

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **DRAYTON MANOR HIGH SCHOOL**

Hanwell, London W7

LEA area: Ealing

Unique reference number: 101942

Headteacher: Mr P Singh

Reporting inspector: Mr J Plumb  
16930

Dates of inspection: 16 – 20 September 2002

Inspection number: 249961

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Foundation

Age range of students: 11 to 19 years

Gender of students: Mixed

School address: Drayton Bridge Road  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr S Plosker

Date of previous inspection: 14 October 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16930	Mr J Plumb	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? The school's results and students' achievements How well are students taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11414	Mrs A Bennett	Lay inspector		Students' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23393	Mr B Dower	Team inspector	English as an additional language English	
4351	Ms J Strickland	Team inspector	Post-16 English and drama	
15268	Mr J English	Team inspector	Mathematics	
12890	Mr T Jardine	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
18057	Mr M Baxter	Team inspector	Post-16 biology and chemistry	
11190	Dr W Burke	Team inspector	Art and design Citizenship	
8552	Mr W Hart	Team inspector	Design and technology	
20247	Mr R Parry	Team inspector	Geography Special educational needs	
13122	Ms S Matthews	Team inspector	History	
14633	Ms J Bannister	Team inspector	Post-16 history and politics	

Team Members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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16950	Dr C Orr	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Educational inclusion including race equality	
31660	Ms M Young	Team inspector	Music	
31821	Mr B McCann	Team inspector	Physical education	
1578	Ms M Sinclair	Team inspector	Religious education	
15277	Mr C Vidler	Team inspector	Post-16 economics and business studies	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a larger than average 11 – 18 foundation school. There are 1,551 students on roll, 866 boys and 685 girls. It has an above average size sixth form. When they start school as eleven-year-olds, the students' attainment is broadly average. Most of the wards served by the school are worse than the national average in terms of levels of disadvantage. There are 26.2 per cent of students eligible for free school meals, a figure above the national average. Twelve per cent of students are included on the school's register of special educational needs (SEN), a proportion in line with the national average. Twenty-two students have statements of special educational needs. Students from a nearby special school are educated in this school. The proportion of minority ethnic students is high and there are currently fifteen refugee students. The proportion of students with English as an additional language (EAL) (6.5 per cent) is high but few are at an early stage of learning English. Over 40 different languages are spoken by the student population. There are five students in public care. As part of the Excellence in Cities (EiC) initiative the school has a learning mentor programme for students at risk of exclusion and there is a very good policy for gifted and talented students.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Drayton Manor High School is an excellent school. It provides a very high quality of education. Standards are above the national average. Compared with similar schools, (as determined by the number of students eligible for free school meals), standards are very high. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. Management is excellent. The school provides very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Very good teaching and learning results in very good achievement and above average standards in English, mathematics and science by Year 11.
- The respect shown by students for the values and beliefs of each other is excellent.
- Behaviour management is excellent.
- The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is excellent.
- Management systems are excellent. The priorities on the school improvement plan are excellent. Systems for monitoring improvement are outstandingly good.
- Financial planning is excellent.
- This is an all inclusive school and this is the key to the success of this school.

#### **What could be improved**

- The provision for and the below expected standards in information and communication technology in Years 7 to 9 could be improved.
- The accommodation could be improved, particularly the hatted accommodation.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

There have been very significant improvements since the last inspection in October 1996. Systems in place for monitoring and evaluation are now excellent. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is now very good. The statutory requirement for the provision of religious education is now met. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used more effectively across subjects but, as recognised by the school, standards in ICT by Year 9 are not yet high enough. The provision for a daily act of collective worship, although difficult to manage, is better than at the time of the last inspection. GCSE results have improved very significantly. Teaching is better. The literacy

strategy has led to a marked improvement in writing across the school. The accommodation has much improved.

## STANDARDS

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

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

**Key**

very high A\*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

\* The 2001 average points score figures are calculated differently from previous years and straight comparisons between years 1999, 2000 and 2001 are not possible.

Attainment on entry is broadly average. In 2001, results in the national tests for students by the end of Year 9 were above average in English and science and well above in mathematics. Compared with similar schools (as determined by free school meals) standards were well above average in English and very high in mathematics and science. Results in 2002 are similar. The GCSE passes in 2001 at grades A\* to C were above the national average and well above average for similar schools. GCSE results in 2002 are much better. In the sixth form AS and A-level results range from broadly average to well above average in 2001.

Standards of work seen reflect these very good examination results. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above the national average for Year 9 and Year 11 students. In ICT standards fall below national expectations for students in Year 9. In all other subjects, including ICT for students in Year 11, standards are average to above average for both Year 9 and Year 11 students. In the sixth form standards are above course expectations in most A-level subjects. Standards in the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) business are outstanding. Standards of achievement are high for students with SEN. Students with EAL often attain standards well above average. Students identified as gifted and talented attain very high standards.

## STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	<b>Very good.</b> Students are keen to learn and they are very enthusiastic in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	<b>Very good.</b> The majority of students behave exceptionally well both in lessons and whilst moving around the school.
Personal development and relationships	<b>Very good.</b> Personal development is very good. Relationships are very good. Race relations are excellent.
Attendance	<b>Very good.</b> Attendance is very good. Exclusions support students in modifying unacceptable behaviour and are seen, by the school, to be supportive of students' needs.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Teaching is very good in English throughout the school. In mathematics and science teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Learning in lessons is at least good and often very good in almost all subjects. Only a small amount of teaching is unsatisfactory. This is characterised by pedestrian pace, lack of match of activities to student needs and unsatisfactory behaviour management which combine to impede learning. Most teaching has very good features: very good subject knowledge and behaviour management; an interesting range of teaching styles; and learning outcomes are shared with students. The teaching of students with SEN and also those with EAL is at least good. The teaching of disaffected students and those identified as gifted and talented is very good. Ninety-four per cent of teaching is at least satisfactory and almost 70 per cent is at least good. In 34 per cent of lessons teaching is at least very good and in almost 10 per cent it is excellent. The quality of teaching is significantly better than at the time of the last inspection.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	<b>Very good.</b> The broad, balanced and relevant curriculum enables all students, including those who are gifted and talented and those with special educational needs, to achieve high standards. There is room for improvement in music in Years 7 to 9. The school recognises the need to provide discrete ICT in Years 8 and 9 to raise standards in the subject by the end of Year 9.
Provision for students with special educational needs	<b>Very good.</b> The provision for students with special educational needs is very good. They have very helpful personal targets which are used very effectively to meet their needs and to monitor their progress.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	<b>Very good.</b> The provision for students with EAL is very good. Many achieve very high standards. There are clear and robust criteria to identify their needs.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>Good.</b> Provision for students' moral and social development is very good. Provision for students' cultural development is good. Provision for students' spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its students	<b>Very good.</b> Procedures for monitoring attendance are very good. Procedures for monitoring behaviour are excellent. Child protection procedures are very good. There is a robust system for dealing with racist incidents. Assessment procedures are good.

Partnership with the vast majority of parents is good. The school is committed to excellence and recognises that it can never be complacent in its goal to work towards even better partnership with all parents / carers.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	<b>Excellent.</b> Leadership is excellent. Management systems are excellent. The strategic plan for improvement has excellent priorities which focus on student achievements.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	<b>Very good.</b> The governing body has a very effective sub-committee structure which enables it to meet its statutory responsibilities very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	<b>Excellent.</b> Systems for monitoring and evaluating performance are excellent. The faculty review structure is excellent and leads to improvements in all subjects.
The strategic use of resources	<b>Excellent.</b> Financial planning is excellent. Teachers, learning support assistants and resources are targeted very effectively and efficiently and contribute to the very high standards. The application of best value principles is excellent.

There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. Although the accommodation has improved since the last inspection additional improvements are needed. Resources for learning are good.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fact that relationships are very positive between teachers and students.</li> <li>The school has a sense of being a community, where students are happy and feel valued.</li> <li>The behaviour of the students is very good.</li> <li>The building and grounds are well looked after.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some parents expressed a concern about their children travelling off site to the games field.</li> <li>A few parents expressed a concern about the number of modern foreign languages available to students.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings indicate that parents / carers are right about the quality of relationships between teachers and students. Behaviour is indeed very good and the building is well looked after. This is an all inclusive school where all students feel valued for who they are. The school is equally concerned about not having playing fields on site but there was no evidence of problems about movement between the school and the off-site playing fields during the inspection. A range of four modern foreign languages and also Latin are available to students and so parents need not be concerned about this issue.

## ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM

## DRAYTON MANOR HIGH SCHOOL

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form has 313 students, a figure well above the national average. Very nearly all of the sixth formers are from within the school, but sixth formers are admitted from other schools including a local special educational needs phase school. Numbers have risen since the last inspection. There is insufficient sixth form accommodation at present but this is being addressed through a building programme, in evidence during the inspection. Each student is interviewed and offered a place having taken all factors into consideration. A student with SEN has the same right of access to a place as a higher attaining student and this is a very significant strength of this all inclusive sixth form. Attainment on entry is varied but there are a significant number of higher attainers in Year 12. There is an excellent range of AS and A-level courses and the range of vocational courses is very good and increasing.

### HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

Overall, the provision in the sixth form is excellent. The needs of all students are met. Standards are above average in many subjects at A-level. Students make very good progress because they benefit from very demanding teaching. Just under ten per cent of teaching observed in the sixth form was judged to be inspirational. Most learners are very mature and independent. They make the best of their sixth form experience, cherishing the formality and appreciating the responsibility its unique ethos affords them. There is a small minority who tries to resist the determination of the new head of sixth form to tighten up on attendance and punctuality. This is seen in the context of the school achieving excellent attendance in the sixth form. The sixth form is very cost effective.

#### Strengths

- Standards of achievement in almost all subjects because of very good and excellent teaching
- The leadership of the sixth form is excellent
- Systems of support in the sixth form are very good
- Relationships within the sixth form are very good

#### What could be improved

- As recognised by the school the amount and quality of accommodation for sixth form provision could be improved

*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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	<b>Very good.</b> Standards are above average at AS and A-level. Teaching and learning are consistently very good.
Biology	<b>Good.</b> Standards are above average at A-level. Teaching is at least good. Where teaching is very good, a range of teaching styles are used to meet all needs of students.
Chemistry	<b>Very good.</b> Standards are above expectation at A-level. Teaching is very good and students develop good speaking and mathematical skills in lessons. Students are very positive about their learning.

Business	<b>Very good.</b> Standards in GNVQ are outstanding. The support offered to students is excellent.
Economics	<b>Good.</b> Standards are slightly below national expectations but the trend is improving. Higher order skills are not sufficiently developed. Great attention has been paid to planning to meet the challenges of new specifications.
Information and communication technology	<b>Very good.</b> Standards in Year 13 are above average. AS results in 2002 were modest but the students who took the course did not benefit from specialist teaching. The leadership and management of the subject are excellent.
Physical education	<b>Very good.</b> Examination results are consistently above the national average. Standards achieved are very good because of the very good teaching. There is not a permanent base designated for theory work and this weakness is recognised by the school.
Art and design	<b>Good.</b> The above average standards of work seen are better than the A-level results for 2001 indicate. Teaching is at least satisfactory and often good.
Drama and theatre studies	<b>Good.</b> Examination results are disappointing and do not reflect the quality of teaching seen during the inspection. The subject makes a significant contribution to students' speaking and listening skills, their confidence and personal and social development.
Geography	<b>Very good.</b> Standards are above average at A-level. The quality of teaching is very good. Some rooms used to teach the subject are too small and poorly ventilated.
Government and politics	<b>Good.</b> Standards at AS and A-level are in line with course expectations but achievement is very good. The quality of teaching is good.
History	<b>Very good.</b> Standards are above average at A-level. Students make very good progress because the quality of teaching is very good.
English	<b>Very good.</b> Standards are above average and most teaching is very good overall. However, there was a lack of active student participation in several lessons observed and the teaching styles and room arrangement in cramped traditional classrooms did not encourage it.
French	<b>Very good.</b> Standards are above average and the quality of teaching is good. An area for improvement is that students are not required to follow up corrections of written work.
Religious studies	<b>Very good.</b> The AS results in 2002 were very good. The quality of teaching is very good. Too little use is made of ICT to support the subject.

Work was sampled in several other subjects. In a psychology lesson seen standards seen were above average and the teacher had excellent subject knowledge and promoted very good relationships. In a sociology lesson observed achievement was satisfactory and the teacher had good subject knowledge. The quality of teaching in music is good.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	<b>Good.</b> Students are given very good advice and information about the suitability of the range of courses on offer in the sixth form when they are in Year 11. They are very well informed about the suitability of alternative provision locally. They settle down very well and quickly; very few students leave after one year, and retention on courses is very good. Support offered to learning within subjects is excellent, and teachers give freely of their time to help students make very good progress. However, 17 per cent of students who returned the sixth form student survey indicated that they did not consider that they are kept well informed about their work. Advice and guidance about careers are improving following some difficulties with the support from Connexions. The school has a robust plan to address the level of customer dissatisfaction on the student survey return about careers advice / support. The school has a very successful record of enabling students to move into higher and further education after their time in the sixth form.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	<b>Excellent.</b> The head of sixth form, appointed in September 2001, has an excellent strategic vision to improve further what is already an excellent sixth form. Monitoring of performance is excellent and there are very effective structures in place to enter into dialogue with sixth form students to improve the quality of provision for them. Standards in the sixth form are improving further.

## STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The quality of teaching in the sixth form and the support they receive from their teachers</li> <li>The wide choice of courses available to them and the way in which they are tailored to individual needs</li> <li>Students enjoy being part of the sixth form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There could be a better range of worthwhile extra-curricular activities</li> <li>The guidance on careers</li> <li>Some students consider that the school could be better at treating them as responsible young adults</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree fully with each of the positive findings from the sixth form survey that elicited a 69 per cent response. Discussions with sixth formers reinforce the positive views. The range of extra-curricular activities is good overall and the expectations of some students may be unrealistic. There has been a problem over careers advice which is currently being addressed by the school in a robust fashion. The feeling about being treated as mature young adults has to be seen against the head of sixth form tightening up on attendance and punctuality which has not gone down well with a small core of students who would prefer a more laissez-faire attitude. The issue is exacerbated by the fact that the sixth form private study accommodation is currently under construction. At the moment, if students have a free period immediately after morning registration, there are not enough places available for them to go for private study. The school recognises this accommodation problem and has urgent plans and building work going on to address this.

## COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and students' achievements**

1. Attainment on entry in Year 7 is broadly in line with the national average. This figure, however, disguises the needs of a quite complex profile of students which must be considered when judging the quite remarkable standards achieved within this school. This is an inner city London school and a significant proportion of students experience very considerable social and economic disadvantage, living in some very deprived wards. The proportion of students with English as an additional language is high, with over 40 different languages spoken within the school. Refugees arrive, often traumatised, as well as not being able to speak English. The proportion of students with SEN is broadly in line with the national average, a figure which disguises how successful the school is in removing students from the SEN register and so preventing labelling and facilitating full inclusion. Because of its excellent behavioural management strategies, the school very successfully manages disaffected students with very challenging behaviour exceptionally well. Given these circumstances, it is quite remarkable that standards by Year 9 and also by Year 11 are above the national average in English, mathematics and science as well as in many other subjects. Because of these outstanding standards inspectors judged that this is an excellent school.
2. Attainment in the 2001 National Curriculum assessment tests for students at the end of Year 9 in English and science was above the national average and in mathematics well above the national average. Compared with similar schools, as determined by the proportion of students eligible for free school meals, standards were well above average in English and very high in mathematics and science. Although national comparative data have not yet been published for 2002, evidence indicates that these very impressive standards have been maintained, judging by the test results, even though eleven Year 9 students were absent from school during the week of the tests.
3. By the end of Year 11 in 2001, the proportion of students who attained five GCSE passes at A\* to C (55 per cent) was above the national average (48 per cent) and well above the average for schools which have a similar number of students eligible for free school meals. Compared with schools which are similar on the basis of prior attainment (a similar average points score at the outset in Year 10) the proportion of students who attained five passes at A\* to C in 2001 was well above the national average. This represents very impressive achievement as it is a more reliable indicator, particularly as there is little turnover of students throughout Years 10 and 11. The GCSE results for 2002 show a very significant improvement on those in 2001. Due to the inspection taking place in September 2002, the national comparative data have not yet been published, and so national comparisons cannot be made. Nonetheless the proportion of students who attained five A\* to C passes rose from 55 per cent in 2001 to 65 per cent in 2002. The school exceeded its published target of 59 per cent and quite remarkably also its internal 'challenge' target of 62 per cent. This evidence suggests that this is an excellent school, particularly when all the factors outlined above are taken into consideration.
4. In English, mathematics and science standards of work seen in Year 9 and Year 11 are above average. Students are confident and articulate when expressing their ideas and opinions. Standards in reading are well above average. The majority of students write at length, fluently and accurately. In mathematics students tackle extended investigations

very well and present their results in a coherent way. In science standards are above average and gifted and talented students and also those with SEN achieve very high standards measured against their prior attainment because of the very good strategies within the department to support them in their studies. A significant number of students with SEN attain a GCSE pass in science and this is a significant achievement.

5. In art and design and history standards are above the national average by Year 9 and well above by Year 11. In French, German and Spanish standards are above the national average throughout the school and in Latin standards are well above. In design and technology and music standards are average by Year 9 and above by Year 11. In geography standards are above average by Year 9 and at least in line by Year 11. In physical education standards are average by Year 9 and also for non-examination students by Year 11 but for examination students in Year 11 standards exceed the national average. Standards by Year 9 in ICT are below national expectations but the school has identified this problem and there is an action plan to raise standards. The school unfortunately has experienced difficulties in recruiting an additional ICT specialist. By Year 11 students following the GNVQ course (Part 1) attain very impressive standards, above those expected nationally. In religious education standards by Year 9 are in line with those students following the programmes of study in the locally agreed syllabus. Students in Year 11 following the short GCSE course in religious education attain standards above the national average and those following the full GCSE course attain standards broadly in line with the national average. Standards in citizenship are judged to be on course to reach the expected standard by the end of Year 9 and Year 11 in the summer term 2003.
6. Students with SEN make at least good progress and achieve at least good standards measured against their prior attainment. Students with statements of special educational needs make very good gains in relation to their identified needs and achieve very good standards. Because the school is so successful with students with SEN many attain a grade C at GCSE in a number of subjects. However, standards are not always as high as they could be in individual lessons because not all teachers make consistent use of the targets on individual education plans to plan their lessons to meet the needs of students with SEN. Students with statements of special educational needs make very good progress because of the high quality support they receive. A pupil with emotional and behavioural difficulties celebrated the progress he made in self-control by organising a party in the summer term to thank teachers, support assistants and friends who had helped him with his achievement.
7. Students with EAL make at least good and often very good progress and many attain standards which exceed the national average, as seen in modern foreign language lessons. GCSE results of students with EAL are above average as is the standard of work seen in lessons. Gifted and talented students achieve very high standards, for example in Latin where results in GCSE are well above the national average and in physical education where students go on to represent the borough, county and England in a range of swimming and athletic events. Because of the very good support they receive students in public care achieve good standards measured against their prior attainment. The school is particularly successful in motivating disaffected students and many achieve a good measure of success assisted by appropriate alternative provision for them in Years 10 and 11. Because of the school's rigorous monitoring of the achievement of minority ethnic students and the effective use of data to plan, these students make at least good and often very good progress and achieve at least good standards measured against their prior attainment. Between the years 2001 to 2002 the proportion of Black Caribbean heritage boys who attained a GCSE pass at grade A\* to C rose by ten per cent. There are no significant differences in attainment and

achievement between boys and girls, but some subjects appear to attract many more boys than girls and vice versa.

