a full grasp of the relevant mathematics. Students, both Year 12 and Year 13, are very determined to give of their best. They know they can rely on the constant flow of guidance about how to improve, given by their teachers and by the head of sixth.
68. Teaching is good overall with the consequence that students make a real effort to succeed and apply themselves very well to their work. The clarity and precision with which teachers explain what students need to learn, leads to high levels of concentration and substantial gains in knowledge and understanding. Sometimes the pace of learning is too slow, and students are not given the opportunity to extend their ideas. Overall the

learning of Year 13 students is very good. They organise their notes very well. They complete even top-level questions correctly and in great detail. Project work shows that they are good at exploring ideas. In lessons they take care over each element of the work, and debate and discuss points with the teacher very confidently.

69. Year 12 AS cohort is split into two sets, taught the same syllabus, but differently. As a result teachers have been able to enhance achievement across the full range of a very large cohort of students. Some students are allowed to study A Level physics without joining A Level mathematics. Special classes are arranged, weekly, which have ensured that these students make good progress. This strategy widens access to A Level physics. Assessment procedures are at the heart of the very good advice and pressure on students to improve. Students benefit greatly from the investment the school has made in textbooks. The subject is well led. Staff have implemented the new AS and A2 course very well, with extensive training plus very good overall organisation and teamwork.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

70. The focus of the inspection was on design and technology. There were no other courses offered in this area.

Design and technology

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

Strengths:

- The quality of teaching ensures that students are motivated and learn well.
- Leadership and management **ensure** a clear direction to the subject.
- Students achieve very well.
- Assessment tracks each student and provides him or her with targets for improvement.

Areas for improvement:

- The condition of the food technology rooms are poor and in desperate need of refurbishment.
- The workshop accommodation is inadequate to cope with the larger numbers taking product design.
- Resources are inadequate to meet the needs of the teachers and students.

71. The provision in design and technology caters for 22 students taking product design AS and A2 examinations and one student, who takes AS food technology.
72. Standards overall are good and have improved since the time of the last inspection. All students, who took the post-16 examinations in 2001 and 2002, gained a pass grade, which is good. In product design in 2002, 40 per cent of students gained the highest grades, A and B, in the A2 examination and in the AS examination, 75 per cent of students gained those grades, which is very high. One student gained a B grade in the food technology A2 examination. The retention rate is good. Those, who left the course, had legitimate reasons, such as illness and leaving the school. The achievement of students is very good. For example, one student, who had not taken any of the design and technology subjects in Years 10 and 11, gained an A grade at AS level.
73. The evidence from inspection is that standards are satisfactory in Year 12 and good in Year 13. All students have a very good understanding of the design process, with a very clear analysis of products, which included aesthetics and affordability. The higher-attaining students produced some exceptionally detailed task analysis of every possible aspect of the product and interrelated elements, for example adhesives. Manufacturing

processes are explained, including both small- and large-scale production methods, also risk assessment associated with food products. Students research thoroughly and use questionnaires effectively. They understand the principles underlying this technique. For example, one student targeted a complete junior school class, who represented the consumer, and numbers were high enough to be statistically sound. The making of products is also to a high standard, with care taken over the finish, on furniture for example. Evaluations are good. The presentation of projects is particularly effective when information technology is used, along with a judicious use of photographs for illustration. The Year 12 students are at an early stage of the course, but their learning has led to satisfactory standards in product evaluation.

74. Teaching is consistently very good, based on very good subject knowledge and an enthusiasm for the sharing of ideas. The high standards achieved result from teachers encouraging students to follow their interests, whether it is in furniture or engineering, for example. Teachers question effectively, often probing until the students answer correctly. This was seen when students were asked about the type of break in plastic, which led to an understanding of the type of plastic involved. Time is well used and time given for tasks is adhered to, which motivates students to learn. Explanations are very clear, ensuring understanding, for example, of the concept of 'absence of risk'. Teachers constantly check students' understanding and this led to a lengthy explanation of what is 'reasonable' when health and safety issues were discussed. The individual input to students is an important element in their progress and this was seen when a student said that she understood the questions at the end of one such session. There is a high emphasis on independent learning through research and group work.
75. Students learn well. They are attentive and work effectively in response to the very good teaching. In one lesson, even the few, who had not completed the required preparatory work, enthusiastically discussed their product by the end of the lesson. Students want to achieve, and they listen carefully and respond, showing that they think of different applications. For example, one student gave details of the supermarket training on health and safety issues that he had received.
76. The department is separated into two sections. The leadership and management of both areas are very good, but the separation results in the very good practices not being shared. Collaboration at post-16 level could further improve standards. The courses are managed well and communication between teachers responsible for the same group is effective. The on-going assessment of students is excellent. Students know the standards that they have achieved at every stage of the course and how to improve. Detailed teachers' notes are discussed and this makes a positive contribution to the high level of achievement.
77. The accommodation in the food technology rooms is in a state of decay, with cupboard doors that have fallen off and mould under the sinks. They have not been refurbished since 1968. This results in rooms that are not fit for food preparation. The workshop accommodation is inadequate for the large numbers taking product design in Year 12. This will affect the ability of students to develop their ideas in a practical way.
78. Resources are also inadequate to allow teachers to use methods that are expected in this technological age. Teachers have brought in their own equipment, such as a television and video recorder, in order to use modern teaching methods. Also, there is insufficient refrigerator space for the safe storage of food. Much of the equipment in food technology is in a poor state and needs to be replaced.

BUSINESS

79. The inspection did not focus on any course in this area, but sampled economics where excellent teaching helps students to build very quickly on their earlier knowledge and to relate economic theory to their lives and interests.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

80. The inspection did not focus on any course in this area. However, the advanced certificate in education in information and communication technology was sampled. Students are taught well on this course and build quickly on their skills. In the one lesson seen, students were guided effectively in devising a spreadsheet. The attainment of these students was wide-ranging, but, overall, close to average.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

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

Strengths:

- Attainment of students is above average and students achieve well in relation to their earlier learning.
- Good teaching supports the development of independent learning.
- Students' very positive attitudes and very good relationships with their teachers contribute to their achievement.
- Very good assessment arrangements inform students how well they are doing and how to improve their work.

Areas for improvement:

- There are not enough visits to local care settings and insufficient use is made of the expertise of current care practitioners.
- Accommodation and resources are poor in that there is no dedicated subject base with on-hand resources and sufficient computers for whole-class involvement.

81. Health and social care is offered as a three-unit Advance Vocational Certificate in Education in Year 12 that builds to a six-unit Advance Vocational Certificate in Education in Year 13. There are 14 students in Year 12 and six in Year 13. There is no provision for vocational courses in this subject in Years 10 and 11 with the consequence that the groundwork for vocational methodology has to be undertaken in Year 12. Overall, standards in previous years have been above average, but the small numbers involved and different course specifications do not allow accurate comparisons with national figures. In 2002, six students attained higher grades than expected based on their GCSE results, four students achieved in line with predictions and the achievement of one student was below expectations. The majority of students on the courses are girls and they pursue careers linked to care, with nursing, teaching, physiotherapy, and social work being popular destinations of previous students.
82. The attainment of the present students is above the national average. Students in Year 13 understand the fundamental concepts of health and social care and manage their learning independently. Their assignments are thorough and well presented with good use of information and communication technology and subject-specific vocabulary. Students take accurate notes in class and use them as a basis for their assignments. When working independently to identify different types of play, lower-attaining students are reliant on their teacher and friends to direct their research. Although students work regularly in health and social care settings, they do not draw sufficiently on these experiences during class discussion and question and answer sessions. Students in

Year 12 report they found the independent style of working very testing at first, but are now more comfortable with the process. They understand the importance of communication skills in health and social care settings and are beginning to write reports that meet unit requirements. Because they draft their work and share ideas with their teachers before completion, their finished assignments are often of a high standard. Teaching and learning is insufficiently based on primary evidence. Group visits to health and care settings and visits from practitioners are not arranged frequently or early enough in the course. Thus, teaching can not securely draw on students' outside experiences. However, teachers are happy to share evidence from their own lives to illustrate a variety of topics and this leads to the very good relationships observed in the department.

83. Teaching is good overall, mainly because students are encouraged to carry out independent research and develop their reasoning and enquiry skills within a supportive structure. The student handbook and unit task sheets provide clear guidelines to help students understand the requirements of each assignment. Students have very positive attitudes that contribute to their learning. Assessment is thorough, regular and informative. Teachers review and evaluate students' draft work, giving time schedules and detailed areas for improvement in writing and in discussion. Students really appreciate the help and guidance provided by this very good system.
84. Leadership and management are good. The two members of the department meet regularly to ensure continuity in their teaching. The good achievement of students is directly attributable to the teachers' knowledge of them and recognition of their individual strengths. The increase in numbers in Year 12 have made it necessary to apply more formal monitoring structures to ensure all students make maximum progress. These systems for monitoring are not yet fully developed. The participation of both staff and students in a local care conference is an excellent initiative that involves five local schools. It provides opportunities for students to meet professionals, gives related careers advice and promotes an awareness of local care-providers. There is no subject base nor are resources readily accessible. Lessons are taught in a variety of rooms throughout the school. This limits teaching strategies, does not allow students' work to be appropriately displayed and valued and students have to leave the teaching base to seek out information and communication technology resources. Teachers then have to follow the students around the school to give them individual help and guidance. This poor accommodation without appropriate resources has a negative impact on learning. The courses provide good opportunities for students' personal, social, moral and cultural development through the many ethical and social aspects of the syllabus. The department has moved forwards well since the previous inspection and met the new challenges of the evolving health and social care curriculum successfully.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

85. The focus of the inspection was physical education, but the advanced vocational certificate in education in travel and tourism was sampled. Students on this course make good advances in learning as a result of very good teaching and reach good standards in their work.