8. Progress in literacy across the school is good and so standards achieved are at least good. However, in some subjects opportunities are missed to improve speaking and listening skills as teachers accept short answers from students without challenging them to think further and explain at greater depth and length. Standards of attainment in numeracy across the school are above average. The development of ICT skills across subjects is inconsistent and, as recognised by the school, standards achieved range from good in some subjects to unsatisfactory in others.

### **Sixth form**

9. Standards in the sixth form must be seen and indeed celebrated in the context of the school's equal opportunities policy which ensures that all students, including those with SEN, are given the maximum chance to succeed in the sixth form. There is almost open access to the sixth form, each individual case being assessed according to need.
10. In the sixth form A-level and AS-level performance has ranged from broadly average to very high for the last three years (1999-2001). Results in advanced GNVQ business are outstanding. Strong performing subjects over time are mathematics, biology, ICT, physical education, geography, history, English language and English literature, French, Spanish and Latin. Good improvement in results has been evident in economics and government and politics. Religious studies is a new course but standards in AS-level in 2002 indicate a very good measure of success but comparative data for that year have not yet been published and so comparisons against national averages cannot be made. Although drama is a weaker subject in terms of results this does not reflect the good quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection.
11. Inspectors note very high standards in mathematics, biology, chemistry, physical education, history, French, Spanish, English language and English literature. Standards observed in GNVQ business are outstandingly good and reflect the very good teaching. For students not taking an examination in religious studies, standards are broadly in line with the expectations in the locally agreed syllabus and this is a significant improvement since the time of the last inspection. Overall, standards of achievement for all students in the sixth form measured against their prior attainment are very good and for a proportion excellent. Given the very small drop out rate in 2001 of 2.7 per cent of students (1.0 per cent unsuitable courses and 1.7 per cent who moved away from the area) the rate of achievement is very impressive for the majority of students.

### **Students' attitudes, values and personal development**

12. Students have a very positive attitude to learning. They enjoy school and participate fully in lessons. This is confirmed by a very positive external survey of 14-year-olds carried out by the school. Almost fifty per cent of 13-year-olds attended the residential experience, half of the 15-year-olds attended the Easter revision course, and 20 per cent the 'catch up' course this summer. Almost all students are keen to learn. Students with SEN respond very positively to the support they receive and their complete involvement in the curriculum and school life. For example, in a Year 9 design and technology lesson students with SEN designed templates and cut fabric to make different types of hats. They approached the task with enthusiasm and were proud of their skills in making the products.

13. Behaviour in lessons is very good and sometimes excellent. Movement in the corridors between lessons is very good, and in assembly it is impeccable. Many students apply themselves diligently throughout the day and behave in an exceptional manner. Behaviour inside of the school and in the grounds at lunchtime is very good, helped by the fact that only half the school is at lunch at any one time. Students say that any bullying they report is dealt with quickly and they feel secure. In a minority of lessons there is too much chatting, which reduces concentration. Some inappropriate behaviour is caused by an imbalance of boys and girls, and occasionally there is silly or unacceptable behaviour with an inexperienced teacher. These are minor incidents because the school's excellent behaviour policy is consistently applied and expectations of good behaviour are suitably high. The excellent support given to those students with behavioural problems is such that they do learn to modify their behaviour. The low number of repeat exclusions verifies this fact. Students can anticipate the probability of exclusion because of the open way the sanction and reward system works. For some a fixed-term exclusion jolts them into accepting the previously rejected offer of support.
14. Students are encouraged to wear their uniform correctly as a sign of respect towards each other. They recognise the authority of senior staff without being afraid of them. One new student, giving directions to an inspector, handed her over to the headteacher instead: 'ask Mr Singh, he'll tell you where to go'. Respect is a fundamental part of the school ethos, and students recognise and copy what they experience. They accept punishments, and respond well to firm discipline. They are tolerant of each other, and accept each other as individuals, helped by the multicultural mix of the school staff and student population. Students were seen helping each other when injured or lost. There is no evidence of any racist or sexist behaviour in this harmonious community. Students are free to express their opinions in class, and the teachers' praise raises their self-esteem. Students join in the discussions around the 'thought for the day' during tutor time but often at a superficial level.
15. Relationships between students and with their teachers are very good; students listen well to each other in lessons. They are good at taking responsibility for their own work. The school council feels it has an important role. It is consulted about changes to policies, and kept informed of building developments.
16. Attendance is very good, and is better than at the time of the last inspection. It has been consistently better than the national average, and with low rates of unauthorised absence. Punctuality is good at the start of the day and at the start of afternoon school. The majority of students arrive at the start of lessons and this has a positive effect on their learning.

### **Sixth form**

17. Sixth form students have very good attitudes towards their work, and their attendance is excellent. In most lessons they realise that they are also being encouraged to develop their study skills. They appreciate being taught note taking in art and design, and their confidence is built up as they make presentations in chemistry. As they work in pairs in history they encourage each other to develop opinions. Their ability to think and to solve problems is encouraged when they have opportunities for small group debate and discussion. The quality of relationships between teachers and students means that huge gains are made in learning at all ability levels. Students say that they enjoy their work because they can study it in depth. Some sixth formers have been trained as peer listeners, to be available to younger students. Others undertake

community service within the school under the direction of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO).

## **HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

18. Teaching is a strength of the school and makes a very significant contribution to students' good and very good learning. There has been a very significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, achieved against the background of a national teacher shortage in some key subjects. Ninety-four per cent of teaching is at least satisfactory and 68 per cent is at least good. Thirty-four per cent is at least very good and seven per cent is excellent. Only six per cent of teaching is unsatisfactory, mostly but not exclusively, in Years 7 to 9. Teaching is good overall in Years 7 to 9 and very good overall in Years 10 and 11.
19. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. Because teachers have such good subject knowledge, for example in mathematics, they can explain the basic concepts in the clearest possible way and so students make very good gains in the processes required to get the answers to solve problems. Planning is a key strength. Very good planning in English ensures that all teachers modify their teaching approach to take account of the needs of all students in the class, thus ensuring that students are fully included in their lessons and so make at least good progress. In drama students make significant gains in all lessons because teachers plan well and the work is varied. In most subjects, short-term lesson plans contain learning outcomes for all students, including those with SEN and those who are gifted and talented, and so they make at least good progress. Teachers manage students with challenging behaviour extremely well, thus enabling all students in their classes to learn effectively. Behaviour management is a key strength to the success of this school. Teachers use encouragement and humour very effectively to inspire students to learn, as seen in a dance lesson.
20. Teachers' methods and organisation of lesson activities are good. In each subject teaching is fit for purpose. In modern foreign languages teachers use chorus-work and pronunciation practice very well and so raise the level of the students' confidence in their own spelling and listening skills. In physical education the calm and organised approach to teaching results in Year 7 students making good progress when they are introduced to gymnastic movements for the first time. Teaching in all subjects is brisk and resources are used very effectively to promote very good learning. Expectations are high and almost all teaching challenges students through the very good use of questioning to extend their thinking. Very good use is made of homework to consolidate students learning and also to extend their thinking.
21. Teaching of ICT is good in Year 7 but standards of attainment are below expectation by Year 9 because there is not yet discrete ICT teaching in Years 8 and 9. This is planned to be introduced but the school has been thwarted in its endeavours to appoint an additional ICT specialist to the staff. Where teaching has shortcomings, particularly in Years 7 to 9, there are a number of common features. On these rare occasions teachers sometimes introduce a second activity before students have had a chance to complete the first activity, as in a design and technology lesson. On other occasions, as in a citizenship lesson, the needs of the students are not sufficiently known or understood by the teacher. The pace of teaching drops in these lessons and students' behaviour becomes restless and this impedes the quality of learning. In a small minority of lessons in Years 7 to 9 in science there are a number of shortcomings. In these lessons slow pace and lack of challenge due to over-reliance on a commercial scheme

of work fail to engage students' interest and lead to a low level of disruption and reduce learning. In music students are not always given enough time to express their own opinions and ideas. This lack of opportunity results in them not being able to compare, contrast and evaluate music in order to make improvements to their work.

22. The teaching of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across subjects is at least good, except in mathematics, science and music where insufficient use is made of computer technology. Because of the success of the literacy strategy, standards have improved in spelling and the use of punctuation across subjects. The implementation of the policy for improving standards in numeracy skills across subjects is beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards.
23. Students with SEN benefit from very good teaching and so make good gains in their learning. Teachers make very good use of learning support assistants (LSAs) when they attend lessons. LSAs assess very well the amount of support they should give so students learn to work on their own. In lessons they work closely with teachers to support students' progress. For example, in a Year 10 GCSE art and design lesson the LSA refrained from helping a student with SEN further when the student could match colour skilfully to achieve a tonal scale. The great majority of teachers effectively use the information provided by the SENCO on students with SEN. They plan well-matched activities to help students achieve their learning or behavioural targets. For example, these matched activities were achieved in a geography lesson for Year 8 on what affects birth rates and death rates. A diagram was given discretely to those students with weak writing ability so they could use their geographical skill to link appropriate factors to an increase or decrease in the rates. In an English lesson, also in Year 8, the teacher and the learning support assistant were sensitive to a student's known emotional and behavioural needs. They were alert to signs of the student not coping and gave suitable support, so that the student remained settled and progressed in line with other students. The calm, productive atmosphere created by the teacher helped this level of progress to happen.
24. The quality of teaching for students with EAL is very good. The two specialist teachers liaise effectively with subject teachers and give very good advice on the way to work with these students. They give effective support to EAL students in lessons. The work of students with EAL is regularly monitored and progress records are kept and reviewed regularly with parents. When necessary interpreters are employed for these review meetings. All faculties have effective strategies which support the teaching of gifted and talented students. Students in public care are well supported because teachers know how to plan using their personal educational plans. Disaffected students with pastoral support plans are well supported by learning mentors and so improve the management of their own behaviour and make good progress. All of these students make at least good gains measured against their prior attainment. Students with EAL and students identified as being gifted and talented, in all year groups, make very good gains in their learning over time. Because of the very good teaching and at least good learning for all of these groups of students, inspectors judge this school to be one where staff value all students.
25. The students' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is at least good and sometimes excellent as seen in a number of art and design and physical education lessons. Students' intellectual, physical and creative development is very good. Where teaching is inspirational, students are encouraged to learn from one another and to elicit information from a wide range of sources as demonstrated in an excellent citizenship lesson. Students have a very good knowledge and understanding of their own learning.

## **Sixth form**

26. The quality of teaching is very good in the sixth form. Seventy-six per cent of teaching is at least good, 46 per cent at least very good and almost ten per cent is excellent. This is an improvement on the sixth form teaching observed during the last inspection. Excellent teaching was seen in business studies, chemistry, physics and ICT. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and all teach with energy and enthusiasm. There is excellent analysis of homework in lessons to rectify errors and to ensure that students improve their work.
27. Relationships between students and teachers are excellent and these contribute to the very good progress made by students in the sixth form. Those students with very complex special educational needs are well taught. Teaching and learning are very good for students following the GNVQ course in business studies

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

28. The curriculum provision is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. The school's curriculum aims are primarily concerned with individual students' development. They refer, amongst other things, to maximising students' potential, developing a lively enquiring mind, preparation for life after school and equal opportunities. The aims are demonstrated by high expectations of students, their emphases on hard work, the effective pastoral system and concentration on academic achievement in the sixth form. The very good examination results, the extensive support given to students and the high proportion who gain entry to higher education are all evidence that the aims are being fully implemented. The school now meets the requirements to provide religious education in all years although the requirement for a daily act of collective worship is still not met.
29. In Years 7 to 9 the curriculum is broad and balanced. All the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught plus drama, a second foreign language in Year 9, and for the most able students, Latin. All students study personal and social education which includes elements of citizenship and, in Year 7, swimming. However, legal requirements are not fully met; teachers of music do not cover all the aspects of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, and ICT is not taught as a discrete subject in Years 8 and 9. The school has plans to remedy the ICT deficiency but has been thwarted by not yet being able to fill a key ICT teaching vacancy.
30. In Years 10 to 11 all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught plus drama, media studies, Latin, sociology and business education. The curriculum meets the needs of students of all abilities well. The wide range of options allows students to take both history and geography and two modern foreign languages. There is a choice of double award science or three separate science subjects, which allows students to study science in considerable depth. Fifty-three students follow a course in key skills instead of a modern foreign language and design and technology in an attempt to improve their basic skills. Vocational education takes the form of GNVQ in ICT and elements of the careers, citizenship and work course, studied by all students, which also includes health, drugs and sex education. Due attention is paid to the ethical and moral aspects of sex education. There is good provision for careers, starting with option choices made by students during Year 9. Many Year 10 students arrange their own work experience placements, but facilities are available to find places for the rest.

Good quality advice is available to all students in their GCSE year, and priority is given to those who need motivating. These students are also offered a series of repeat interviews around examination time.

31. The school makes use of its London location for visits that enhance the curriculum. Students receiving help are also rewarded by visits to sporting events. An old people's party is hosted by students each year. There are instances where students have been involved in projects far beyond their local community, such as the students who had experience of working with poor people in Brazil. As a result of a local initiative, a community policeman has recently been allocated to the school, and he tries to arrive by bicycle at the start and end of the day, in order to raise the profile of the law in a non-confrontational setting. Relationships with partner institutions are good. Close liaison with primary schools ensures the transfer of valuable information. Systematic build up of skills and knowledge are ensured by very good curricular links with primary schools and the use of schemes of work by all subject teachers.
32. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities available at lunchtime and after school. Sport is encouraged and over a third of students take part regularly. Inter-school and inter-house competitions help raise skill standards and are popular with students. The governors' report to parents gives details of the schools' numerous sporting achievements in a wide range of team and individual sports by boys and girls, for example last year school teams were borough champions in athletics, cross-country, football, netball and gymnastics. Likewise the report lists the range of extra-curricular activities in which drama, music and dance feature prominently. There are opportunities for students to make visits outside of school and to receive visitors, for example the Years 9 and 10 science discovery visit and the visit of the author Bali Rai to discuss his book 'An unarranged marriage'. Students take part in various clubs and schemes that promote their personal development such as the Duke of Edinburgh award, the Youth Public Speaking competition and the Young People's Faith Forum.
33. The provision for students with statements of SEN is very good. The requirements for an identified teacher to oversee their individual education plans, for additional help in lessons, external specialist support, good learning resources and equipment are fully met.
34. It is the policy of the language and learning support department for students to experience the full curriculum. Consequently the aim is to meet their special educational needs in lessons through teachers' planning specific activities and personal support. Students with statements of special educational need invariably have help from learning support assistants. Some students however benefit from some individual teaching with a teacher qualified in special educational needs. In Year 10, a new course, the Young Enterprise Team programme, is informing students on how business is organised. A large number of these students have special educational needs. Later they will be given an opportunity to create their own company and assume positions such as company secretary or finance manager. This course, which provides an alternative to wholly GCSE subject provision, is activity based and contributes to citizenship education and to building students' confidence and self-esteem. It also includes opportunities to develop students' ICT skills. A behaviour management workshop contributes to developing the social skills of identified students. Students from a local special school attend these classes before joining the school in Year 10. The language and learning support department has several computers and it plans to develop their use further, for example to develop students' keyboard skills with a suitable program. In view of an increased number of students with special educational

needs joining the school in September 2002 the governors decided to increase the number of teachers and support staff appropriately.

35. Provision for students with EAL is also very good. For example, a Year 8 student with English as an additional language experienced difficulty in understanding fractions. By cutting a chocolate bar the teacher demonstrated how a fraction is part of the whole. As the student grasped the concept she used words such as *half, halves, third, quarter and sixth*, to describe fractions of a circle.
36. The provision for gifted and talented students is good. In the main school, the gifted and talented programme supports effectively well-identified students. This process helps to raise the standards of student attainment overall, as subject departments re-examine what they offer to all students. The highest attainers receive either individual challenge, lessons outside of the normal school day or an introduction to a new subject, such as Latin. The provision is predominantly subject based and is beginning to establish a range of activities using outside sources. Gifted and talented students attain a high proportion of A\* grades in English literature, German, history, Latin, sociology and physics.

### **The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

37. The overall provision for students' personal development is good. A strong school ethos, characterised by very good relationships and mutual respect, provides a strong context for students' moral, social and cultural development. Throughout the school there is an excellent respect for feelings, values and beliefs. This was seen clearly in a history lesson where students were encouraged to consider and reflect on the conditions prevalent on slave ships. They explored moral issues surrounding the high mortality rates of the slaves and the directed discussion enabled them to express their feelings. The whole lesson was well structured and had a profound effect on the students as they explored the culture and history of West Africa. Discussion encourages students to consider a range of viewpoints and to think through difficult choices and decisions they will need in life.
38. The provision for students' spiritual development is satisfactory. Since the previous inspection a series of 'thoughts for the day' has been developed which gives a theme for tutor times and assemblies. At present there is considerable variation in the way tutors enable students to consider and reflect on these issues. There is a lack of consistency in the delivery so that the best practice seen is the norm. As at the time of the previous inspection the requirement for a daily act of collective worship is not met. There is a lack of rigorous monitoring to ensure all departments understand their contribution to students' spiritual development. Time is not built into the schemes of work of all subjects for students to pause, reflect and appreciate the intangible, as was the case, for example, when students in their art and design lessons made use of stimuli from nature and reflected this in their drawings and collages.
39. Very good provision is made for students' moral development. The school's daily routines successfully promote values and help students distinguish between right and wrong. Adherence to school rules and the school's successful anti-bullying strategy promote an orderly environment where students help and support each other. In physical education lessons students play in a sporting manner and show a sense of fair play. Several sensitive issues are discussed, for example population control in China during geography lessons. Year 11 students discussed human rights and responsibilities in a mature and balanced way valuing their peers' contributions. This instance contrasted with some lessons where teachers led the discussion and

students were not given sufficient time to express and consider their own opinions. The commitment and attitudes of the staff set a very positive example for students. They are very good role models. Students work hard to raise money for a variety of charities. A non-uniform day was held and monies raised sponsored two sixth form students' trip to Brazil; it also provided basic necessities for them to take to underprivileged children.