Physical education

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

Strengths:

- Students' attainment is above the national average and their achievement is good.
- Teaching is very good and teachers use interesting and varied ways to help students to progress.
- Leadership and management of the department are very good.
- Students' are very positive about the courses and they have very good relationships with their teachers.

Areas for improvement:

- There is inadequate provision for a dedicated subject base with information and communication technology resources.
- Target setting is not always realistic enough to help students achieve well.

86. 2001 A Level results were above average and well above average at AS level. 2002 results showed further improvement with over half the AS level students attaining A and B grades. A Level results in 2002 were the best in the county. Students achieved well in relation to their previous learning and attained better in physical education than they did in their other subjects. Results over time show a rising trend in both students' attainment and achievement.

87. The standards attained by the majority of students presently in Years 12 and 13 are above average overall and over half of Year 13 students are working at the highest attainment levels. Year 13 students attain high standards and have a very good knowledge of their own specialist sports, for example basketball, hockey and athletics. Students' personal performance portfolios are very well presented with excellent use of information and communication technology and evidence that meets the examination criteria very accurately. Year 12 students understand where short- and long-term memory is needed in a variety of sports. Their learning in this unit is very good because the teacher gives many opportunities for students to discuss with one another and relate skill acquisition theories to their practical experiences. However, at this early stage of their course, students lack confidence in their presentation skills, although students in both years are able to research material from a variety of sources. Year 12 students used the Internet effectively to find information on sporting associations.

88. Teaching is very good overall. Teachers plan a wide range of activities that interest and challenge students of all abilities. Very good informative handouts and a booklet provide students with accurate revision material. Teaching is well linked to practical activities, helping students to understand outcomes through their own experiences. For example, three students took part in a practical experiment that illustrated the effects of recovery time on performance. 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 take an active part in the subject. This helps their learning and provides them with opportunities to apply theoretical aspects to the practical situation. Several students are part of a sports development group that provides help for younger students in the school and those in local primary schools. This is a very good initiative that extends students' skills and widens their learning opportunities.

89. The department is very well managed and much has been achieved since the previous inspection. Comprehensive documentation indicates a clear vision for examination courses. Record keeping is very good, but the analysis of examination results and target setting is less effective. Teaching is constrained by lack of a permanent subject base with information and communication technology facilities. The few girls in each year group feel well integrated and are appreciative that their sporting achievements are well recognised. Boys and girls report how much they value the courses because they provide an accreditation linked to their proposed careers in sports science, for example.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

90. The focus of the inspection was on art, music and theatre studies. Media studies was sampled. The media studies course is taught satisfactorily and students, for example, show a sound grasp of the ideas and values that inform the world of advertising.

Art

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

Strengths:

- The quality of teaching ensures that students are motivated and learn well.
- Students achieve very well.
- Leadership and management ensure a clear direction for the subject.
- Assessment ensures that pupils know their standards and how to improve.
- Visits extend students' knowledge and understanding of art.

Areas for improvement:

- Ceilings leak in heavy rain, which could seriously affect pupils' work.

91. The provision in art caters for 18 students, who follow the AS and A2 courses.
92. Standards overall are satisfactory, although numbers taking the examinations are too small to be significant. All students gained a pass in the AS and A2 examinations in 2001 and 2002, which is good. The proportions of students, who gained the higher grades A and B, fell slightly in 2002, but all the students, who gained those grades in the A2 examination, had A grades, which is good. Students achieve very well, including those, who have not taken art at GCSE. The retention rate is good.
93. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of work show that standards are good in both Years 12 and 13. Students show a clear development of ideas. For example, a study of woodland showed supple silver birch trees against a background of straight oaks and this was finally developed to show close detail of the silver birch bark. Students' knowledge of artists is extensive and this includes those from earlier centuries as well as modern artists. Students' development of portraits is very strong, with the starting point the observation of people at Gatwick. These portraits reflect students' individuality and range from the quiet and muted in blues and mauves to the bold and angry in reds and oranges. Students' sketchbooks are very well used and form a very good resource of visual information. These are based on very good drawing skills, which show a good understanding of tone and form. Students have a strong ownership of the sketchbooks. For example, one was headed 'Trust me, I'm an artist'. Students use different media and space effectively and this was seen in a very large representation of a cabbage, where colour and texture were effectively used.