40. Social education is also very good with opportunities taken for students to develop social and collaborative skills in many of their lessons. There is good work done in pairs in art and design, mathematics, music and physical education lessons. The school council has an active voice in the life of the school and enables students to contribute to many areas of school life. The peer listening scheme gives confidential advice to students. Students mix well together within and outside of lessons developing very good relationships and treating everyone with courtesy and respect. The house competitions in dance, drama, music and sports provide good opportunities for social interaction and independence. The texts used by the English department expose students to a range of material exploring various social issues. For example, Year 7 students analysed the relationship between father and child as set out in Michael Morpurgo's 'My Father is a Polar Bear'.
41. Provision for students' cultural development is good; the school is a very harmonious community. Cultural interests and horizons are extended through various visits including field trips and residential visits for students in the main school. Students learn about dances from other cultures in the annual dance festival that is always a popular event. However, there are no visits to concerts by students studying music. Lessons in religious education give a good introduction to world religions, especially to current world situations.

### **Sixth form**

42. Curricular provision is very good for students in the 16-18 age ranges. Those students interviewed by inspectors considered that there was a very good match between what they wanted to study and what the school was able to offer them. This is an inclusive school and no student is refused entry to the sixth form because of special educational needs. Entry qualifications are far less rigid than in a significant number of schools and this equality of opportunity policy must be seen in judging standards in the sixth form. Sixth form provision promotes equality of opportunity for all and there is a wide range of options on offer.
43. The manner in which the head of the sixth form manages the provision of the curriculum is very good. As with the rest of the nation there have been issues as the AS package beds down and this has caused some timetabling difficulties and consequently some students have not always been able to get exactly the combination of subjects that they would like to follow at AS but, where this has been a very significant issue in respect of a particular student's career aspirations, a special arrangement has been made wherever possible to accommodate and resolve the problem. There is a very extensive and broad range of AS and A-level courses and the number of vocational courses available has grown very significantly since the last inspection. The school provides exceptionally well for the small number of students with special educational needs who would find the immediate transfer to further education at the end of Year 11 too traumatic. Provision for immature students who do not have a clearly determined path set out in front of them at the end of Year 11 is also very good. The provision for gifted and talented students is very good too. In the sixth form, the Excellence Challenge Programme actively meets the aspirations of the highest attainers in developing their overall potential. The focus is on preparation for

university entrance, including Oxbridge, and comprises detailed information on interview techniques, thinking, research and revision skills. The programme also provides students with very good opportunities to look beyond their immediate neighbourhood through outside residential visits and courses.

44. The school has taken the decision not to teach the key skills as a discrete programme. However, they are delivered across the curriculum. All students follow a general studies package and the mandatory sixth form religious education is taught as part of this package. Provision for vocational courses is very good and developing.
45. There is not a programme of work experience for all students in the sixth form. A significant number of students have part-time jobs in the local community and the school considers work placements beyond the immediate community to be difficult to manage, particularly in ensuring student safety in travelling to those placements. No student has had a formal work placement in another European country but the school is open to exploring such a possibility. Individual work placement experiences are found for students following A-level courses and particular career paths, for example medicine. Students following vocational courses, such as travel and tourism, experience appropriate work placements. The sixth form students have opportunities to visit and attend courses at the extensive range of London higher education colleges and universities. For the first time all sixth form students are being offered careers interviews this year. The new sixth form centre will have duplicates of the careers library's set of university yearbooks.
46. Provision for students' personal development is very good. Students have opportunities to develop recreational sports. They organise charity events and their own parties. They act as mentors for students in other parts of the school, listen to younger students read and help younger students across a wide range of subjects. There is an effective head boy and head girl system; representatives are elected democratically. A group of students have been trained as peer listeners to help any younger student who perceives that she / he has been the victim of harassment. As a body the vast majority of sixth formers interviewed spoke affectionately of the school and they are very appreciative of all the opportunities the school has offered them.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?**

47. Heads of year know their students really well, and this is a strength of the school. They have a detailed knowledge of each pupil's academic, pastoral and behavioural development. Each student is treated with respect and as an individual, and every effort made to provide timely guidance to make sure the opportunities available at school are used to best advantage.
48. A full range of very effective support is available in school for students. Based on their records and thorough knowledge of students, individual heads of year meet regularly with the SENCO to look at concerns so that she can decide the appropriate support. The school is making excellent use of its specialist support systems with a focus on helping students, for example, to remain in school, to cope in class, to control their anger and to develop social skills. The learning mentors' room is a constant buzz of activity, indicating both the popularity and success of their role. Learning mentors give very good support to students at risk of exclusion or who have poor self-esteem and their support makes a valuable contribution to their learning. Other specific support is brought in, such as the Windsor Fellowship, which deals with underachievement in Black Caribbean heritage students.

49. In Year 9 students with SEN discuss their curriculum choices for Years 10 and 11 with a personal adviser from the Connexions service. This opportunity also happens in Year 11, when opportunities in continuing education or employment are explored with students. The language and learning support department receives good advice and support from a number of external agencies: the educational psychology service; the Special Educational Needs Support Service (SENSS); the secondary behaviour team; Connexions Service (careers advice); and the study centre (part-time respite support for students temporarily excluded from school). The SENCO meets termly with these agencies.
50. The five students in public care are looked after very well by the school and supported consistently to a high standard, both pastorally and academically. Full details of the students' home and academic backgrounds are kept by the co-ordinator (the designated teacher with responsibility for children in public care) and sensitively conveyed, where appropriate, to heads of year and tutors. The students have very good access to the co-ordinator who is based in the school. She meets the students by appointment every week and is available on a daily basis where need is great. Very good contacts are maintained with the relevant local educational authority (LEA) officials, foster homes and hostels for sixth form students. Correct procedures are followed with the LEA.
51. The identification and monitoring of minority ethnic students are excellent throughout the school. The school has a very clear idea of these students' attainment and potential, and provides for them very well both pastorally and academically. Some students have been selected to form part of the group of gifted and talented students. The students' home languages are given full value and recognition in the school. In cases where students are literate in both speaking and writing their home language, they are encouraged, if appropriate, to take an examination in it. There is a very good anti-racist policy and a robust system for monitoring and dealing with racist incidents should they occur.
52. The behaviour policy is excellent; it is devised within school and regularly refined. It is fundamental to the school's success. It is seen to be open and fair; students can see how their behaviour is progressing and have a way to redeem misdemeanours. The below average rate of exclusions bears testimony to its effectiveness. For some students, a fixed-term exclusion is the jolt which makes them accept support and repeat exclusions are infrequent. The school council considered the school's anti-racist policy before it was adopted. Bullying is similarly well defined with excellent, clear procedures available to deal with both incidents of racism and bullying.
53. Attendance and lateness monitoring are very thorough, and attendance is very good as a result.
54. There is good provision for students who are injured or unwell at school; there is an appropriate number of first aiders, a qualified nurse as their first port of call, and a medical room. There is one nominated child protection officer, and arrangements comply with those agreed locally. Health and safety procedures are very good, and governors are involved in ensuring health and safety matters are dealt with rigorously through a sub-committee. Arrangements are made to obtain parental permission before students use the Internet, and protective filtering systems are in place.

## **Assessment**

55. Procedures for assessing students' attainments are good in all subjects but one. In music the procedures are unsatisfactory. However, in ICT the procedures are very good. Accurate and reliable systems are in place for all other subjects.
56. Procedures for monitoring and supporting students' academic progress are good. Form tutors interview their students twice a year and help them to set personal targets for each subject. These are recorded in homework diaries, for reference and subsequent review. Very good systems are in place for setting individual GCSE targets by using the results that the same students had attained in their Key Stage 3 national tests at the end of Year 9. The school is excellent at analysing examination and test results. Only recently has a start been made upon the analysis of the Year 6 students' national test results, when they enter Year 7, to identify targets for them to meet by the end of Year 9. The monitoring of minority ethnic achievement is very effective. There are effective systems for monitoring the achievement of students with EAL, gifted and talented students, those with SEN and those children in public care.
57. A very good range of information is available on individual students from Year 7 through to Year 11. From a database information can be obtained quickly about the performance of different groups of students. Information is therefore available when tutors need to give pertinent advice and guidance at the right time to students, whether about punctuality, involvement in extra-curricular activities or their progress towards personal and academic targets. Good use is being made of this information in all departments to support the overall very good achievements of the students in this school. The good policy has effectively raised the teachers' expectations of what students can achieve especially in the GCSE examinations and in core lessons in ICT.
58. Individual target setting is well developed and the students know what grade to aim for in their GCSEs. The practice of identifying targets is consistently good in all subjects except music. However the impact of the policy and its associated procedures are reduced by the current weaker provision for the use of assessment to improve achievement in Years 7 – 9.
59. The language and learning support department assesses regularly the reading and spelling of students with SEN to monitor their progress. The SENCO meets with heads of year every three weeks to discuss the progress and emerging needs of students. Assessment is used very effectively to plan for students with SEN and to monitor their progress over time.
60. Students in need of help in learning English are identified through liaison with feeder primary schools and through the administration of reading and writing assessment tests devised by the school. These tests are also used to determine the level of need of students entering the school in the middle of a year and there is an induction period for them which is speaking and listening based. Those students at the lowest level of English language acquisition will be withdrawn from lessons once a week for support from one of the two specialist staff. That support is very effective and there are very few students who still need it in Years 10 and 11.

## **Sixth form**

### ***Advice, support and guidance***

61. Teachers make themselves available to offer academic support to sixth form students. The head of sixth form has spent time putting into place procedures which match those of the main school. Careers advice is currently in a state of flux, with a new external service provider now able to offer interviews and advice to all students, instead of only to those leaving after one year. At this early stage in the academic year, over 40 per cent of sixth form students are not happy with the careers advice they have been given by an external agency. The new service level agreement with the Connexion service should help redress this. The new sixth form accommodation is to include an additional careers reference area. Good arrangements are made to prepare students for university applications.

### ***Assessment***

62. The continuous assessment of students' work is good overall. The students' work is assessed accurately against the requirements of the examining boards. The students receive good information through tutorials on how they are progressing towards their target grades throughout the year. Assessment and feedback are good in all subjects. They are a consequence of a well thought through policy for whole school assessment that includes tutorial support. The analysis of a student's previous performance to produce a targeted minimum grade is effective, for example, with boys in history. Girls in the same subject find the challenge less helpful in terms of their achievement. Also in science there is an over-reliance on module tests and feedback is both irregular and inconsistent. The procedures, therefore, are not yet providing the guidance when it is needed by each individual to support the progress he or she needs to make towards the clear individual targets identified.
63. Assessment of the students with SEN in relation to the particular learning skills and attitudes needed for sixth form studies is undertaken. Teachers take account of students' special educational needs in lessons and, where appropriate, external advice is sought. Some very good provision is given for individual teaching. For example, a student who joined the school from a special school has his literacy skills developed through three lessons a week. This supports his access to the other subjects studied in the sixth form.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

64. Parents' views of the school are good. Parents are supportive of the school. It is over subscribed at Year 7, and the size of the sixth form has increased significantly since the last inspection. Over 90 per cent of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire were confident that their children like school, are making progress and expect to work hard. They feel the school is well led and managed, and would feel able to approach the school with any problems or concerns. Only 63 parents (four per cent) attended the pre-inspection meeting, and only 13 per cent of the questionnaires were returned. In two areas, this small sample had some concerns: 26 per cent (55 returns) did not think their children had the right amount of work to do at home; and the same number did not think the school worked closely with parents. These numbers are small, and a slightly smaller number raised similar concerns at the time of the last inspection.

65. The school encourages students to take responsibility for themselves, and provides them with a diary which contains information about homework, progress, rewards and sanctions. This makes it easy for parents to check and to discuss these areas with their children, and to communicate with teachers or the form tutor. Tutors also keep in touch with parents by letter and by telephone if there are any ongoing concerns. There is only one newsletter a term and some parents would value receiving more; other letters relate to specific events.
66. Parents receive very good written information each term about their children's academic progress. In two terms they receive a progress check or set of examination results, in the third an annual report. These include much good information, giving a clear indication of how students could improve their work. In reports for students in Years 7 to 9 each subject allocates a National Curriculum grade and, although these are described, it is unclear how they relate to national expectations. Reports for students in Year 11 give mock GCSE examination grades. Year 10 students receive a statement which provides a measure of their attainment and progress.
67. Parental consultation meetings are well attended and, although appointments are brief, follow-up meetings can be arranged. At the interviews when students start school, parents are fully briefed about the school's expectations, and sign a home-school agreement. The school works closely with parents and carers of students at risk of exclusion. The parent-teacher association is supportive of the school through its fund raising events, and hosting curriculum information evenings. This term the school is involving the parents of 25 Black heritage students to help to raise their achievement through out-of-school mentoring with the Windsor Fellowship.
68. The SENCO invites parents of students with SEN to review meetings of individual education plans twice yearly, and to the annual review meeting held for students with statements of SEN. The SENCO asks for parents to give their views in writing if they cannot attend. Students attend these meetings to give their views on the progress that they make.

### **Sixth form students' views**

69. Students enjoy being in the sixth form. They feel they are taught well and challenged to do their best. Teachers are accessible if difficulties arise, and students are helped and encouraged to study. There is a good range of other activities for them to do, including some supporting of younger students. However, some students consider that there could be more enrichment activities provided for them. A small percentage of students do not consider that the school treats them as adults.
70. Those who have recently started their courses were very satisfied with the induction process and found the written information and interview process helpful. They had problems with their individual timetables. Some students found it hard to interpret their timetables. On certain days some students have no midday break for lunch. They are unhappy with the present common-room facilities but the sixth form accommodation is being improved, and building work is almost completed.
71. Final year students feel well supported in their university applications, and are confident that their teachers are always there to help. However they feel that they do not get fast enough feedback on some of their work in some subjects. More than 40 per cent do not feel well advised in relation to careers, and this is a challenge for the new external careers advice service.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

72. Leadership is excellent. The headteacher has very successfully built a high performing team of senior managers who have effectively managed change. This has resulted in very significant improvements which, when viewed overall, make this an outstanding school. The headteacher leads by example and from the front, taking responsibility in partnership with all staff, governors, parents and students for the key decisions which have to be made. He has successfully created and secured a commitment to a clear vision and educational direction for this school which is shared by all staff. Leadership at middle management level is also outstandingly good, with almost all heads of faculty and heads of year inspiring, motivating and influencing staff within their faculties and year teams.
73. Managers carry out duties in an excellent manner. Excellent management systems have been put in place and all staff are consulted through these very effective systems. Effective communication is the secret to success in this consultative school where all issues are discussed in the open. Since the last inspection very significant improvements in standards and in the quality of the accommodation have been achieved against a background of turbulence caused by the change in status from grant maintained status to foundation status, troubled times caused by the national crisis of recruitment and retention of key staff in inner city schools and the unexpected shortfall in the level of funding for sixth form provision. Against this background the headteacher has very successfully encouraged staff at all levels of management by very good delegation of responsibilities. Staff have responded by fulfilling their responsibilities with enthusiasm, energy and commitment. Thus a school environment has been created where all students, including disaffected students, achieve very high standards measured against their prior attainment and potential.
74. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is excellent. The excellent faculty review system has led to very significant improvements in most subjects across the whole school. There are formalised systems for the monitoring of whole school planning and faculty development plans. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good. Middle managers carry out their management responsibilities very effectively. Heads of year monitor and evaluate the school's provision to meet the pastoral needs of all students. They work very effectively with the SENCO and leading learning mentor to support students with SEN and also those students who are disaffected and not keen to learn. Their very effective teamwork has resulted in a number of students with very challenging behaviour being fully included in all aspects of school life. Heads of faculty carry out a thorough analysis of examination results and conclusions are used well to devise subsequent plans to raise standards in all subjects. The monitoring of minority ethnic achievement is very good. Information gained and action taken from this exercise resulted in a very significant improvement in GCSE results at grades A\* to C for Black Caribbean heritage boys between 2001 and 2002.
75. The management of students with SEN is very good. Excellence in Cities funding has been used very effectively to develop an excellent learning mentor system and the provision for gifted and talented students is a key strength. The management of the provision for students with English as an additional language is also very effective. The management of refugee students and also those in public care is also very good.
76. The school's aims and values are excellent and they are highly valued by parents. They successfully promote equality of opportunity where all students are valued in a fully inclusive school. As a result race relations and behaviour are very good in this school.

A culture has been created where the respect shown by staff and students for the feelings, values and beliefs of the whole school community is excellent. A deep commitment has been created to challenging and extending all students to achieve their very best in an environment in which it is safe to make mistakes and to learn from them. All staff work very hard in building up the confidence and self-esteem of all students in a range of imaginative ways and they are successful in doing so.

77. The long-term strategic planning is excellent in setting priorities for whole school development which focus on student achievement and the school has been very successful in raising standards. The yearly plan is a very effective tool for the management of change and faculty development planning is integral to that of the whole school. Consultation with all staff over the priorities for improvement is very good; this was noted by the inspection team when attending the consultative group meeting which considered proposed curriculum developments for the academic year 2003 – 2004.
78. The governing body is very effective in meeting its statutory responsibilities. There is a very good structure of sub-committees and governors are very supportive of the school's aims. They visit the school regularly to support staff and attend sub-committee meetings to discuss and shape policy. They are kept well informed about the school's performance by the headteacher.
79. Financial planning is excellent. Although the level of funding is relatively low the headteacher and governing body have successfully raised standards so that compared with similar schools they are very high and this is no mean achievement. The school is well supported by an excellent finance officer and a very effective finance sub-committee of governors who monitor expenditure rigorously. Recommendations in the most recent auditors' report have been adopted. The application of the principles of best value is excellent. Governors play an important role in setting the school's budget. The school receives a range of grants and these are used efficiently and effectively for the purposes for which they are designated. The provision for students with SEN is very generously funded and these students benefit enormously as a result.
80. All staff, including the LSAs, are effectively and efficiently deployed. Taking into account the very effective teaching, high standards of behaviour, the good provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the improvements achieved since the last inspection in the context of the level of funding available, the school provides very good value for money.