94. Teaching is consistently very good because of the very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm of the teachers, which inspires pupils and motivates them to work hard and to learn. Teaching has improved since the time of the last report. Questioning is very good as it makes pupils think and, therefore, learn. For example, they were asked if a city picture was natural. This led to a discussion on natural, studio and manmade landscapes. Resources are stimulating and effectively used. This was seen when transparencies were used to show changes in styles over time and a magnificent fungus was used to stimulate attention to form. Frequent reference is made to Tate Modern visits, which have made a tremendous impact on students, as they give vivid descriptions of the paintings. Relationships are very good, which encourages students to give their opinions. In one inspiring lesson, students drew by candlelight and in another, the lesson started with a poem. This established the learning atmosphere in which students become totally involved. Above all, it is the emphasis on individuality and creativity that leads to good standards.
95. Students learn well due to the very good teaching and this was seen as they listened and worked with total absorption. For example, when completing portraits, they were startled when the teacher talked to them about their artwork. They are very ready to give their opinions. This was seen when a student described a Jackson Pollock landscape as disturbing, with no order and this contrasted to the teacher's introductions of modern interpretations of landscape. Students work hard and use the study area frequently in their free time. They are involved in the topics. For example, students said that they intended to bring in their cameras to record objects that interested them. Students' interest extends beyond the art area into the school, to the improvement of the environment with exciting murals.
96. The leadership and management are very good and collaboration between the teachers involved with the same students is effective and contributes to the good standards achieved. Assessment is excellent. Students know their current levels of attainment and how to improve and comments by students and teachers are comprehensively discussed. The accommodation has a sixth form study area, which is essential in order to allow them to continue their studies. However, heavy rain penetrates the ceilings, which could seriously affect pupils' work. On entrance to the art department, the wealth of art, both of students' work, reproductions and objects, makes a tremendous visual impact and provides a stimulating environment. Also, art around the school reflects the importance that the school puts on students' work, which is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection.

Music

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

Strengths:

- Students tend to do better in music than their other subjects.
- Students enjoy music and are well motivated to succeed.
- Good teaching encourages students to learn independently and express views in discussion.
- Students use information and communication technology well to enhance their work.

Areas for improvement:

- There are some weaknesses in the accuracy of students' written work and aural perception.

97. One candidate was entered for A level music in 2001. Therefore, it is not possible to comment reliably on the result in relation to national standards. This student did slightly better in music than in other subjects and this is also mirrored in the results of the 13 students taking the examination between 1998 and 2001. In 2002, the results of both AS and A2 level students were below both the national average and the school's predictions based on some very good GCSE results. The 2002 results are, however, contentious, given that the examination board and the marking in music came under scrutiny in the recent national enquiry about A level results. The number of students taking the courses has significantly improved in recent years. Currently, there are seven in Year 12 and six in Year 13, a very good number for a school this size. There are more boys than girls studying music, but, historically, the balance is good, with no bias in results to one gender. No students, who take the courses, opt out and, despite the 2002 AS results, all of last year's Year 12 students are continuing with music in Year 13. About 80 per cent of students pursue music when they leave school, either in higher education or vocationally, a fact confirmed by the stated ambitions of the current sixth form music students.
98. Overall, the standards of work observed in the inspection are above average and represent satisfactory achievement, given the students' very high GCSE results. In Year 13, students work imaginatively and sensitively in composition tasks, developing music for a film excerpt or setting words to music. They use computer technology and multi-track recording very effectively. However, when notating music through the computer, their grasp of the principles of music notation is not as strong as their ability to create musical structures relying on aural judgements alone. Most students are very competent performers, a strength also identified by the examination board. In written work, they exhibit a good awareness of timbre and texture in music, but are not so consistent in other areas of aural perception. Note-taking about historical trends in music is conscientious, although not always well organised.
99. In Year 12, most students are talented performers and many play two or more instruments to a high standard. For example, a pianist, euphonium player and clarinettist double on bass guitar, vocals and rhythm guitar in a band, which recently won a prestigious local rock music competition. They perform as soloists and in ensemble with very good co-ordination, integrating complex rhythmic motives and figurations. They read music well and are able to identify musical features using correct technical language. They engage well in discussion in all aspects of the course. In free composition, they use computer recording and editing techniques very well by experimenting with complex chord structures and applying more sophisticated techniques to bass- and inner-part writing.
100. Teaching is good and students learn well as a result. Teaching is well adapted to the various components of the course. In composition, the teacher supports and

intervenes appropriately as the work of each individual student progresses. Much of the performance component is pursued with individual instrumental teachers. There is little co-ordination between these teachers, affecting the consistency of quality in the analysis of performance. The teaching of aural perception uses attractive and challenging materials, but lack of rigour in presenting these materials provides the students with insufficient guidance. Teaching of theory and harmony uses a balanced variety of methods, incorporating analysis, playing and discussion and does much to help students make connections between the various elements of the course. Analytical and historical perspectives were not observed being taught, but the students' written evidence indicates that teachers do not monitor it adequately. Misspellings of names go uncorrected; information written in continuous prose contains some factual errors; completed essays give insufficient analytical evidence in support of historical information. Individualised verbal feedback is strong and constructive.