## **Staffing**

81. In the current climate of teacher recruitment, the senior management of the school have put in considerable time and effort to ensure that sufficient high quality teachers are recruited and the existing staff retained. In this they have been very successful, and although there are still a number of vacancies for full-time permanent posts, these are all being adequately filled by long-term supply teachers. Most departments are adequately staffed and the staff well deployed, with the exception of the religious education department where the curriculum is delivered by too many non-specialists teaching the subject for a few periods each week. The administrative and site staff are well qualified and make a very valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school on a day-to-day basis.
82. The school's policy for performance management has been very well constructed, is effectively implemented, and is having a positive impact on standards and on the

general morale of the teaching staff. Provision for staff development is good. Induction of staff new to the school, and for newly qualified teachers is very good, involving an active programme of formal sessions, and a very great deal of daily support from mentors and other staff. The programme is actively and effectively monitored by the deputy headteacher.

83. Since the last inspection, the school has developed and refined its appraisal system in line with national requirements, and has improved the relationship between monitoring of teaching and the planning and staff development cycle.

## **Accommodation**

84. Accommodation is satisfactory. The site manager and the caretakers, assisted by their cleaning and maintenance teams, keep the site in very good condition. There is very little litter, no graffiti and the level of internal and external cleanliness is very high. Maintenance is very good and has substantially extended the life of the hatted accommodation well past its expected lifetime. The quality of accommodation is good but the quantity is not. There are insufficient rooms to support specialist teaching for the numbers in the school and too many rooms are too small for their ascribed purpose. This is particularly the case for the teaching of English, for example. The school's governing body has well-designed and costed plans to meet the school's perceived needs and to replace the elderly hatted accommodation with a purpose-built block. The school has been able to fund specific schemes from its own resources or specific grants, such as the current re-construction to provide a sixth form library and study area. Subject faculties have access to six ICT rooms and the library provides a good-sized resource for learning, which should support subject needs more effectively when the sixth form study area is completed. The level of security is very high. There is strong boundary fencing to the site and a controlled means of entry that limits access by the general public without compromising the safety of staff and students and the entire site is under constant and recorded CCTV surveillance.

## **Resources**

85. The provision of learning resources is at least satisfactory and in the majority of subjects the quality and quantity of available books and equipment are good. Spending on resources continues to increase as a proportion of the total budget with decisions linked to the overall development planning within the school. For example significant improvements since the last inspection are seen in the provision for ICT. There are now a substantial number of networked workstations, supported by a technician and systems manager. Further developments are currently taking place including broadband access to the Internet which, when completed, should result in excellent provision. Resources are particularly good in English, science, history, geography and modern foreign languages. Resources are good in music where the school owns a range of orchestral instruments, although there are no instruments of ethnic heritage. In mathematics there are textbooks for all students but in Years 7 to 9 there is insufficient provision of equipment and materials. There is a good range of audio and visual resources and consumables in art and design. Resources continue to be good in physical education where items of differentiated equipment support learning. The spacious library is very well stocked and is used by students of all years on a regular basis, both in and out of lesson time.

## **Sixth form**

### ***Leadership and management***

86. Leadership of the sixth form is excellent. Management of the sixth form is excellent. The head of sixth form, through excellent monitoring and evaluation, has identified the concern about the provision for careers guidance and there is a robust strategy and action plan to address the issue. Monitoring of faculties and departments to ensure that they give consistently high quality advice on what students need to do to make greater progress has been put in place. There is a very effective system of consultation with sixth form students and their views are listened to sensitively, and wherever a recommendation will benefit the majority it is always acted upon. It is not always possible to meet the wish / want of every individual and a small number of sixth formers have unrealistic expectations and this has contributed to some of the negative responses to the student survey. Inspection interviews with sixth form students confirmed that effective communication systems are in place and that they consider that management listens to their views and considers them seriously when planning to improve the sixth form provision.

### ***Resources***

87. Overall resources in the sixth form are good. In some subjects, for example science, where the laboratories are currently being upgraded, history and geography, the provision of resources is very good. The modern foreign language faculty is also particularly well resourced. Sixth form students currently make extensive use of the school library for private study but can look forward to the provision of their own facility in a few months time. As recognised by the school much of the accommodation used for teaching in the sixth form is too cramped, for example the bases used for teaching English. There is an extensive building programme going on to redress this issue which currently adversely affects learning.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

88. The governors, headteacher and senior management team should give attention to the following points to improve the quality of education provided and raise standards for all students.
- i) Raise standards in ICT by the end of Year 9 by ensuring that a discrete programme of teaching is delivered in Years 8 and 9 by ICT specialist teachers.  
(Paragraphs: 5 and 155)
  - ii) Continue to improve the quality of accommodation, particularly the hatted accommodation.  
(Paragraphs: 84, 97, 133, 141, 146, 185 and 190)

## **Sixth form**

- i) Continue to improve the amount and quality of the accommodation used for teaching in the sixth form  
(Paragraphs: 87, 217, 225, 245 and 265)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 - 11	159
	Sixth form	71
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students		85

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Years 7 to 11</b>							
Number	11	43	54	41	10	0	0
Percentage	7	27	34	26	6	0	0
<b>Sixth form</b>							
Number	7	28	23	18	0	0	0
Percentage	9	37	30	24	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

### Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	1238	313
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	314	40

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	22	0
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	176	7

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	102

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	79
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	44

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.3
National comparative data	8.1

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	143	107	250

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	86	109	105
	Girls	79	82	76
	Total	165	191	181
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	67 (87)	77 (74)	73 (63)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	35 (60)	55 (52)	44 (30)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	91	102	76
	Girls	83	79	57
	Total	174	181	133
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	70 (66)	72 (73)	53 (63)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	39 (29)	48 (48)	25 (32)
	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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2001	133	107	240

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	70	123	132
	Girls	61	99	106
	Total	131	222	238
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	55 (51)	93 (94)	99 (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	43.4
	National	39.0

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 students who achieved all those they studied	School	240	90
	National		N/a

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

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	69	59	128
	Average point score per candidate	17.3	17.4	17.4
National	Average point score per candidate	16.9	18	17.5

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	Number of candidates	64	59	123	12	1	13
	Average point score per candidate	15.8	17.1	16.4	15	18	15.2
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.*

### ***Ethnic background of students***

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
662	29	0
0	0	0
126	3	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
255	5	0
102	3	0
7	0	0
0	0	0
120	16	0
106	6	0
31	1	0
17	0	0
125	4	2

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	86
Number of students per qualified teacher	18

#### **Education support staff: Y7 - Y13**

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	483

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	69.0
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13**

Key Stage 3	25.3
Key Stage 4	21.1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	4,889,426
Total expenditure	4,760,069
Expenditure per pupil	3,052
Balance brought forward from previous year	39,909
Balance carried forward to next year	169,266

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	30.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	39.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	6
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	6

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1490
Number of questionnaires returned	190

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	47	4	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	37	52	6	2	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	54	11	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	49	19	7	6
The teaching is good.	22	66	5	1	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	46	15	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	40	4	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	41	6	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	24	45	21	5	5
The school is well led and managed.	51	40	3	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	53	6	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	39	17	2	11

Not all columns add up to 100 per cent because some parents return questions left unanswered.

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents expressed a concern about a high turnover of staff in modern foreign languages. This issue has now been resolved. Parents praised the headteacher for his strong leadership and visible presence around the school. Mention was made of the Parent Teacher Association being strong and benefiting the school.

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

### ENGLISH

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

#### Strengths

- Students achieve well and attain standards at GCSE above the national average.
- Students' positive attitudes to their work and the good relationships that teachers have with them contribute significantly to the high levels of achievement.
- The head of faculty provides very good leadership in developing teaching and learning and raising standards.
- Students learn well in lessons because the work is adapted to meet individual need and teachers target support effectively.

#### Areas for improvement

- Students are not achieving at the highest GCSE grade in English language.
- The means to disseminate to all faculty staff the very good teaching practice which exists is not sufficiently developed.
- Problems in accommodation are having an adverse affect on the quality of provision for some students.

89. The proportion of students attaining a grade in the A\* to C range in the 2001 GCSE English language examinations was above the national average. Although the girls did better than the boys, they did not exceed the performance of their counterparts nationally by the same margin as the boys. Their results were significantly better than boys nationally. Students with SEN and those for whom English is an additional language achieved well. Nearly all the students entered for the subject obtained a pass grade. Standards at GCSE have been above average over recent years and have improved since the time of the last inspection when they were average. The results in 2002 show a further improvement in the standards attained by boys and girls. Students did not, however, attain at the highest grade in the 2001 and 2002 examinations and this is an issue to be remedied.
90. In English literature results in 2001 at the highest grades, including attainment at the A\* grade, were above the national average and boys and girls did significantly better than their counterparts nationally. Many more students were entered for this subject than is the case nationally and, with nearly all being successful, the proportion obtaining a grade in the A\* to G range was close to the national average. The standards attained in these examinations were significantly better than at the time of the last inspection when results were below average. This improving trend has been maintained with the further rise in standards in the 2002 examinations. The levels of achievement in both English language and English literature in 2001 were very good when judged against the levels they obtained in the 1999 national tests.
91. Results in the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 9 were above the national average and well above average when compared to similar schools. They were in line with the school's test results in science but below those in mathematics. These results represent good achievement given that students' attainment on entry to the school was average. The 2001 results were not as good as the results obtained in 2000 and at the time of the last inspection, which were well above average, but they were better than

those of 1999 and 1998. The proportion of students attaining at the expected Level 5 and at Level 6 were average but the numbers obtaining Level 7 were high and account for the above average results overall. Boys and girls did equally well, as did students with SEN and those with EAL. The results in 2002 were an improvement on what was attained in 2001.

92. The standards of work seen in Year 9 and in Year 11 are above average and reflect students' attainment in the public tests and examinations. Students' levels of achievement are therefore good and for some groups very good. The work in English literature currently undertaken with Year 11, for example, is of an exceptionally high standard and is well above average with students attaining at A\* and A grade levels. This is because of the very good quality of the teaching and the positive attitudes students display to their work. The standard of work done in class by students of lower attainment is above national expectations because their work is planned well by teachers and adapted to meet their needs. They also receive effective support in lessons. Such students succeeded in understanding the characteristics of simple and compound sentences in a Year 9 lesson because the teacher had modified the scheme of work to take account of the needs of students with English as an additional language, monitored their progress throughout the lesson and took action to help them at appropriate times. Their levels of achievement were therefore very good. The standard of work seen in media studies in Year 11 was above average and the students were achieving well because of the very good teaching.
93. Students are confident and articulate when expressing their ideas and opinions and are sensitive to context and audience when speaking. They communicate well with each other in small group work but whole class discussion skills are not so strong; opportunities need to be provided to address this. Students listen and reflect on what is being said to them and this is a significant factor in how well they learn. Standards of reading are very good. By Year 9 students read aloud confidently and with expression and by Year 11 they have become discriminating and critical. Although many students write at length fluently and accurately, there is a minority of students, particularly in Years 7 and 8, who have difficulties with spelling, punctuation and sentence structures. Some also have difficulty organising their writing at length and need help with paragraphing. The faculty is aware of this problem and already has strategies in place to improve basic writing skills for these students. Students do use computers to improve the quality of their written work and present it in varied ways but the provision for Years 10 and 11 is not as good as that for Years 7 to 9. Students are not provided with sufficient opportunities to access computers.
94. Students achieve well because of the quality of the teaching which was good or very good in two thirds of the lessons seen. In those lessons which were deemed to be at least satisfactory teachers' subject knowledge, their planning and the quality of the relationships they had with the students were good, resulting in students making reasonable progress. The planning of lessons is a particular strength with teachers modifying their approach to take account of the needs of all groups in a class. Expectations are good and work is challenging. The result is that all students make good progress in their learning. This was seen in a Year 7 lesson on the use of the vowel where the teacher had identified the difficulties faced by students with EAL and those with SEN. Technical language was explained and the teaching approach was modified to allow for additional help for students with SEN. Consequently students enjoyed their work and made good progress. Teachers have established a positive learning environment in the classroom by building very good relationships with the students. The result is that students are attentive and keen to learn. A culture of mutual support and respect permeated all lessons seen.

95. The monitoring and assessment of students' performance in Years 7, 8 and 9 is efficiently undertaken and action is taken to address any underachievement. The same rigorous approach is not there for Years 10 and 11 and this is a management issue for the faculty to redress. Detailed and supportive comments are given regularly and there are teachers who have adopted the practice of giving written guidance on how to improve the quality of work. Care has been taken to display work which celebrates students' achievements.
96. Some of the teaching seen, however, was pedestrian and lacked pace and challenge. Students in a Year 7 class spent half the lesson needlessly revising the use of the verb and the few students who struggled did not receive the specific support they needed. The teacher of a Year 11 lesson on the novel 'Of Mice and Men' did most of the work and failed to get students thinking for themselves. This lack of challenge meant that learning opportunities were missed. Teaching was seen which enabled students to be more active in learning for themselves. Teaching was also seen which was challenging and stretched students intellectually. This faculty has not disseminated this good practice so that the emerging interactive approaches are adopted consistently and all teaching becomes rigorous and demanding.
97. The head of faculty provides very good leadership with the emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and raising standards. He has been successful in creating an open and critical but mutually supportive culture and he leads a committed and able team. Newly qualified and less experienced teachers are well nurtured and consequently make a significant contribution to the work of the faculty. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and in addition to the raising of standards there are now clear objectives to all lessons and successful strategies in place for creating positive attitudes to learning. The head of faculty is aware of what still needs to be done and how to bring about those improvements. These strategies for taking the work of the faculty forward are based on a collaborative, team approach. Students' work is monitored on a regular basis to ensure that students from varying backgrounds are attaining as they should and such work is discussed regularly at faculty meetings. Teachers observe each other teach and the faculty is now looking at ways to develop this further so that the very good practice which exists can be disseminated widely. The faculty makes good use of the resources which are available and uses display material to improve the learning environment. However, insufficient use is made of computers to support learning in Years 10 and 11 and this has a negative influence on outcomes in writing for some students. Accommodation, however, is unsatisfactory and is having a negative impact on the learning of some students. It is not possible for teachers to have their own rooms or for all lessons to be taught in specialist accommodation. Time and energy are lost in moving resources around and there is not the ownership which results in rooms being furnished and set out to reflect the culture of English work. Consequently, students are not exposed to that stimulus.
98. There is the capacity to improve further on this provision because of the commitment and expertise of the staff.

### ***Literacy***

99. The school has developed a framework to enable all members of staff to make the teaching of literacy skills a part of their routine classroom practice and this whole school approach is raising standards of literacy. The policy for cross-curricular provision is in place and members of staff have received initial training in the strategies to be adopted. There are plans to expand the training in coming months. A recent

literacy audit undertaken with Years 7, 8 and 9 revealed written accuracy in spelling and punctuation to be an area for improvement across subjects and this is now being addressed through literacy targets being given to each student together with guidance on how to improve. The work on literacy is led by a co-ordinator who monitors progress by observing lessons on a regular basis. Good advice is given to heads of faculty and heads of subjects.

100. There are instances of good practice being used at faculty level where teachers take account of students' literacy needs in their approach to their teaching. There was good use of technical vocabulary in design and technology. Business studies makes good use of presentations to develop confidence and consolidate learning. When discussion is encouraged through group work students are able to express their ideas articulately and coherently. In some subjects, however, opportunities are missed to improve speaking and listening skills when teachers accept short answers from students without challenging them to think further and explain at length. Students are encouraged to develop different kinds of writing and instances were observed of report writing in science and note-taking and written evaluations in art and design. There is a range of subject specific texts used throughout the school and as a result students have many opportunities to extend their reading ability.
101. Standards of literacy throughout the school are good. Students are confident and fluent when speaking and have the reading ability to understand the range of texts they meet in all subject areas. The number of Year 7 and 8 students at Level 3 in reading is very small and they receive effective help through the literacy progress units. Students listen well and can concentrate for long periods of time. Most are able to adapt their writing to the varied demands of the curriculum but there are those who struggle with technical accuracy.
102. The good practice which does exist now needs to be consistently applied by all subject teachers. Not every subject teacher, for example, identifies within schemes of work where the literacy skills should be in curriculum topics and so literacy aspects are then missing from some lessons. The school is aware of this and sees the need to develop more systematic procedures for monitoring and evaluating the teaching of literacy to raise standards further.

## Drama

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

### Strengths

- The level of girls' achievement at GCSE is very good.
- The quality of the teaching is good or very good.

### Areas for improvement

- Boys are not attaining the expected standards at GCSE.
- Curriculum provision is fragmented at Year 9.

103. The proportion of students attaining a grade in the A\* to C range in the 2001 drama examinations was below average because of the poor performance of the boys. Their attainment was significantly below that of boys nationally whereas the girls performed as well as their national counterparts. In the 2002 examinations there was an improvement in the proportion of boys and girls attaining the higher grades but within the school the standards obtained by the boys were still below those of the girls.

104. Standards seen in Years 10 and 11 during the course of the inspection met national expectations and the quality of the boys' work was the same as that of the girls. Boys and girls showed understanding of sensitive issues and had the ability to communicate those perceptions clearly and with feeling in a variety of ways. This was seen in a Year 11 lesson when students showed insight into the conflicts facing Indian men during the Second World War when deciding whether to enlist in the British army. The students understood the cultural and moral issues, explored them sensitively through discussion in groups and then presented their views through improvisation. The quality of this learning experience resulted from the careful planning and the pace and challenge of the teaching. Students were able to evaluate their own work and that of their peers and so were beginning to take greater responsibility for their own learning. The development of this skill should result in higher standards. Students' attitudes to the subject are very good and the respect they show for each other's contributions produce good collaborative work.
105. The standard of work seen in Year 9 also met national expectations for boys and girls. Students were confident and articulate and able to work effectively in role. Students with SEN and those with EAL contributed well in group work and in presentations and were making progress in line with their peers. Because students explored a wide range of moral, social and cultural issues the curriculum contributed significantly to their personal and social development.
106. Students achieve well in drama because of the quality of the teaching which is good or very good. Teachers are well qualified and the four non-specialists who contribute to the teaching are experienced at working in the subject. There were significant learning gains in all lessons because teachers planned well to meet the varying needs of students. There was a good balance between teacher exposition, group work, presentations and evaluations and this was seen to good effect in a Year 9 lesson on the Greek theatre when students learnt about the portrayal of dramatic tension arising from personal tragedy. This was a difficult concept for them to come to terms with but because of the good quality of the teaching and their positive attitudes to their work, all students made good progress. Teachers challenge students in their lessons and convey an enthusiasm for the subject. Class management is very good because it is rooted in respect for the students. The subject is well resourced and provided with adequate accommodation which is well used.
107. The leadership and management of the subject are good and progress has been made in recent years in improving the quality of teaching and raising standards. This is because of effective planning and the ability of teachers to communicate their enthusiasm for the subject to students. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities and students benefit from drama clubs and theatre visits as well as learning from guest speakers and actors. A weakness, however, is that drama is offered as an option in Year 9 against the second modern foreign language and therefore continuity of learning is broken for those who elect not to take the subject in Year 9 but then choose it for GCSE. In the current Year 10 there are several students in that position.
108. The department is committed to improve the quality of its provision still further.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching is very good, and there is some excellent teaching.
- Most students have a very good attitude towards work, and make very good progress.
- The quality of the presentation of students' work is very good.
- The department is well organised and very well led.