101. Students are well supported in the course. They appreciate the new accommodation with its studio and 'state-of-the-art' technology as much as the dedication of their teachers. They are almost unanimous in describing music as the best course they are taking. They show initiative by leading musical activities within the houses and in a range of extra-curricular activities, which lead to performances in the school and the community at large. Most successful of these is the swing band. Students seeking further challenge attend regional orchestras and groups organised by the local education authority. Students obtain good guidance for higher education and vocational training, including a programme of visits from former students and from contacts of one part-time teacher, who spends half of his week in the music industry.
102. The subject is well led and managed. Sensibly, the school has demanded a re-marking of the contentious examination scripts to be better informed for future planning. The head of department attended training in the first year of the new specifications, but was not accepted on the board's course in the second year. The new facilities for music are excellent from the room space and technology perspective, but sound-proofing is inadequate and affects students' ability to concentrate in aural perception lessons. The library houses excellent and substantial reference work, but lacks texts more appropriate to the transition from GCSE to A level. All departmental computers have Internet access and can enable sound-files to be heard. By maintaining similar standards through a period of staffing and building turbulence, the subject at sixth form level has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

Theatre Studies

Overall, the quality of provision in theatre studies is **good**

Strengths:

- Students reach good standards and achieve well in relation to their attainment on joining the course.
- Teaching is good and often very good. Teachers are particularly adept at using students' own ideas to build their performances.
- The students have very positive attitudes to their work. They are persistent in refining and improving their practical work and show considerable sophistication in the evaluation of performances.

Areas for improvement:

- Students do not read enough or experience a wide enough range of theatre to help them reach the highest grades.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory and creates real difficulties for performing to an audience.

103. The GCE A Level results this year showed a continuing improving trend and were above average. All students taking the course gained a pass grade and the proportion gaining the highest grades, A and B, was average. Male and female students did equally well. All students completed the course and did considerably better than expected in relation to their overall GCSE results.
104. The standard of work of current students, still in the early stages of their courses, is above average. In Year 13, students achieve well in relation to predictions based on results at GCSE. In lessons, they build well on their skills as a result of teaching that provides a progressively challenging range of activities. Their powers of critical evaluation of performance are well developed. In one lesson, for example, through very well-organised group work, the students experimented with dramatic form to good effect and were successful in realising some complex ideas through improvisation and scripted performance. Written work, though much of it is good, is occasionally weakened as a result of the students' limited reading.
105. Students in Year 12 have made a good start to their course and are achieving as expected. Their work is mainly average, but represents good achievement in relation to the standards they brought to the course. They show a good grasp of the structure and significance of *Dancing at Lughnasa* by Brian Friel. The teacher's very good knowledge of the play supports some intelligent analysis of the more elusive themes and conflicts in Friel's play. In their own devised work, they show a strong sense of mood and atmosphere. An awareness of audience pervades all their work.
106. Teaching is good overall with some very good teaching that is rooted in a thorough understanding of theatre. A strength of much teaching is the teachers' skill in engaging the interests and enthusiasm of the students, encouraging them to work critically with their own ideas. The emphasis on independent learning is also a strength and is supported through well-judged intervention by the teacher. The students are left in no doubt about how well they are doing and about how they might further develop their ideas and performances.
107. Students learn well. They use their time productively in refining and developing their work, with the consequence that they build quickly on their skills through thoughtful practice and evaluation. They work hard on their acting skills and produce some convincing performances. They move easily into the role of director and are good at observing performance and commenting constructively on it.

108. The quality of teaching and learning owes much to good leadership and management and the effective deployment of the complementary skills of the staff involved. However, there are missed opportunities for teachers to learn from one another. There is a limited range of helpful learning resources, mainly as a result of unsatisfactory accommodation. Possibilities for practical work are very limited, but, to the credit of the teachers, they make very good use of the space available. The staging facilities in the main hall are particularly poor. Any attempt to adjust the lighting constitutes a risk to the safety of those involved. Theatre studies was not reported on in the previous inspection, but, over recent years, standards have improved steadily.

HUMANITIES

109. The inspection focused on history and psychology. Geography, law and sociology were sampled. In geography, standards are above average as a result of very good teaching that is rooted in a very secure knowledge of the subject. Students are taught very well in law and achieve good standards in examinations in relation to their attainment on joining the course. Standards in sociology are above average as a result of very good teaching.

History

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

Strengths:

- Standards are rising at AS and A2 level.
- Teachers use subject knowledge very well to promote good learning.
- Students have very positive attitudes and make good progress.
- The department is managed well and has an experienced teaching team.
- The progress of students is monitored very thoroughly.
- History is an increasingly popular subject in the sixth form.

Areas for improvement:

- Sharper questioning techniques are needed to allow more in-depth discussions in class.
- The library has insufficient resources to help students develop their independent learning.
- Information and communication technology and the Internet are underdeveloped as a resource for promoting research skills.

110. There are 26 students currently studying for AS level and 27 students on the A2 course.

111. In recent years, results at AS and A2 level have been in line with national averages for the proportion of students achieving a pass and for the proportion achieving the highest grades. There is, however, a rising trend and provisional results from the most recent examinations show that half the students entered for AS level, and nearly two-thirds entered for A2 level, achieved the highest grades. The standards reached by students as seen in the current inspection are in line with the national average in both years. On the Year 12 course, students analyse sources critically and are at ease with the use of a wide range of evidence; for example, in some copious note-taking seen from Year 12 students on the reconstruction of the southern states in the USA after the civil war. Most students have a clear understanding of how political, economic and social factors affect historical events and their skills of interpretation and evaluation are being developed well. Some lower-attaining students are struggling with the range and

complexity of advanced level work, but derive benefit from individual mentoring sessions at regular intervals. In Year 13, students display a good command of higher-order skills through their note-taking and extended writing. In this context, some very good extended essays were seen on the reforms of Alexander II in Russia. Students use these skills well to make sustainable arguments and higher-attaining students in particular use specific detail to support their conclusions. In both years, students are articulate and can discuss issues in depth. They show commitment to learning and, as a result, they make good progress.

112. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are very confident in their subject expertise and use this very well to promote learning. Lessons are planned meticulously and expectations are high, with the result that students make rapid progress both in terms of their understanding of the various topics and in terms of developing subject skills. Lessons are also enlivened by the use of varied tasks that are stimulating and engage students' interest. This was demonstrated very well in a Year 12 lesson, during which students probed in detail the intricate nature of royal finances at the time of Elizabeth I through paired work, group work and an impressive feedback session. In order to improve on this positive picture, questioning techniques need to be refined in order to probe students' oral contributions in more depth and to allow more cross-fertilisation of ideas in lessons. Students contribute well to their own achievement and have very positive attitudes to study. Teachers encourage them to evaluate their own work and, as a result, students develop a sense of shared purpose in lessons and enjoy their learning. This was seen to good effect in a Year 12 lesson on the impact of emancipation in the southern states of America after the civil war. In this lesson, students investigated the work of the Freedmen's Bureau in groups and reported their findings to the whole class with skill and maturity.
113. The subject is led and managed well with very strong support from an experienced teaching team. The progress of all students is monitored rigorously through half-termly reviews and targeted areas for improvement are agreed between students and staff. There is a good range of materials to support students in their learning, but more resources are needed in the library to help them develop their independent learning and research skills. Information and communication technology and the Internet are not used widely enough and students would benefit from more advice on how to use the wealth of information now available to them through this medium. There are good opportunities for students to attend historical conferences and to listen to visiting speakers. The department also benefits from the involvement of a conscientious and enthusiastic Year 13 student, who is subject leader for her peers. She is closely involved in administrative support within the subject area.
114. Overall, this is an increasingly popular and successful area of sixth form provision with an experienced and dedicated team of teachers. The key issue now for the department is to ensure that good progress is maintained so that all students achieve their full potential.

Psychology

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

Strengths:

- Standards are high at both AS and A2 level.
- Students in both year groups develop advanced subject skills rapidly.
- The quality of teaching is very good throughout and promotes very good learning.
- Relationships within the classroom are excellent.
- The subject is led and managed very well.
- Psychology is a very popular and successful area of sixth form provision.

Areas for improvement:

- Information and communication technology and the Internet are not yet fully developed as resources for learning.
- Students have limited library resources to develop their independent learning skills.

115. 30 students are currently studying the subject on the AS course and 24 students are on the A2 course.

116. Students were first entered at A2 level for this subject in 2002. Provisional results show that standards are high. All students passed the examination and more than half achieved the highest grades. Two cohorts have been entered at AS level and, in each year, half the students achieved the highest grades. The standards reached by students, as seen in the current inspection, are also above average in both years. In Year 12, students develop a good knowledge and understanding of the key approaches and major theories in psychology, such as those dealing with cognitive development. Evidence from their written work so far also indicates that they are becoming adept in analysing these theories to produce structured arguments; for example, in some detailed work seen on theories of sociability in infants. Higher-attaining students in particular are able to represent and describe data and can make linkages with relevant research. Some students are struggling with the complexity of a new subject, particularly with technical vocabulary and statistical data, but they are being supported very well through detailed booklets and handouts that guide them very effectively through the more complex parts of the syllabus. In Year 13, there is ample evidence that independent research skills are being developed very well through coursework assignments in which students analyse and evaluate psychological perspectives to considerable depth. In this context, some very impressive coursework studies were seen from Year 13 students, which clearly indicated how well they had achieved in terms of research skills and independent learning.