### Areas for improvement

- Assessment of progress during lessons.

109. In the year 2001 exams at the end of Year 9, the proportion of students scoring the expected Level 5 or above was well above the national average, and very high compared to schools with a similar proportion of students taking free school meals. Standards in mathematics are generally better than those in English and for similar schools, and on a par with standards in science. There is no clear difference in the performance of boys compared to girls. Results in 2002 were broadly similar to those in 2001.
110. In the GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2001, the proportion of students gaining a grade A\* to C was just above the national average. However in the 2002 examinations there was a marked improvement, by nearly ten per cent. The proportion gaining at least 1 grade A\* to G was just below the national average, but was improved in 2002. In general the results in mathematics were not as good as in most other subjects in 2001. Overall boys did better in obtaining the higher grades A\* to C than girls.
111. In work seen up to Year 9, attainment overall was above national expectations, and the achievement of the students in these three years is very good. The very good working practices instilled into the students from early on in their school careers have a major impact on this rate of improvement. Students are taught all the areas of the curriculum, and standards of algebra and geometrical representation are particularly good. Numeracy is good, although the Year 8 students often lack flexible strategies to work out unusual number problems, and many reach too quickly for their calculators. Students with SEN and those with EAL achieve as well as the other students because of the additional attention they receive from the teachers and the learning support assistants, and smaller class sizes in the lower attaining sets. Students identified as gifted in mathematics achieve very high standards.
112. Attainment in work seen in Years 10 and 11 was above national expectations. Achievement in the two years is very good at all levels of ability, including those students with SEN, EAL and for students from all backgrounds. Students cover all areas of the curriculum at a level matching their potential. Algebraic expressions and equations are used with admirable precision, and the diagrammatic representation of solutions is often very good at all levels of attainment. Standards of numeracy are adequate to support students in solving problems effectively, and students are competent and confident when using calculators for more complex calculations. The students learn how to tackle extended investigations at a level appropriate to their prior learning, and present their results in a coherent way.

113. In virtually all classrooms there is a relaxed and business-like atmosphere, with the students clearly there to work. Students are free to contribute and ask or answer questions, although the majority seem more comfortable as relatively passive receivers of knowledge and understanding. The majority of students at all levels of attainment organise their work with great care, and many take pride in the tidiness and accuracy of their work. In a few lessons a small number of boys, particularly in Years 7 to 9, take advantage of the teachers' attention being elsewhere to waste time talking amongst themselves, but this is relatively rare.
114. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good overall, although it varies from excellent to a few instances of unsatisfactory lessons. In Years 10 and 11 it is more consistent, and is very good overall. In the excellent lessons, the teachers enthuse the students, involving the whole class in an adventure of exploring the fascination of the subject as well as learning and consolidating key skills and processes. All the teachers are good mathematicians, so they can explain the basic concepts in the clearest possible way. Almost all lessons are carefully planned, and the exercises prepared for the students to practise the processes are usually well matched to their needs. A particular strength is the very positive learning atmosphere that has been created in most lessons. In the best lessons, the teacher helps the students understand the basic principles as well as being able to carry out the processes needed to get the answers to solutions. There are a variety of activities and phrases to keep the students interested, and give them real opportunities to stretch their thinking and explore their understanding of the subject. In those lessons where there are weaknesses, the teacher concentrates too much on learning processes without spending enough time understanding the key underlying principles, and there are insufficient strategies to check on what is being learned by the students, so that some make repetitive mistakes for too long before this is discovered. The teachers mark homework in great detail, giving the students clear guidance on how to improve and also encouraging them when they try hard.
115. Since the last inspection the rate at which the students learn has improved in all years. Students' attitude towards work has improved. Standards of attainment and the quality of teaching have been maintained. The course is very well managed and administered. There is a clear commitment in the department to provide the best possible mathematical education to all students regardless of their attainment level or background. The curriculum followed by the students covers all the statutory requirements, and most teachers assess each student's progress systematically so that underachievement can be identified and tackled quickly when it occurs. There is a real sense of teamwork in the department that is helping to build consistency, and is focused on the continuing need to review and improve standards. Information and communications technology has yet to be systematically and comprehensively integrated into the curriculum and this weakness sometimes impedes learning.

### **Numeracy**

116. Most of the students have a good foundation of skills and knowledge, which enables them to use number in a variety of circumstances. Some very good examples were seen in art and design, where knowledge of shape helped the students with artwork involving form, solids and proportion. The accurate interpretation of timelines enhanced studies in English and religious education, and graphical methods were effectively used in geography, science and business studies. When working with number the students use calculators confidently, but are sometimes over-reliant on them, and lack a range of strategies to work out unusual numerical calculations. There is a policy for the development of students' numeracy in all areas of the curriculum, which looks promising and is beginning to have an impact on standards.

## SCIENCE

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

### Strengths

- National tests for Year 9 students and GCSE examination results are above the national average.
- Well qualified and committed team of teachers who work well together.
- Very good leadership and management by senior staff.
- Very broad range of courses that enables students of all abilities to fulfil their potential.

### Areas for improvement

- Lack of pace and challenge and weak classroom management in some lessons in Years 7 to 9.
- Insufficient use of ICT to teach and learn science.

117. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above age-related national expectations for Year 9. This represents good achievement since the students entered the school when available indicators showed them to be broadly in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 11 standards are still above national expectations, indicating very good achievement during Years 10 to 11. Gifted and talented students and those with EAL achieve well. Students with SEN achieve very well.
118. The results for students in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were above the national average for all schools and very high compared to similar schools. The improvement in the results since 1997 has been at a rate faster than that found nationally. Boys' and girls' results were similar. GCSE results were above the national average for all schools and for similar schools in 2001. Boys' and girls' results were comparable. The high proportion of A\* grades and A\* to G grades suggests that students who are gifted and talented and those with special educational needs both do well. Indicators suggest that the test results for Year 9 in 2002 are likely to be similar to those in 2001 and GCSE results are likely to be much better, but national comparisons cannot yet be made because the national data have not yet been published.
119. By the end of Year 9 most students' attainment is above national expectations. In a Year 9 top set students observed changes in the chemical properties of solutions very carefully in an attempt to discover if a chemical reaction had taken place and were able to name the products formed. In a Year 9 middle set students could define key words associated with food webs, such as omnivore and carnivore, and most could draw their own food web. In a Year 9 lower set students could spell the technical terms associated with a food chain and arrange organisms in the correct order in a food chain but were less sure of the definition of the technical terms.
120. By the end of Year 11 most students' attainment is above national expectations. Most students in an upper set of Year 11 chemistry could predict the effects of change of pressure and temperature on the industrial production of ammonia. A middle set of Year 11 students in physics could predict the effect of changing the current and the number of coils on an electric motor. A Year 11 biology class understood the anatomy of the heart and its functions but had some misconceptions about the circulation of the blood. A middle set of Year 11 students knew the units for force, speed and acceleration and could draw distance/time graphs. They carried out a tricky practical exercise with confidence and most produced a distance/time graph by the end of the

lesson. A lower set of Year 11 science students were able to explain the effects of smoking on the lungs in their own words after seeing two memorable demonstrations.

121. Overall the standard of teaching is good; it was good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 to 11. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory. The best teaching was characterised by high expectations of students' attainment and behaviour, reinforcement of prior learning, content and methods that engaged students' interest, attention to individual needs and reinforcement of the main points at the end of the lesson. Learning is improved and students' personal development fostered by the very good relationships between students and teachers and between students. Most students behave well in class and focus on their work. A small minority of students, mainly boys in Years 8 and 9, find it difficult to concentrate and disrupt lessons. There are some weaknesses of teaching in a small minority of lessons, especially in Years 7 to 9. Slow pace and lack of challenge due to an over-reliance on a commercial scheme of work fails to engage students' interest and leads to low level disruption and reduced learning. Weaknesses in classroom management gave disruptive students an opportunity to misbehave. There is insufficient use of ICT to teach and learn science.
122. The subject is very well led and managed by the head of faculty and senior staff. They handle change with confidence. The greatest strength of the department is the presence of a team of well-qualified, experienced and committed teachers who work well together and who are anxious to improve the quality and standard of education they provide. The faculty exceeded the targets set for the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 and for GCSE in 2002. The monitoring and evaluation of students' progress is very carefully carried out and effective action taken when students are found to be underachieving. Students' attainment is analysed by gender, ethnic group and prior attainment. Resources for learning are good and accommodation much improved since the last inspection.
123. The faculty has improved since the last inspection: the GCSE results are better; the proportion of good teaching is higher; and most of the accommodation has been refurbished.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- The very good quality of teaching and learning.
- Attainment is above expectation by the end of Years 9 and 11.
- Very good progress in acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding from Year 7 to Year 11.
- The development of literacy and numeracy in art and design.

### Areas for improvement

- There is not enough use of ICT in Years 7 to 11.
- The raising of boys' attainment for the higher grades at GCSE.
- Gallery visit for Years 7 to 9.

124. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average in Years 7 to 9 and well above average in Years 10 and 11. These standards are the result of most teaching being very good. Students' levels of achievement in relation to standards on entry to the school are good by the end of Year 9 and very good by the end of Year 11.

The majority of students make at least good progress in skill development as they move through the school with gifted and talented students making very good progress. Students with SEN and those with EAL make good progress in art and design.

125. By the end of Year 9 in 2001, students' overall level of attainment in teacher assessments was well above that expected nationally. Reference cannot be made to the 2002 assessments because national comparative data has not yet been published. From the evidence of drawing, painting and sketchbook work seen, attainment is on course to be well above that expected nationally by the end of Year 9 in 2003 and confirms teachers' assessments. The best work is based on observational drawing either of natural or man-made forms or from studying the work of well-known artists. The use of ICT is less evident than might be expected.
126. By Year 11, based on work seen, standards are well above average. Year 11 girls work more independently of their teachers than boys do, as they acquire critical evaluative, as well as drawing and painting, skills. Homework research supports, enriches and extends classroom studies. ICT features less than might normally be expected by this stage and three-dimensional work is less evident than work in two dimensions. Sketchbooks are used well for research, design and the development and refinement of ideas.
127. Over the period 1999-2001 the proportion of students gaining grades in the range A\* to C is well above the national average and compares very favourably with similar schools. In 2001 girls performed better than the boys did for A\* to C grades. Boys in this school attained higher than boys did nationally for the higher grades A\* to C. Work seen in lessons confirmed this trend. In 2001 no student performed at the highest grade A\* but a significant number attained a B grade. In 2001, those gaining grades in the range A\* to G were broadly in line with the national average. Students' performance in this subject is not significantly different from that achieved in most of their other school subjects.
128. The quality of teaching, seen during the inspection, is very good with particular strengths evident in teachers' subject knowledge, the teaching of basic skills and classroom management. Teachers have good links with primary schools. The quality of the transition ensures smooth progression from one school to another. Many students enter the school with above average knowledge and understanding of, for example, colour theory. In Years 7 to 9 students make good progress in consolidating information as well as in acquiring new knowledge of artists and developing drawing, painting, collage and modelling skills. Understanding of the important part experiment and research plays in creativity is also a key feature of students' achievement as they move into Years 10 and 11. Teachers provide very good opportunities for literacy and numeracy for Years 7 to 9 but ICT is less prominent in all year groups. In Year 8, for example, students repeat shapes and forms studied previously in mathematics and learn to visualise these ideas and draw them, for example, as both transparent and solid forms. In Year 9 students learn not only to observe and record architectural details but also to develop the ability to work quickly and creatively using two different coloured pencils. During this exercise students from minority ethnic groups respond differently to pattern and colour whereas in the black and white observational study preceding it such variations are less apparent. In all lessons teachers display key words and ensure meaning is understood. Students with special literacy needs and EAL students benefit, particularly, from this emphasis. Gifted and talented students are offered extra challenges by their teachers and make very good progress. Plans are in hand to provide them with enrichment opportunities, by way of an art club. Good opportunities are allowed for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, although no

trips are provided to galleries for Years 7 to 9. Years 10 and 11 visit art galleries and explore deep emotional themes concerned with the human condition. A very good example of this is in a Year 11 student's exploration of the twin towers tragedy, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001. Teachers' individual strengths are evident in the presentations they make as well as in the range of work asked of students. One group of Year 11 students benefited from their teacher's knowledge and understanding of Georgia O'Keefe's work. Displays in one teacher's room show an expertise in textile prints and mod-roc sculptures. Another teacher specialises in photographic studies. All of these interests lead to good or very good student achievement.

129. The acting head of department was appointed in September 2002. New innovations such as a student notice board have already been installed. Improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection have been good. Statutory requirements are met, although ICT does not play a meaningful part in the art and design curriculum.

## CITIZENSHIP

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

### Strengths

- The introduction of citizenship as a National Curriculum subject has been planned well.
- Some very good teaching provides a model that can be used by the school to improve the quality of provision overall.
- The school council is effective in involving all students.
- The vocational emphasis in Years 10 and 11 offers opportunities for all students to succeed.

### Areas for improvement

- Training to ensure that all teachers feel confident to deliver the new requirements.
- The sharing of citizenship objectives with students.
- Closer links between the citizenship co-ordinator and the school council.
- The provision of suitable accommodation for citizenship lessons.

130. Currently students are on course to reach average standards by the end of Years 9 and 11 in becoming knowledgeable citizens and in developing skills of enquiry and communication. Most are enthusiastic and take an interest in what is presented to them by their teachers. Students with SEN achieve particularly well in the St John's Ambulance examination. Students with EAL also achieve well.

131. Higher attaining students achieve well in all year groups when the work is challenging and students concentrate on the task in hand. In Year 11 for example, they make good use of the opportunities offered to them because they draw on previous learning in order to understand new ideas. This was evident in a lesson concerned with government spending and ethical responsibility. Students with EAL in a very good Year 9 lesson were given opportunities to read aloud, using a play script, and achieved well, as their peers listened attentively. Boys often dominate whole class question and answer sessions whilst girls are usually given the task of acting as scribes in small discussion groups. These gender features could limit girls' progress in developing discussion skills and boys' progress in synthesising information and making clear notes. This was evident in Years 8 to 9 and also in Years 10 and 11. Students with SEN usually achieve well because both the teacher and their peers are aware of their problems and act supportively.

132. Citizenship, as a subject, is new in the school with many students just starting to develop an awareness of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society. This shows in their discussion with one another and their teachers. All students, during the inspection, benefited from the feedback they received in assemblies on how money raised by the school and donated by the school council had improved conditions for people in a South American community.
133. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is usually good or better in Years 10 and 11 but in Years 7 to 9 personal, social and health education (PSHE)/citizenship lessons seen, one-third is unsatisfactory. In the best lessons teachers have good subject knowledge, manage students well and encourage lively debate. In the unsatisfactory lessons there is little intellectual demand and on occasions teachers are late for the lesson or ignore students' interests in issues which deeply concern them such as personal experiences with the police. A constraint for even the best lessons is to be found in the range of accommodation used for citizenship/PSHE lessons. It is particularly difficult for both students and teachers to engage in meaningful discussion when students in Years 7 to 9 are enjoying noisy games outside the window.
134. The citizenship curriculum is well planned throughout the school. It meets statutory requirements.
135. The subject co-ordinator has developed a well-planned citizenship programme and produced support resources for teachers. At present, however, too little is done to monitor weak teaching to bring about improvement. Well considered plans are in place for assessment and reporting procedures but citizenship objectives are not yet shared consistently with students so that they become aware of how they can improve their performance in this subject area. The co-ordinator does not have a direct link with the school council.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Good teaching.
- Good leadership and team work.
- Good priorities for development.

### Areas for improvement

- Achievement in Years 7 to 9 could be better (*ie marking and pace and focus within and between lessons*).
- Resistant materials.
- Using computers (*including CAD/CAM*).

136. Standards by the end of Year 9 in teachers' tests were above those expected nationally in 2001. However, too few students obtained the highest levels. Standards in the work seen during the inspection week are as expected, although some work seen, for example, in jewellery, graphics electronics and textiles, is above that expected and now reaches the highest levels. The good quality of the paper prototypes for a range of hats suggests that the final products will be of the same high quality as in 2001. National comparative data is not available for 2002. Students, as they pass through Years 7, 8 and 9, learn to speak clearly and to use technical words well. They improve the quality of their writing well. However, they do not describe what they did to keep the project

moving if things had not gone as planned. Too often the students are not clear about the use to which their products will be put. Students are not used to using knowledge and skills learned in previous lessons. The work sampled shows that computers are not used often enough nor in a sufficiently wide range of tasks; too little work is done in resistant materials and this also adversely affects standards.

137. In 2001 the GCSE results overall matched the national average. The girls' results were above average. The boys' results were below average. The proportion of the Year 11 students taking the examinations was too low. Samples of work completed at the end of 2002 suggest that standards are now higher than they were in 2001, but comparative data is not yet available. They also showed students' ability to use their very good understanding of cultural diversity when adapting garment designs. The products were evaluated in use and decisions were made on the basis of good data collected. By the end of Year 11 students' attainment is above average. Current work samples show key decision points, the solving of problems using previously learned skills and good quality presentation enhanced with a thoughtfully effective combination of hand sketching and computerised graphics, for example in the project on clocks. However, computerised designing and making activity is not affecting standards sufficiently. Students do not sufficiently evaluate their sources of information although they do include the lists of books they have used.
138. Standards of behaviour are good in Years 7, 8 and 9. Behaviour is very good in Years 10 and 11. The vast majority of the students from different backgrounds listen well and work hard throughout the lessons. In a Year 8 lesson on electronics, the students were very keen because the teacher was cheerfully and enthusiastically giving them the skills and confidence they would need later on. In a Year 9 textiles lesson attitudes were also very good. The higher attaining students were forging ahead very well and independently. One minority ethnic student was taking the greatest possible care to pin the template in place ready for cutting the fabric. Another quiet student was proud to compare the paper prototype with the very good sketch she had made of a fun-type hat. One boy only just starting the project was rightly pleased with his first steps towards the designing and making of a baseball cap. In most lessons the students respond well because teachers apply consistently the schools excellent pupil management methods. However, the planned sequence of activities in Years 7 to 9 does not yet fully gain the interest of all because some projects and some lessons develop too slowly and this lack of pace affects attitudes.
139. The very good attitudes adopted by Year 11 students were most noticeable at the end of the electronics lesson. A group of minority ethnic students worked cheerfully with their teacher, learning how to make electronic circuits work again and learning to persist and to be confident especially when trying out prototype circuit assemblies when loose connections are inevitable. Very good project work on the designing and making of clocks also reflected very good attitudes and achievement.
140. The quality of the teaching and the learning are good in both Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11. Overall two out of three lessons are good or better. However the quality of the teaching in Years 7 to 9 is more varied in its quality. It ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. In the very good lessons the students were well motivated at the start of the lesson, became progressively more confident as the lessons progressed and the whole class was actively involved. Three examples follow. First, the demonstration by the teacher of a commercial product, an automatic night-light, enabled the students to see the point of the theoretical ideas being discussed and they persisted with renewed enthusiasm. Second, the students were obliged to think things through on paper before using the computers and therefore worked more independently at the machines. Third,

very well managed skills and concept development over a sequence of lessons enabled the textiles teacher in this lesson to concentrate on those who needed support, so that all did very well. One lesson was unsatisfactory because a second task was introduced before the first had been properly completed. The GCSE projects are very accurately marked to convey the standard achieved against examination requirements and so identifying what students need to do to improve their grade. However, in Years 7 to 9 the teachers' encouraging written comments are too frequently ignored because they are not written as specific tasks for prompt completion. Similarly, when the targets were not precisely defined at the beginning of the lesson, the review at the end did not involve all effectively.