117. The quality of teaching is very good. Detailed subject knowledge is used by teachers to promote very good learning. Frequent cross-referencing to relevant research ensures that students are supported well in their studies. Lessons are planned thoroughly so that students know precisely what to do. All students are fully involved in lessons through the skilled use of questioning and there is a clear sense of enjoyment and purpose in the classroom. This was demonstrated to the full in an excellent lesson during which Year 13 students discussed and reflected on possible elements of bias in their research. The debate was highly articulate and orchestrated with considerable expertise by the teacher. Students are mature in their oral responses and are eager to participate in classroom activities with questions and opinions. Relationships are excellent, with the result that students make very good progress. Classroom management techniques are very good and expectations for all students are very high. Independent learning is encouraged fully as teachers encourage students to sift out important information for themselves and apply their knowledge accordingly. This was seen to very good effect in a Year 12 lesson in which students examined and analysed various theories of conformity and obedience, using examples from their own

experience and relevant research with skilled prompting from the teacher to reinforce their learning.

118. The subject has been recently introduced into the sixth form and it is led and managed very well. The monitoring of students' progress is very thorough and efficient marking gives all students a clear idea on how to improve their work. Departmental planning is very effective and new developments within the subject are clearly shown in the comprehensive schemes of work. Information and communication technology and the Internet are being used increasingly to support students' learning, but further developments are still needed in this area. There is a good range of research materials within the department, but resources in the library are very limited in terms of the development of independent research skills. The department has clear plans to rectify this defect as numbers increase for this new curriculum area. The department makes a very important contribution to students' development in the key skills areas of communication and number. Students attend conferences regularly and their learning experiences would be further enriched by the use of visiting speakers.

119. Overall, this is a very popular and successful subject. It is taught very well and students thoroughly enjoy their studies. The key issue is to maintain the high standards achieved in such a short time and the department has the undoubted potential to do this.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

120. The focus of the inspection was on English literature and German. In the one lesson seen in French, the students were taught well and reached good standards in their written and oral work.

ENGLISH

121. The focus was on English Literature, although the work of the fewer students opting for English Language was also sampled. Relatively few students took the Advanced Level examination in English language between 1999 and 2001, but the 12 students, who took the examination in 2002, achieved results (yet to be confirmed) above the national average. Work sampled during the inspection shows that students make good gains in learning and achieve good results in English language.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

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

Strengths:

- Students achieve results above the national average.
- There is good teaching, characterised particularly by high expectations, resulting in good learning by students.
- There is very good leadership and management of a successful department, particularly in adapting teaching to relatively new syllabus requirements.
- Students are enthusiastic and have positive attitudes, which contribute to good learning.

Areas for improvement:

- A few students in Year 12 have relatively undeveloped independent learning skills and do not participate actively enough in lessons.

122. Standards in English Literature are good. The national examination results at Advanced Level for 2001 showed that, although the percentage of boys achieving A and B grades was just below the national average, the percentage of the much greater number of girls taking the examination was well above the national average. The good results continued the trend of the previous three years and this was also reflected in the unconfirmed results for 2002. The inspection showed that standards are above national expectations for students by the end of Year 13, studying at A2 Level; and in line with expectations for those students in Year 12 in the relatively early stages of the Advanced Supplementary course. The standards attained by the end of Year 13 represent good achievement for both boys and girls in relation to their prior attainment at the end of Year 11. The department has identified students, who are gifted and talented, and ensures that they make good gains in learning by giving them appropriately challenging tasks when analysing and evaluating the chosen texts.

123. By the end of Year 13, students can communicate their knowledge and understanding of a range of texts very effectively. A particular strength is their developing skill at presenting their arguments effectively in discussion, as seen, for example, when Year 13 students enjoyed an animated discussion of a poem by the contemporary poet, Carol Ann Duffy. The great majority of students make big gains in confidence when expressing their own opinions as well as considering the interpretations of other commentators. When studying the works of a range of authors, students display a good awareness of how novelists such as Dickens and Hardy and poets such as Keats and Coleridge shape their ideas through various structures and linguistic devices. The contextual understanding of a minority of students is less well developed: for example, they have a more limited understanding of the significance of the French Revolution for the poetry of the English Romantic movement.

124. The overall quality of teaching is good and students learn well as a result. The teaching is characterised above all by the high expectations, which teachers have of students' capabilities. Students enjoy the teachers' challenging approach and have very positive attitudes towards their learning, particularly enjoying the opportunity to debate their ideas about a text. Teachers also engage the students in active learning, for example, through research tasks and encouraging analytical debate. When particularly successful, as when Year 13 students analysed and evaluated Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, the students largely take over the discussion. Consequently, they gain both in confidence and understanding and the teachers are able to keep a low profile, intervening only to prompt further analysis or use their very good subject knowledge to reinforce students' understanding through focused questioning. As a result, a very productive work atmosphere is sustained, but also an informal one, which encourages students to participate and make good gains in learning. It was pleasing to observe that even those students initially less confident in debate began to play a more prominent part in the discussion of Gray's *Elegy*. Where the teaching is less effective,

discussion is too teacher-led and some students are reluctant to contribute, as observed when Year 12 students were analysing early nineteenth century Romantic poetry.

125. The quality of leadership and management is very good. The department has been very successful in adapting its approaches to the demands of relatively new syllabuses. The department benefits from having experienced and specialist teachers. They enhance students' interest and understanding through arranging theatre visits, for example, to *The Rivals*, and succeed through their enthusiasm and commitment in ensuring that limitations in accommodation and resources do not impair standards. Although the department makes limited use of information and communication technology, it does teach other communication skills effectively, as witnessed in the confidence of students in debate and their very good personal development.
126. At the time of the previous inspection, attainment in English was good and the good quality of teaching was a strong feature in the success of the department. These strengths have been maintained, whilst the department has successfully adapted to the requirements of new syllabuses and made English one of the strongest departments in the school. Therefore, there has been good progress since the previous inspection.

German

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

Strengths:

- Students perform well in examinations.
- Students have a good oral command of the subject.
- Teaching demonstrates an excellent knowledge of the subject, which motivates and challenges the students' linguistic and cultural awareness.

Areas for improvement:

- Strategies for consolidating the learning of vocabulary and grammar are not always applied rigorously enough.
- New media resources are not used enough for developing independent learning.

127. The number of candidates entered for the GCE A-level examination in 2001 and 2002 was too low to allow statistical comparisons to be made. All students passed and they performed as well as would be expected given their results at GCSE level. Two out of the three students in 2002 gained high grades. Those students, who took AS level in 2002, obtained results, which were a little lower than predicted, but, which also reflect the amount of teaching time allocated to the subject. Most students, who start the courses, pursue them to certification: the few, who change courses do so early enough in Year 12 so as not to be disadvantaged in their studies. About one in three A level candidates include a German component in study after they leave school.
128. The standards of work seen during the inspection are above average. In Year 13, students perform well in relation to predictions based on their GCSE results. In lessons, they show considerable interest in literary texts and respond well to questions about content, meaning and cultural background. They acquire good cultural, social, and moral perspectives in their work. They are strongest orally and work with ambition to speak in sentences that link clauses together, using conjunctions and correct word order. Pronunciation and intonation are good, although not all German consonants are

consistent. They are able to express themselves in extended written work, gaining in confidence in applying new vocabulary and grammar as they progress.

129. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into their course. They are well motivated and conscientious, although, at times, lacking in confidence. This was especially noticeable in their cultural general knowledge both of Germany and Europe and in their recall of some words frequently encountered at lower levels of study. However, the friendly and constructive relationship they enjoy with their teacher does much to address this. Orally, they interact well in German in discussion and, in the course of the double lesson observed, there was clear evidence of improvement in applying grammar, a factor, which currently constrains their ability to write expressively in German. They are well on course to meet or even exceed their predicted grades.
130. Teaching is good and students learn well as a result. The subject knowledge of the German mother-tongue staff is excellent and this sets very high expectations for the students. This is most evident in oral expression. Recent changes to the rules of written German are taught accurately and anecdotal evidence relating to cultural issues arising from reading does much to emphasise cultural issues. English is used only occasionally, either to avoid protracted explanations or to provide essential clarity when students are over-stretched by explanations in German. Correction of written work is also judicious, highlighting errors of grammar and vocabulary, but not drawing attention to every error, keeping confidence high. In the consolidation of learning, however, there is potential to apply greater rigour. Corrected texts are not formally re-worked by students to help them reflect on their mistakes. Students collect vocabulary in a rather haphazard way and their files show inconsistencies in recording genders, ending of nouns and declinations of verbs, which also reflects the way key vocabulary from texts is presented on the board in class; German synonyms could be more readily emphasised to reinforce vocabulary. Homework is set regularly and encourages the application of grammar and free writing. The examination boards recognise strengths in the students' coursework. Magazine work and reference to web sites of German television companies assists students in keeping abreast of current affairs, such as the recent German election.
131. Few students are dual linguists at GCSE, where German is taken less than French, and this is also the case in the sixth form. Consequently, most German students find understanding and using grammar the hardest aspect of the course. The small groups lead to a very personalised approach to the monitoring of students' development in the subject and individual coaching is sometimes offered to overcome difficulties. A talented student has gained notably in confidence, thanks to a summer course provided by the local education authority. Students show initiative by helping younger pupils at the German Club and attend trips to Germany organised by the school. There is, however, no formal exchange and opportunities to extend learning within the local community, for example, through Gatwick Airport, are not exploited. While the students see German as the most challenging of their GCE courses, they are unanimously positive about the course and the support they receive.
132. The department is well led and managed, although the lesson time allocated to the subject is less than to other GCE subjects. Textbooks are new and appropriate to the needs of the students. While only holding a small German stock, the library has books, which are appealing and of a suitable standard to encourage individual reading and learning parallel with and beyond the GCE courses. Access to information and communication technology and satellite television is restricted due to the shortcomings of the accommodation for languages as a whole. Teachers attend courses from the examination boards regularly. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in the subject.