141. The leadership and management of the department are good. Having been in post for only three weeks, the new acting head of department is already beginning to create a cheerfully effective team of specialist teachers. The accommodation is better used than it was last school year when key specialist teachers were simply not available. However, despite recent good improvements, some furnishings and equipment are not yet in a sufficiently good condition to improve achievement. There is overcrowding in some rooms, for example computing and textiles. The provision for resistant materials technology is in the process of being restored and improved but its impact is not apparent in recorded work. Since the last inspection improvement has been satisfactory. Standards have been maintained to match more challenging national requirements. Also there are encouraging signs of improvement. More students are attracted to a wide range of short courses in the subject. There is now a well-qualified technician in post and the teaching team is more stable than it has been in the recent past.

## GEOGRAPHY

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

### Strengths

- Teaching is good overall so students learn effectively.
- Students show enthusiasm and behave very well because lessons are interesting and teachers manage students skilfully.
- Very good assessment information helps teachers to develop the curriculum and its teaching so learning continues to improve.
- Regular and communicative marking helps students know how they can do better.
- Teachers use very good teaching methods that make all students feel included in lessons.

### Areas for improvement

- The recruitment of girls in Years 10 and 11 so that there is a better gender balance.
- Pace and the match of work to students' abilities in a small minority of lessons.

142. At the end of Year 9 in 2001 standards judged by teachers were broadly as expected. In 2002 teachers' assessments show an improvement in students' standards and similarly indicate standards above expectations. By the end of Year 11 students attained slightly below average for grades A\* to C, but above average for grades A\* to G. Boys attained in line with the average for boys, but girls were below the average for girls. Boys choose geography in larger numbers than girls do in Years 10 and 11. In relation to their attainment at the start of the GCSE course students achieved comfortably in line with expectations in 2001. The percentage of grades A\* to C in 2002 was below the previous year because their coursework was graded lower. The school

has requested re-moderation of the sample of students' coursework. No comparative data are yet available for 2002. Over recent years, and since the previous report, standards in GCSE have improved steadily.

143. Students attain above expected standards in work seen by the end of Year 9. They use a variety of methods to record facts and analysis. For example, they use a table to set out statements about the different effects of an earthquake in Los Angeles. They acquire the ability to interpret information given by graphs, for example how the demand for electricity varies during the day, and depending on season. Much emphasis is given to literacy. Students record notes neatly using bullet-points and arrows. They develop research skills and present their work in long pieces of writing. Higher attaining students delve into topics at greater depth than lower attaining students, and write more extensively. Students respond enthusiastically to opportunities to use ICT, and produce very high quality data-handling work. Year 9 students investigate the weather of Antarctica using a range of websites and produce very attractive factsheets on the region. Their sense of responsibility for the environment develops well, and they understand the conflicting demands for motorways and improving the quality of towns and countryside.
144. Students continue to achieve well by the end of Year 11 and standards match those expected. They develop their skills of undertaking fieldwork investigations by testing hypotheses. For example, Year 10 students made a comparison of two tributaries of the River Thames – the rivers Chess and the Mole. They collected data on the depths of the rivers at various points, using statistics to construct cross-sectional drawings. Such tasks develop students' literacy and numeracy skills, and also their application of ICT. Some higher attaining students excel in this independent work. Lower attaining students find the organisation of such work challenging and do not probe sufficiently. Students' understanding of global issues is extended, such as the population growth in countries like China. They interpret population pyramid graphs to identify patterns, for example how age distribution varies by country. Students with SEN achieve very well and make very good progress by the end of Year 9 and Year 11.
145. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It shows improvement since the previous inspection. In about six lessons in ten teaching is very good, and it is satisfactory in the remaining lessons. Teachers use their very good knowledge of geography and their students' ability to plan lessons that will promote very good learning. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on birth rates and death rates students recalled these terms accurately from the previous lesson. Students enjoyed the challenge of explaining from the front of the class how events may influence these rates. Teachers plan activities so students share their learning through lively discussion in small groups. They give suitable tasks so students with SEN may work by themselves, and achieve the overall learning targets set for the class. In very good lessons the choice of resources has a positive impact on students' learning. For example, a Year 10 lesson focused on population control in China. Students used a number of sources of information on the effects of the policy on a family to gauge how it affects people's lives. They prepared in groups an account as radio journalists for broadcasting (to the class) in the next lesson. Students have very good attitudes because they enjoy such activities. They behave well because teachers have high expectations and manage them skilfully. In a very few otherwise satisfactory lessons slow pace and insufficient provision for the different ability groups led to slower progress, and unsatisfactory behaviour by a very small number of boys in Year 10. Work is marked regularly, often with comments that help students to know what they can do to improve. Homework is set to research learning of the current topic. Some assignments extend over a number of weeks.

146. The head of department gives very clear direction and leadership to the subject, and monitors standards and teaching quality very effectively. A very good assessment system is in place and is used to evaluate the curriculum so that it progressively improves. The very good practice of departmental review identifies priorities for development annually. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. There is a strong team of teachers all committed to maintaining the highest standards. Accommodation is too small to accommodate some classes in Years 10 and 11 because the subject is popular, especially with boys. The department is considering ways to make the subject attractive to more girls.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- Attainment at the end of Year 9 is above national expectations and at the end of Year 11 it is well above the national average.
- The department is well managed.
- Students work hard and have very positive attitudes to the subject.
- Teaching of the skills required for the study of history is very good and teaching overall is good.
- The approach to learning is exceptionally inclusive.
- The subject makes a very valuable contribution to students' skills in literacy and to the development of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.

### Areas for improvement

- Some rooms used to teach history provide a poor learning environment.
- During the inspection computers were not used in the classroom.
- Induction lessons in Year 7 provide a useful introduction to history in the secondary phase but there is not enough focus on content directly related to the subject.

147. Attainment at the end of Year 9 in the school's assessment tests and as observed in lessons is above that expected of students of similar age. Students show a level of knowledge and understanding above that expected nationally. They also have a good understanding of how to use sources of evidence and written work shows that many can write about history well and at length when required. Those who find written work more difficult show their knowledge in discussion and other oral work. Standards seen overall are above average and students achieve very well, particularly as many enter the school with below average skills in literacy.
148. GCSE results in 2001 were above the national average for the majority of students. The results of boys were particularly good in comparison with national trends. In 2002 results were even better and work observed during the inspection indicates that the well above expected standards in the present Year 11 are at least as high as in 2001. The trend is one of a noticeable improvement in standards since the last inspection. Standards are high in Years 10 and 11 because of the quality of teaching within the department and because the vast majority of students have positive attitudes to their work in class. They achieve well.
149. In Year 9 students are all able to write about and understand the major events of previous centuries, and knowledge of key developments in the periods they study is often good. Written work is good for the majority of students. Higher attaining students

are able to express their ideas really well and they can show how events link together and thus that they understand cause and effect. In discussion and in written work students of average levels of attainment show that they understand how to use a variety of sources of evidence. This is a feature of work in Year 8 where they use portraits of Elizabeth I to gain an understanding of political propaganda and symbolism in the Tudor period. In Year 9 students of below average attainment and those with SEN show that they have a clear understanding of what it meant to be a slave. The department encourages discussion of many issues and contributes well to students' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. All students empathise with the slaves and the highest attaining students have a clear understanding of the economic factors that underpinned the trade in human lives. Students also study the African background and can understand that in many ways the people there were more civilised than their European masters.

150. In Year 10 students are clearly making good progress in acquiring the skills required for their GCSE in Year 11. Lower attaining students understand the economic impact of war and they can explain the reasons for population mobility and rationing in the USA in 1941. All show a clear understanding of segregation and how it affected life in the army and at home. In Year 11 many students have a very good knowledge of the topics that they have studied and a student was able to compare the way Indian troops were used in the British army between 1914 and 1918 with the racist attitudes prevalent in the USA in 1941. The majority of students have completed coursework on Jack the Ripper, which shows that they are able to use evidence well. Students, including those with SEN, understand the desire for independence in India. Higher attaining students have a clear understanding of why Great Britain was reluctant to grant independence and they use complex vocabulary with confidence. Students of average ability understand that that not everyone viewed the Amritsar massacre or the role of General Dyer in the same way. Students are all clear about the role of the press in influencing public opinion, indicating that the subject is making a valuable contribution to their understanding of citizenship. This ability to link cause and effect and to use varied sources of evidence well indicates that they have the levels of skill, knowledge and understanding to reach the higher grades at GCSE.
151. Learning is well managed in history and teaching is good overall. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. Questioning is effectively used to assess understanding and to encourage students to think carefully and evaluate evidence. There is a consistent focus on providing the opportunity for the improvement of skills in literacy. The identification of key words, good variety of tasks and writing frames to help those of lower potential attainment are all key features of lessons. Students who are using English as an additional language are well supported. Computers are used by all students in studying specific topics and in the production of coursework. However they are not used as an integral part of learning in lessons, although overhead projectors and video are used well.
152. Tasks and resources are usually well matched to the attainment of students of different ability. This match ensures a good quality of learning for students, including those with SEN. Resources are good and students use high quality booklets that have been produced by the department. However some lessons are taught in unattractive and overcrowded classrooms and this adversely affects the quality and range of learning activities available in them. Lessons are well planned and have clear objectives although in some lessons pace is a little slow and more could be covered in the time available. Learning is good in Years 7 to 9 because students have the opportunity to develop skills in history as they progress through the school and tasks set for

homework link well with work in class. Lessons in Year 7 show that there is a clear focus on the skills used by the historian. Although this approach to learning provides a good link between work in primary and secondary school, the present planning does not provide enough history content because the type of material used is not related to any specific topic in history. At present students are not given sufficient opportunity to work in pairs and groups for discussion. There is not enough really independent work as textbooks or photocopied sheets are used for research tasks. Personal targets are set and students are assessed effectively ensuring that progress is carefully monitored.

153. Students with SEN make good progress because of the good quality of support available and the good use of appropriate resources. The highest attaining students are challenged by the approach and content of most lessons. The ethos of the department is one of inclusion and students from all backgrounds work together very well. Curriculum development, especially the introduction of new modules on local, Black and Asian history, has been a strong feature of work in the department.
154. The department is well managed, particularly in the development of resources. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Monitoring of teaching ensures that resources and assessment procedures are being effectively used to promote the systematic build up skills and knowledge and to ensure that all students have a relevant and interesting experience in studying history. Improvement since the last inspection has clearly been good.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

### Strengths

- The high standards achieved by students in the GNVQ.
- The quantity and quality of the ICT equipment.
- The outstanding leadership and management of ICT.
- The quality of the technical support offered by the systems manager and the technician.
- The procedures for assessing the level of students' work.

### Areas for improvement

- To extend the formal discrete subject teaching of ICT into Year 8.
- To appoint an ICT teacher additional to the current vacancy.
- To extend and enhance the analysis of assessments and examination results as planned.
- The installation of broadband access to the Internet.

155. Students enter the school with few, if any, ICT skills and standards are significantly below expectations. By the end of Year 9 standards are higher but still below expectations. This is because ICT is currently taught as a discrete subject only in Year 7 and through its application in other subjects. That provision does not fully meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, although there are very positive departmental planning commitments to extend curriculum time to include Year 8 and to appoint an additional appropriately qualified teacher. Students in Year 7 are learning how to access the school's computer system and their own folders within it. They are also learning to touch-type with some early success for a minority who can already do some very

simple editing in 'Word'. Though a significant number of students acquire a modest degree of competence by the end of Year 9, those skills are not coherently learned and often represent what has been self-taught on their own equipment at home. As a result of this, too many students in Year 7 have poor keyboard skills and limited knowledge of how to use and employ software applications.

156. Provision in Years 10 and 11 is very good. By the end of Year 11 attainment is above expectations and students achieve very well. In 2001, results in GNVQ (Part 1), which is equivalent to two GCSE passes, were impressive. They indicate a significant level of achievement by students considering their lack of prior formal teaching and also represent a significant improvement on the standards at the time of the previous inspection. Using wordprocessing, students in Year 10 are beginning to edit text documents competently and quickly and have learned to use the spell-checking function, although lower attaining students tend to use inappropriate techniques in their work. A small minority have very weak typing skills and lack sufficient familiarity with the keyboard. Almost all students, however, compose text direct to screen, which is a higher order skill. A majority are using good enhancing features such as WordArt and Textboxes and a minority of the more talented are using the AutoShapes function well. Little evidence was observed of students using presentation software or desktop publishing. The content of their GNVQ course is not restricted to ICT skills and students have evaluated commercial documents and subsequently designed business letters, agendas and minutes successfully in their correct format.
157. The quality of students' learning is good for students in Years 7, 10 and 11 and for a large minority of these students it is very good. Where learning is at least good, students respond well to encouraging relationships and challenging work. They volunteer answers to questions, work co-operatively with each other and sustain a reasonably high level of concentration. They work well on their own and develop confidence as well as extending their skills and have progressed well from a poor knowledge and experience base. Most behaviour is good, even though teachers often have to work hard to keep students focused, as a number of individual students present quite challenging behaviour. Consequently their level of achievement overall is better than expected.
158. The quality of teaching overall is good. Relationships are good. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good. It results in very clearly explained objectives or procedures, often supported by up-to-date technological resources which gain students' interest and gives them confidence. The very good resources stimulate interest and also enable teachers to deliver a high level of individual support during practical assignments. Teachers are aware of the needs of students with SEN and work effectively to meet their needs. There is an effective integration of the work of the support assistants into the teaching. Both learning support assistants and teachers plan and work co-operatively together and as a result lessons are planned well so that students with SEN make good progress whilst alternative tasks can offer greater challenge to those who are more talented. The impact of this good progress is observed in the high level of the 2001 GNVQ results, which represents a considerable improvement on the previous report.
159. Leadership and management of the faculty are excellent. The lack of discrete ICT teaching in Year 8 is outside of his control. The major improvement in the provision of equipment and its organisation is testimony to coherent planning. The ICT co-ordinator has a clear and well thought out vision of developments, some of which have already been realised. Immediate decisions are also well considered, such as that to discontinue the use of e-mailing pending the installation of broadband access, to avoid

overloading the current system. In this he has been greatly assisted by the technical and educational perception of the systems manager, whose contribution to planning has been significant, since September 2002 and the support of the senior manager, who has overall responsibility for ICT. Relationships between staff in the faculty are good and future proposed developments are discussed in a forum that includes representatives from all the faculties. Teaching in the faculty is monitored by the co-ordinator. There are very good assessment procedures in place within ICT although analysis to date has not been as comprehensive as is planned. Assignments are marked thoroughly and the derived grades are used to set individual targets. The analysis of assessments and examination results are not rigorously developed along the lines planned. There are effective back-up and security systems in place for the administration and curriculum networks. There are also very effective measures in place for child protection in relation to Internet access.

### ***Information and communication technology across the curriculum***

160. Provision for ICT across the curriculum is **satisfactory**.
161. The use of ICT is included in the schemes of work of all faculties but it is underdeveloped, a further reflection of students' generally hitherto limited experience. Its application is good in business education, where the level of teachers' ICT skills is very high. ICT is an integral element of the GNVQ, AVCE and A-level courses followed and it is used well, although without the level of sophistication normally observed. Wordprocessing is used in a wide variety of ways particularly to enhance students' written work and the Internet is used for individual research. For example, although spreadsheets are used very effectively to model cash flows, students do not show evidence of using its more advanced features. In design and technology, where the level of teachers' ICT skills is also very high, students use ICT effectively to investigate control systems, such as linking the electronic operation of fans and windows in a greenhouse to temperature sensors. It is good also in geography, where Year 9 students have consulted a number of websites in their research into Antarctica and have collated the evidence and information gained into a well produced booklet using desktop publishing skills, enhanced by the addition of scanned and downloaded photographs. It is used well in the learning support department to extend literacy and numeracy skills and also to improve manual dexterity and hand-to-eye co-ordination using 'Mavis Beacon', a commercially developed touch typing software package.
162. The use of ICT in mathematics, music and science is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has offered positive guidelines to almost all subject teachers in the use of ICT in their teaching but heads of faculties do not organise and manage the use of ICT coherently enough nor integrate it effectively into their schemes of work.
163. The co-ordinator liaises with other faculty representatives to monitor the quality of teaching across all subjects. There are good assessment procedures in place for ICT across the curriculum. There are also very effective measures in place for child protection in relation to Internet access, which includes the monitoring of all traffic by the technical staff. All staff have completed the national training programme and the vast majority are committed to the principle of integrating the use of ICT into their teaching and learning strategies. There is good access to computer facilities in all the teaching blocks but only experience will build full confidence in all teachers; to help in this, technical support is usually on hand in case of difficulties with the school's system.

### **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

Overall, the quality of provision for modern foreign languages is **very good**.

**Strengths**

- GCSE results in French, German and Spanish have improved considerably since the last inspection despite a dip two years ago, and are now, overall, above average.
- Teaching is good and often very good, and learning is good in response.
- Behaviour in lessons is good overall and is often very good.
- The head of faculty's leadership is of high quality and the teaching team is very committed to improvement.
- Three languages are provided from Year 7 to Year 13.

**Areas for improvement**

- In Years 7 to 9, the amount of written work set and the quality of marking are not always consistent across the year.
- Higher attainers in mixed-ability classes in Years 8 and 9 are not always challenged sufficiently.
- Strategies for improving literacy are not firmly in place in Years 7 to 9.

164. GCSE results in German and Spanish in 2001 were above average, and in French well above average. This was a considerable improvement over the previous year and represented an improvement overall over three years, despite a dip in 2000. The 2001 students performed significantly better in languages than in almost all their other subjects. In Spanish, girls did better than in all their other subjects. Fluctuations, such as the dip in 2000, have been largely the result of changes in staffing and teacher absence. In 2002, German results dipped to below average because of the absence of a head of department, but high standards in French were maintained, and in Spanish results improved even further. The department reached its school target overall.
165. Standards in lessons and other work of current Year 9 students, and the exercise books of previous Year 9 students, are above average overall. The vast majority of students participate well in chorus-work and practise pronunciation frequently. They enjoy pair work and co-operate well in practising dialogues. Students are used to hearing the foreign language spoken for instructions and most follow them easily. Students have opportunities to read out loud, and on these occasions most demonstrate good accents. As might be expected, a minority of lower attaining students in the mixed-ability groups have greater difficulty in following instructions and in recalling vocabulary. Writing skills develop well in the mixed-ability classes of Year 7, but in Year 8 in all languages and in Year 9 in German progress is more uneven in the mixed-ability classes, as the gap between the attainment of higher and lower attainers widens. In these classes, a significant number of students, particularly the higher attainers and the lowest attainers with special educational needs, are not consistently given work that meets their needs. In Year 9, classes are setted by attainment in French, and the higher attainers and the students in the smaller groups for lower attainers make good progress in writing skills, especially when they receive additional support. Overall, much of the written work is presented well, but accuracy and presentation are unsatisfactory in the work of a minority of students.
166. Standards in the lessons and other work of current Year 11 students are also above average. Students' speaking and listening skills develop well within the close framework of the examination syllabuses. In reading, most students revise and extend their vocabulary well. In writing the higher attainers learn to use the past and future tenses appropriately, and are guided well by teachers to produce accurate lengthy accounts of,

for example, their holidays and school experiences. Middle and lower attainers write shorter accounts and letters more simply, but show good understanding of the guidance they receive.

167. Overall, progress is good, mainly because of the good teaching. Students with SEN progress well in the smaller groups created for them, where the teaching is mostly good and meets their needs. They achieve well in Year 7, and in the large mixed-ability groups in Years 8 and 9 provided they receive well-informed support. On the rare occasions when they do not have such support their achievement is only satisfactory, and is sometimes unsatisfactory. Students with EAL achieve as well as others in the class, or even better. They know that their knowledge of their home language is valued. The talented students who take Latin achieve very well in learning grammar, particularly in Years 10 and 11, and also delight in seeing similarities and contrasts across the languages they learn.
168. The quality of teaching is good overall; in a significant number of lessons it is very good. As a result, students learn well. The main feature of the good teaching is that all teachers use the foreign language well as the main means of communication in the classroom. Over a third of the teachers are native-speakers, trained to teach in this country. Their mode of pronunciation is therefore an excellent model for students to copy. All teachers use chorus-work and pronunciation practice very well to raise the level of the students' confidence in their own speaking and listening skills. Although there are some variations, overall teachers manage students effectively, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Students are encouraged to concentrate and listen carefully to the teacher and other students. A small number of teachers have some difficulty in managing a minority of boys in the large mixed-ability classes in Years 8 and 9.
169. Teachers plan lessons very well to include the full range of attainment targets. They draw on a wide range of resources, including whiteboards, PowerPoint presentations, imaginatively produced overhead transparencies and other visual aids. These features help to stimulate students' effort and pace of work. However, the quality of written work is weaker than it might be because teachers do not always require high standards of presentation and accuracy.
170. In general, students enjoy their language lessons and most participate well and have very positive attitudes towards languages. Boys, unusually, are keen to do well, and most enjoy the competitive element of language learning. They are very well represented in the top sets in Years 9, 10 and 11, in contrast to the national picture.
171. The head of faculty in most respects provides very good leadership. He manages effectively a very hard-working team committed to improvement and the raising of standards. The present aim of establishing consistency of provision across the three languages is being worked on carefully and thoroughly. Even so, monitoring of written work across teaching groups in Years 7 to 9 is not yet thorough enough to ensure consistency in marking and in the amount of work undertaken by students. The department has developed stimulating new initiatives - such as the introduction of Italian to the range of second foreign languages in Year 9. The very well chosen resources and good accommodation improve learning.

## **Latin**

172. Latin is taken from Years 7 to 9 and as an option in Year 10 for early GCSE entry, by students identified by the school as being particularly talented. In most years the majority of students in the Year 9 group continues into Year 10 and takes GCSE. GCSE

results in Latin are consistently well above average, and the numbers entered are relatively high. In 2001, 24 students entered and all gained a grade between A\* and C. In 2002, the number of students entered rose to 37, and 26 gained an A\* or A grade.

173. The progress made by these students is excellent, considering that several of the lessons take place both before and after school. In one Year 8 lesson seen before school started, students showed considerable interest in the subject and had very positive attitudes towards this opportunity for enrichment.

## MUSIC

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

### Strengths

- Standards attained by students in GCSE examination.
- Enriching programme of extra-curricular activities.
- Quality of and provision for instrumental teaching.

### Areas for improvement

- Assessment procedures to effectively monitor student progress and ensure they know how to improve their work
- Students do not reflect, assess and discuss their work using musical language.
- Revision of the scheme of work for students in Years 7 to 9, to ensure all programmes of study are covered evenly, including music from other cultures.
- Improve access to appropriate and regular use of ICT equipment to support music learning.

174. The teacher assessments of students' work at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicate standards well above national expectations for both boys and girls. However, these assessments are based on end-of-year tests and reflect only a small part of the music curriculum. Students' performing skills are higher than their improvising, appraising and evaluating skills. This is because opportunities are not planned into lessons for students to discuss and evaluate their own and others' music. Students can play simple melodies fluently on keyboards and glockenspiels, reading from staff notation. They are able to identify treble clef notes accurately and relate them to classroom percussion instruments. They are taught to use correct finger technique when playing keyboards and this aids their rhythmic and melodic fluency. In a Year 8 lesson students played a simple melody, then composed and performed a counter melody. Three students were able to introduce quavers into their melody to provide an interesting contrast.
175. Students study for music at GCSE during twilight lessons completing the course in one year. The time allowance is less than expected. Results achieved are above national expectations with boys and girls achieving equally. These results indicate good progress. During the last three years (1999 – 2001) though, no students have achieved the highest grades.
176. Standards in lessons observed for students in Years 7 to 9 match those expected nationally. Some Year 7 students have limited prior knowledge and experience of music and take time to settle sensibly to their work. Because they are not used to using instruments they lack the technical and performance skills expected. By the end of Year 9 students have become competent performers and music readers. In these aspects of music all students make good progress. Overall all students, including

those with SEN and EAL, make satisfactory progress. This is because on occasions tasks are not structured carefully enough to ensure that they can achieve as well as can be expected. During the inspection GCSE students had just begun their course. However, from taped recordings students can compose with understanding of rhythmic variation and sequences to create tension in their compositions. Several students make effective use of chord progressions and their initial ideas are developed using question and answer techniques. Few students make use of ICT to assist compositions.

177. Teaching and learning are satisfactory for students in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. The main difference is because the lessons for examination students, despite the limited amount of time, are clearly designed to support and fulfil the examination requirements. The best lessons are characterised by review of learning and setting clear expectations in lessons. The teachers are skilful performers with good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for their subject. They use personal knowledge of musical repertoire in their lessons. Attention is always paid to musical technique and performance. A lesson for Year 9 students showed good concentration and application in order to perform a short piece fluently with higher attaining students adding chords to the piece. However, in the less effective lessons there is insufficient variety in the tasks set and they last for too long. These defects mean that students' learning suffers as a result of losing concentration and application. Overall there is little variety in teaching styles and as a result lessons are teacher led at all times with little time for students to experience working in small groups. Students' literacy skills are not developed as opportunities are missed during lessons to reinforce and develop musical language through speaking and writing. Students are not given enough time to express their own opinions and ideas. This lack of challenge means that they are unable to compare, contrast and evaluate music in order to make improvements to their work. There is insufficient ICT used to support music learning; at present it is only used occasionally by examination students.
178. There are a varied number of ensembles that perform regularly. Rehearsals are conducted professionally and students enjoy the social interaction showing good commitment to attending rehearsals regularly. The school funds high quality instrumental lessons and the department actively encourages students to have lessons.
179. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Accommodation is much improved and more students are studying music for GCSE examination. The organisation of the department is satisfactory and staff have clear roles and responsibilities. However, a number of whole school initiatives have still to be embraced by the department. At present the system for assessment is unsatisfactory and does little to measure student progress in different areas of music. Information is not shared with students to help them understand how to improve their work. At present lessons for students in Years 7 to 9 do not cover all parts of the curriculum. Insufficient time is spent exploring music from other cultures and enabling students to improvise and create their own music. This means that students do not have sufficient breadth of experience, as their studies are too narrow.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The quality of provision in physical education is **very good**.

### Strengths

- Consistently good teaching in which relationships between teachers and students are

very positive.

- Improving examination results.
- The interest and enthusiasm shown by the students.

Areas for improvement

- Extend the use of ICT particularly with examination classes.
- Establish a permanent base for teaching the theoretical elements of the examination course.
- Increase storage provision at the school field.

180. On the basis of the assessments undertaken by teachers, standards at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were above average. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment by the majority of students in the present Year 9 matches expectations and remains similar to the picture described at the time of the previous inspection. Students in Years 7 to 9 perform well in a range of activities that during the inspection included football, netball, rugby, gymnastics, dance, volleyball and trampolining. The attainment of non-examination students in Years 10 and 11 also matches those expected nationally and remains similar to the situation described at the time of the last inspection. A number of individual students of all ages attain standards above those expected and have represented the borough or county in football, netball, athletics and cross-country running. In 2001, 42 per cent of students entered for the GCSE examination gained the higher A\* to C grades. These figures were below the national average. The percentage of students in the Year 11 group who sat the examination was above average. The most recent examination, sat in 2002, produced a dramatic increase in the number of students achieving the higher grades. A total of 76 per cent of students entered obtained A\* to C grades. Again the proportion of students in the Year 11 group who sat the examination was above average. These results are the highest ever recorded by the faculty. Unlike the previous year, boys achieved better than girls. In both years all students entered achieved A\* to G grades.
181. A scrutiny of coursework and observation of theory lessons indicate that students in the present Year 11 have a good understanding of the theoretical aspects of the course. For example, in one lesson observed they demonstrated a sound grasp of the skills necessary to analyse performance. The work seen suggests that above average standards are being maintained by the majority of students following the examination syllabus.
182. The achievement of students in Years 7 to 9 is good. On entry, the ability level of the students varies considerably but the majority have progressed well in the very short time that they have been in school. Most are adapting well to the new demands that are being placed on them. One Year 7 class worked enthusiastically in a dance lesson to produce a short sequence for warming up. Another Year 7 group applied themselves conscientiously when developing their passing skills in football. A minority of students in Year 8 can perform some basic gymnastic movements with control, but their overall attainment is below that expected. In Year 9 where students have just been introduced to trampolining, most are beginning to work with confidence in developing their basic bounces as well as understanding the important safety features. In the extra-curricular activities observed, many Year 7 and 8 students achieved well in football and netball. Students with SEN and students from minority ethnic backgrounds progress as well as others. One student with special needs gained a high grade in the most recent GCSE examination. The achievement of non-examination students in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. These students still have only one lesson of physical education each week, as was the case at the time of the previous report.

183. The quality of teaching and learning is good or very good in almost all lessons. On occasions teaching is excellent. Class management is very effective and practices that are both progressive and challenging encourage the students to make good progress. Students respond very positively to the teaching that they receive. They are always correctly dressed for physical activity and levels of participation are high throughout the school. Consequently the quality of learning is good overall. The poor behaviour of a small minority of boys in one lesson only detracted from the work of others. That was an exception. Teachers have effective strategies for handling potentially challenging behaviour. Overall the standard of behaviour in lessons is very good. Teachers make effective use of a good range of learning resources. Relationships between teachers and students are consistently good and encourage learning at all levels of ability. In Year 7, for example, the methodical but good-humoured approach shown by the teacher gave students the confidence to progress in dance. The same calm well-organised approach was shown in another Year 7 lesson where students were introduced to a number of gymnastic movements for the first time. A similar situation was observed in a Year 11 GCSE theory lesson where the teacher's enthusiasm and careful planning resulted in the students remaining completely focused throughout. Their learning was very good as a consequence. Students in both Year 10 and Year 11 who are following the GCSE course show a ready willingness to work with persistence and determination in order to improve. They co-operate well together, they are highly motivated and they conduct themselves with considerable maturity in lessons.
184. The departmental staff, helped by one or two other colleagues, offer a very good range of extra-curricular activities for students of all ages. During the inspection the inter-house football and netball competitions, that are open to all students, were extremely well attended. The Year 7 competition, for example, attracted 107 students, whilst about 50 students attended the Year 9 activities. More than 50 students also took part in a cross-country event at Horsenden Hill during inspection week, enjoying success in all age groups from Year 7 to seniors. The annual dance evenings also attract large numbers, whilst at different times of the year activities such as gymnastics, trampolining and athletics are offered. The school competes against schools in a range of different sports. The current Year 8 and Year 11 netball teams are borough champions. The 1<sup>st</sup> XI football team hold the Middlesex Cup. The school are also borough gymnastic champions. Students of various ages have won the local athletic championships for the past three years. Higher attaining students are encouraged to develop their skills further through very good links with local clubs. These include Perivale Athletics Club, Ealing and Southall Swimming Club, Elthorpe Park Trampolining Club, Academy Netball Club and London Towers Basketball Club. Gifted and talented students also benefit from occasional visits from club coaches. A netball coach worked with girls from Years 11 to 13 during the inspection week.
185. Leadership and management of the faculty are very good. The faculty staff are committed, hard working and enthusiastic. They are functioning well as a team in difficult circumstances, particularly regarding the current shortage of available accommodation. This follows the temporary loss of one of the two gymnasias and the fitness room as a result of the current building work. Several positive developments have taken place since the last inspection. The introduction of single sex games in Year 9, coupled with the setting arrangements, has resulted in improved standards of performance. Increasingly high numbers of boys and girls are opting for the full GCSE course. Academic and practical standards have improved significantly since the last inspection. The GCSE short course has been introduced this school year as a pilot scheme for all students in Year 10. One member of the faculty has recently completed work on revising the existing assessment procedures and the new arrangements will

be put into place this term. The faculty does not have a permanent base for teaching the theoretical elements of the examination syllabus, making it more difficult for staff to organise this aspect of the work in the way that they would like. The faculty has also identified the need to make greater use of ICT where appropriate, particularly for examination students. The school has applied for funding to undertake the much-needed resurfacing of the tennis courts and netball areas. There is also an urgent need to improve the existing storage facilities at the extensive playing fields that are about a mile from the school.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- Good leadership by the head of department who has introduced a number of new examination courses and ensured that statutory requirements are met.
- The majority of teachers use good behaviour management strategies that focus students' attention on learning.
- Good relationships mean that students are confident to share their views and as a result the whole class make gains in learning.
- A structured assessment scheme for Years 7 to 9.

### Areas for improvement

- Marking and homework are not always effectively used to raise standards.
- Year 7 are not consistently challenged as some of the teaching content pays too much attention, for too long a period, on work covered in junior school.
- The quality of report writing for parents is variable, with some giving very little detailed information about what has been learnt.
- Accommodation, staffing and curriculum structures are not supportive of really good provision.
- More visits and visitors for Years 7 to 9.

186. Results for the GCSE short course were in line with the national average in terms of passes at grades A\* to C in 2001. The provisional results for 2002 are better, reflecting an upward trend since the introduction of this course for all students in 1998. The GCSE results in 2002 indicate that the A\* to C pass grades are higher than in the previous year. There was a significant variation in the results between boys and girls with girls being far more successful. This is a new phenomenon, and the head of department is investigating the cause. In 2001, the results for the GCSE full course were below the national average. There were no entries in 2002.

187. By Year 9, the attainment of the majority of the students is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Students know about the principal religions and have had some opportunity to consider personal responses to questions about the meaning of life and the existence of God. Too little detailed writing at length in Years 7 and 8 precludes an in depth consideration of these questions and as a consequence the progress of gifted and talented students is on occasions unsatisfactory. Good work on moral issues was seen. Higher attaining students in Year 9 use research and ICT to produce good quality project work on religious pilgrimages, although the use of these skills is not very common. There is not a range of visits and visitors to gain the interest of and to motivate students in Years 7 to 9.

188. The majority of students in Year 11 following a GCSE short course attain standards above the national average. Students in Year 10 reach standards in line with what is expected for their age group. Scrutiny of the work in books indicates that there is generally a brisk pace of learning and by the end of the course most students show an awareness of the teaching of the main world religions, particularly Christianity. They write competently about monotheistic and other views and higher attaining students produce good work on absolute and relative morality. The wide range of ability and the very small number of students in the full GCSE class make it difficult to judge overall attainment at the end of the course. Certainly, about a third are reaching high standards, studying an option that reflects their faith background and facilitates a good debate about a range of moral and social issues.
189. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Very good teaching was seen in Year 8 and excellent teaching in a Year 11 class. Specialist teachers did the majority of the teaching that was good or better. Their very good subject knowledge enables students to more easily understand and link concepts. Good background knowledge stimulates interest, promoting a good Year 8 discussion on the expansion of Islam in Arabia. Teacher expertise was most effectively used to pinpoint requirements for higher achievement in a Year 11 class. Some of the non-specialist teachers rely too heavily on the prepared materials and worksheets, especially in Years 7 to 9 lessons. These lessons are sound but do not sparkle. Students with SEN make good progress in relation to their prior attainment, responding well to the support of teachers and special needs staff. The majority of teachers manage behaviour well so that all can concentrate. Thorough question and answer sessions test and confirm previous learning. Most teachers stress the importance of the correct use of subject language, thereby helping the development of literacy skills. Good relationships give students the confidence to share concerns and ideas, increasing their capacity to learn. However, there is scope for improvement in homework and marking. Homework too frequently consists of requests to finish work started in class with no additional work for the more able. The quality of marking is inconsistent. Not all students are given clear guidance on how to improve their work.
190. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The department is well managed and the major concerns raised in the previous report have been remedied. Very good progress has been made in introducing the nationally recommended eight point scale for the assessment of students' attainment. Statutory requirements are now met and all students take either a full or short GCSE course in religious studies. The GCSE results for the latter course are above the national average. This is despite the fact that this course is taught in less than half the time allocated to a full course, well below the figure suggested in the locally agreed syllabus. Time for individual research and reflection is curtailed and the subjects' ability to make a strong contribution to spiritual development is limited. As Year 11 studies are taught in intermittent six weeks blocks, the continuity of teaching and learning is hindered. Most of the teachers are not specialists and over 70 per cent teach only one or two lessons a week. There is not a stable team from one year to the next. In these circumstances, it becomes difficult for the head of department to use the school's very good self-review programme to effectively monitor teaching and learning and manage meaningful training. Accommodation has improved slightly; the department now has the use of two mobile classrooms. However, a large percentage of lessons are still taught elsewhere, making it difficult to use artefacts or promote research through the use of a range of books. A good scheme of work to meet the requirements for Year 8, as outlined in the new locally agreed syllabus, has been written. The one for Year 7 gives too much emphasis on work that has been taught in primary schools. The quality of the reports for parents

is variable. Some give little detail about students' achievement and information about what has been studied.

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

In the inspection, 15 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	10	89	87	0	43	3.2	3.10
Biology	16	100	85	50	36	6.4	2.69
Chemistry	17	88	87	24	43	4.8	2.94
Computing	14	64	60	14	28	2.6	n/k
Design and technology	9	89	85	0	26	3.1	2.41
Drama	7	100	n/k	14	n/k	5.1	n/k
Economics	19	63	n/k	16	n/k	2.7	n/k
English	38	100	n/k	53	n/k	7.3	n/k
Film studies	19	89	n/k	63	n/k	7.0	n/k
French	4	100	n/k	50	n/k	7.5	n/k
Geography	14	100	91	36	40	6.0	0.42
German	3	100	n/k	67	n/k	7.3	n/k
Government and politics	19	100	n/k	42	n/k	6.1	n/k
History	29	100	94	21	43	6.0	n/k
Latin	1	100	n/k	100	n/k	10.0	n/k
Mathematics	22	68	72	18	33	3.5	1.51
Media studies	19	89	n/k	74	n/k	7.4	n/k
Physics	26	56	87	31	42	4.5	0.90
Psychology	15	80	n/k	40	n/k	5.6	n/k
Sociology	26	85	62	46	7	6.0	1.66
Spanish	7	86	n/k	29	n/k	4.0	n/k
Sport and physical education	2	100	n/k	50	n/k	8.0	n/k

N/k = not known

### ***GCE A level and AVCE courses***

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Arabic	1	100	N/k	0	N/k	4.0	N/k
Art and design	N/k	100	96	38	46	6.5	6.57
Biology	28	89	88	33	34	5.36	5.25
Business studies AVCE	n/k	100	92	100	32	n/k	5.50
Chemistry	27	96	90	33	43	5.85	5.90
Computer studies	8	38	86	0	23	1.50	4.62
Design and technology	N/k	100	90	75	30	8.50	5.38
English literature	N/k	100	95	35	37	6.3	5.91
Economics	N/k	80	89	30	36	4.50	5.52
French	3	100	90	100	38	8.67	5.59
Geography	14	100	92	43	38	6.29	5.74
German	3	100	91	67	40	8.00	5.81
Government and Politics	n/k	100	n/k	56	n/k	n/k	n/k
History	24	100	88	58	35	7.58	5.5
Latin	n/k	100	n/k	100	n/k	n/k	n/k
Mathematics	37	72	87	11	43	3.35	5.80
Music	2	100	94	50	35	7.00	5.74
Physical education	14	100	92	50	25	6.71	5.09
Physics	18	100	88	11	40	5.33	5.67
Psychology	n/k	81	n/k	38	n/k	n/k	n/k
Sociology	20	95	86	38	35	5.20	5.32
Spanish	5	100	94	60	39	8.00	5.70
Theatre studies	n/k	100	n/k	0	n/k	n/k	n/k

n/k = not known

### ***Intermediate vocational qualifications***

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
GNVQ Business	13	81	n/a	44	n/a	6	n/a

n/a = not applicable

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

### MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

191. The inspection focused on AS-level and A-level mathematics, biology and chemistry. Physics and science for public understanding (SPU) were also sampled. Standards in physics are similar to the national average. The teaching in the two physics lessons observed was very good. Standards in the SPU lessons were in line with course expectations and students displayed considerable skill in the use of ICT and confidence in debate and discussion. The SPU course makes a significant contribution to the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The teaching observed in the two SPU lessons was very good

#### Mathematics

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

##### Strengths

- Overall standards seen at AS and A2 level are above average.
- Teaching is consistently very good.
- Management and organisation of the course are very good.
- Students' achievement on all courses provided in mathematics is very good.

##### Areas for improvement

- Effective use of resources in managing retake GCSE classes.

192. Results in the GCE A2 level examination, and in the AS-level examination in 2001 was below national averages, but this was out of line with results both before and in the recent 2002 examinations where they were much better. A number of students retook their GCSE examinations in order to obtain a higher grade, but relatively few were successful.
193. Most students' standards of work seen, in AS and A2 level courses, were above national expectations. The students follow a course which offers them a choice of a number of different modules, which include decision mathematics this school year for the first time. During the inspection work was seen in all the areas. Presentation is good. The students take care with their work, and use precise and appropriate processes as taught to them. Most of their work is accurate and of a good standard. In a mechanics lesson in Year 12 students were seen learning the basic principles of vectors. In Year 13 an A2 level class was seen effectively using the binomial theorem. The students' progress over the period of the course is very good, influenced both by very good teaching, and by their own conscientious attitude, and consistent good habits in how they organise and present their results.
194. The teaching is consistently very good. The teachers are all very good mathematicians. They present the concepts clearly so that the students can understand them easily, and ensure that they make useful notes. They mark homework in detail so that they can pick up quickly on mistakes that the students might be making and correct them.
195. All the students following the AS and A2 course are conscientious and have a good attitude to learning. Although they are sometimes diffident about contributing actively to the lesson, they ensure that they record all necessary information, and mostly get their work done on time.

196. Since the last inspection the rate at which the students learn has improved. The management of the subject is a significant strength. The courses are very effectively managed and administered. Resources for learning are adequate. The students are generally appreciative of the high quality that is provided for them in the course.

## SCIENCES

### Biology

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

#### Strengths

- Results at A-level show a pattern of steady improvement and are above the national average.
- Teaching is good and sometimes very good especially where a range of teaching styles is used.
- Teachers have above average expectations.
- Student attitudes to learning are very good.

#### Areas for improvement

- The development of speaking, writing and the use of ICT.
- Establishing quality standards and feedback to students on their progress towards them.
- Developing the student questionnaire to monitor the impact of teaching.

197. The GCE A-level examination results in 2001 show a continuing pattern of improvement since the last inspection, and are now above average compared with national results. Value added from GCSE to AS in 2001 was good; the average point score of 6.4 is above the school average for AS subjects, and the proportion of students gaining the highest grades at A2 in 2001 was good compared with national results. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls or students from ethnic groups, and all students completed the A2 course. Work observed indicates that standards at AS are at national expectations and at A2 are above. Students make rapid progress in their second year and the autumn field trip for A2 students both enriches and consolidates their learning, and in 2001 resulted in some excellent work.
198. The quality of teaching is good overall and some is very good. It is best where students are actively engaged in learning and the teachers use their good subject knowledge to develop ideas and consolidate understanding. In some Year 12 lessons students are passive and reluctant to question the teacher. However, where a range of learning styles is used and students are encouraged to think and reflect, they readily engage in debate and collaborate. In one very good lesson the teacher required students to use a wide range of reference texts to research cell organelles and in pairs prepare a summary for other students. In an A2 lesson students dissected a pig's eye and related their observations to theory. In both lessons the teacher targeted individual students to check understanding, move them to new learning, and provided good opportunities for students to solve problems and explore open-ended questions. However some teaching places insufficient emphasis on the development of fluency in speaking, writing and the use of ICT.
199. All teachers have above average expectations of students who are aware of their progress and motivated to achieve ambitious personal targets. All students are

interested and engaged in focused study and the partnership between students and teachers is very good. Transition from GCSE to AS is satisfactory although not all students understand the level of independent study and pace of work required from them.

200. The head of subject provides good management, and a good scheme of work is in place. Too often marking does not provide sufficient guidance on what students must do to improve, and the absence of examples to illustrate quality standards means that not all students understand what is expected from them. The student questionnaire provides valuable feedback to teachers but it is insufficiently refined to be useful as an instrument for subject self-evaluation. This, together with a weakness in monitoring the impact of teaching on standards, limits the effectiveness of subject self-evaluation.

## Chemistry

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

### Strengths

- Standards seen in lessons are above national expectations.
- Teaching is very good.
- Assessment for learning in lessons is very good.
- Students develop good verbal and mathematical skills in lessons.
- Student attitudes to the subject.
- Consistency of expectation between the teachers of students' performance.

### Areas for improvement

- Easing the transition from GCSE to AS for some students.
- Balancing assessment in module tests with continuous assessment against quality standards.
- Monitoring the impact of the scheme of work and teaching on standards to improve subject self-evaluation.

201. The GCE A-level examination results in 2001 show an uneven pattern since the last inspection but they have not been below the national average since 1996. Value added from GCSE to AS in 2001 was satisfactory, with the average point score of 4.8 below the school average for AS subjects, and the proportion of students gaining the highest grades at A2 similar to the national average. Boys attained results at or above the national average and girls slightly below, but there is no significant difference between the attainment of students from ethnic groups, and all students completed the A2 course. The 2001 results contrast with the standards seen in lessons, which are at or above national expectations, with a high proportion of students achieving very high standards. Students have a good grasp of practical techniques and most understand fundamental concepts such as the mole, atomic structures and lattice energy.
202. Overall teaching is very good and some teaching is excellent especially where ideas are related to social, moral and cultural issues. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, have consistently high expectations, and they have productive partnerships with students which promote discussion, debate, and problem solving. In lessons where teacher intervention is well judged, it progresses learning. Assessment for learning in all lessons is good and students have a sense of progress against clear expectations. However the emphasis on assessment at the end of each syllabus

module is not balanced with structured continuous assessment in the marking of written work against illustrative quality standards.

203. Students develop very good mathematical skills and verbal skills through discussion, although their written skills are less refined. ICT skills are satisfactory and a programme for improvement is planned. There is scope to improve learning for some AS students because the change in intellectual challenge from GCSE chemistry or double science represents a steep learning curve.
204. Student attitudes to chemistry are excellent and they respond readily to the challenges placed on them. They show a high level of commitment, and student retention throughout AS and A2 is very good.
205. The head of subject provides good leadership of the subject. A scheme of work is in place and good communication between the teachers ensured consistency of teaching. This is reflected in the student questionnaire which provides valuable feedback. However arrangements to monitor the impact of the scheme of work and teaching on standards and use of the student questionnaire are insufficiently refined for robust subject self-evaluation.

## ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

No evidence was gathered in this area of the curriculum.

## BUSINESS

The quality of provision is **very good**. Recent improvements in the management, staffing and organisation of the department are raising levels of achievement.

### Strengths

- Standards of achievement of those taking advanced GNVQ business are outstanding.
- The high level of teamwork and mutual support within the department creates conditions which are likely to result in continuous improvement in standards achieved by students.
- Close attention is being paid to the development of teaching strategies which should improve learning on all courses.
- The support offered to students is excellent. Staff have developed excellent working relationships with students.
- The response of students to business courses is excellent. Students are keen to learn and support each other very well.

### Areas for improvement

- Both challenge and pace is lacking in some lessons.
- The critical skills are not being developed enough for students to obtain top grades.
- Although good, specialist rooms are not always used to best effect.

206. Standards achieved by students on vocational courses are very high. In 2001 all ten entered for Advanced GNVQ gained distinctions, and results from the new AVCE course show a creditable 80 per cent pass rate. Results for those taking intermediate business courses are good. Over the last five years (1999 – 2002) about 50 per cent of those entered have achieved merit grades or better. GCE A-level business was

reintroduced in 2001, and initial AS results show a 68 per cent pass rate. Completion rates on some courses are poor. A significant minority of students fail to complete the coursework requirements of vocational courses and in 2002 the results of five GNVQ candidates were unclassified.

207. Students taking the intermediate course make good progress. Although their course has only just started, this group of students showed an excellent understanding of the relative merits of different forms of business ownership. They were able to provide detailed explanations and even at this stage make evaluative judgements. Students' questions to each other were perceptive and the positive interrelationship between teacher and students created an exciting and stimulating environment for learning. Similarly students in the first term of their AVCE programme were able to critically evaluate the effectiveness of different forms of business organisation. Their oral contributions to class are perceptive and thoughtful. Written work produced for the examination was very comprehensive but tended to be more descriptive than analytical. This was also evident in some Year 13 lessons where students tended to accept company promotional material without critical examination.
208. Teaching is very good. Staff responsible for business courses work very well together and have created a very effective team-based approach to raise standards of learning. Students benefit particularly from the contribution made by staff with industrial and commercial experience. Teachers' planning of study to meet the demands of the new course is thorough and good use is made of optional courses to complement the core programme of study. Thus, students take an option which focuses on teamwork skills at the same time as they work collaboratively on business planning. Presentations are used to excellent effect to both confirm student learning and to develop their self-confidence. It is very evident that teachers are continually reviewing the effectiveness of different teaching methods, and they have started to collect a bank of materials which can be used to support each part of all business courses. Insufficient use is made of local business contacts and possible links with other European countries. Not enough attention is paid to the development of those skills for students to achieve top grades.
209. The support and help available to students create very positive responses. The careful structuring and planning of activities to take account of the particular learning needs of individual students encourage most to make at least good progress in developing study skills. Year 13 students are able to take considerable responsibility in managing their own learning. Relationships between staff and students are excellent and these contribute further to the development of confident and mature learners. All students spoke very positively about business courses.
210. Leadership of these courses is very good. The head of faculty communicates an infectious enthusiasm for the success and contribution to the curriculum made by business courses. Great attention is paid to lesson planning. This has already had a dramatic effect on standards attained on GCSE courses and is now being applied to the sixth form. He and his staff are exceptionally effective in their reflection of the school's aims and values. Their contribution to the promotion of social inclusion is excellent. Business courses are popular with students from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds, and the attention that is paid deliberately to the explicit development of team working skills, and individual self-confidence is reflected in the excellent relationships that students have with each other. Teachers also come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and their leadership and teamwork provide excellent role models.

211. Accommodation is good but a significant number of classes take place in rooms full of computers. Access and the use of information technology is, therefore, good, but the use of these rooms for general teaching is very limiting on the range of learning activities which can take place.

## Economics

The provision of economics courses **is good**. The subject is well established and makes an important contribution to the curriculum.

### Strengths

- Standards continue to improve from the inception of the course and the A-level pass rate in 2002 was 100 per cent.
- Great attention has been made in planning to meet the challenges of the new specifications.
- Teachers are very approachable and sensitive to the needs of students.
- Teamwork shown by members of the department helps to promote continuous improvements.
- Students are keen and respond very positively to the challenges of economics as a 'new' subject.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards are slightly below those attained nationally in examinations.
- Teachers do not pay enough attention to the development of higher order skills to enable more students to get high grades.
- Insufficient use of a wide range of teaching strategies to further raise standards.
- Timetable constraints do not allow the most effective deployment of staff.

212. The number of students taking economics has increased over the last five years (1998 – 2002) and standards have continued to improve. In 2001, 80 per cent passed the course with 30 per cent gaining grades A and B. These results are slightly worse than national figures, but in 2002 all students gained a pass grade but no A grades were attained.
213. Students in Year 13 of their course are able to show a good understanding of the working of the labour market. They are able to apply the principles of demand and supply to factor markets and most showed a detailed theoretical understanding of marginal revenue product. Their use of diagrams to aid explanation is good, and their files of work contain detailed and comprehensive notes. Year 12 students just starting their course are at a very early stage in developing their understanding of elementary demand and supply analysis, but they show that they are keen to explore complicated sets of relationships such as the impact of inflation on demand. Year 12 students are able to start to manipulate diagrams to model different types of economic relationships. Student files contain comprehensive and well-developed notes and evidence of a varied range of learning activities.
214. Students are more limited in terms of the development and application of those skills necessary to gain top grades. They tend to accept uncritically economic theory, for example, the contention that trade unions create unemployment, and are not helped to understand the possible limitations of economic modelling. Similarly Year 12 students appear to accept demand and supply analysis without considering the validity of the assumptions which underpin the theory.

215. Teaching of economics is good. Staff have a good understanding of their subject and are able to exemplify theory by reference to current economic debates and discussion. Courses are well planned and resources have been collected to help and support student learning of the new specifications. Teachers use a variety of approaches to ensure that student understanding is developed. For example, students starting economics for the first time benefit from quick and clear exposition of the factors affecting demand and supply followed by applications to particular markets. Similarly, opportunities are missed for students to make fuller individual contributions to some classes. Support given to individual students, however, is excellent. Students are ready to ask for help both in and out of lessons and teachers do well to create a positive learning environment in which questioning is welcomed.
216. Leadership and management of economics are good. New staff are well supported and a team-based approach provides each member of staff with help in choosing the most appropriate teaching methods for different parts of the course. The head of faculty takes a lead in ensuring that all staff contribute fully to the development of suitable resources.
217. Timetable constraints mean that each year group is taught by two teachers. The introduction of modular courses places a strain on this relationship and the division of responsibility between each pair of teachers and the pace and challenge of teaching suffers. Accommodation for teaching is too small and this has a negative impact on learning.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall the quality of provision in information and communication technology (ICT) in the sixth form is **very good**.

### Strengths

- The above average expectations attained by students.
- The very high quality of the teaching that produces those standards.
- The leadership and management of ICT in the sixth form.

### Areas for improvement

- The installation of broadband access to the Internet.
- Extension and enhancement of the analysis of examination results.

218. Standards seen in Year 13 are above those expected. There is no discernible trend in recent results, but in 2002, the proportion of students passing at grades A to E, 100 per cent, and at the higher A/B grades, 50 per cent, were significantly higher than in 2001. AS results in 2002 were more modest but the students entered did not benefit from specialist teaching.
219. Students in the current Years 12 and 13 are achieving very well. They are very well motivated and enthusiastic in discussion and practical work and are making very good progress. This level of success is the result of very good teaching, some of which is excellent. Teachers use their personality and teaching skills extremely effectively to generate interest, cultivate relationships and to motivate their students. They use humour well and have the ability to make potentially tedious topics exciting. Because they have a high level of subject knowledge, their explanations are very clear. Combined with very good whiteboard illustrations and examples, this enables students

to understand quickly how to convert denary numbers into binary and the reverse. Complex details of programming in Visual Basic are explained very clearly and that is reinforced by individual tutoring to students, who are writing their own programs. Teaching is inclusive because individual support keeps weaker students focused and helps those who have specific difficulties. The impact of this high quality teaching is excellent behaviour and attitudes and a high level of student progress. This is a very significant improvement on the last report.

220. Leadership and management are excellent. Students and their teachers have benefited from the substantial increase in the availability of good quality modern equipment, which is clear evidence of coherent and forward planning, although the school awaits the installation of broadband access to the Internet, which has been delayed for the best part of a year. Students are helped by the greater availability of computers in the classroom and Internet linked workstations for individual use in both the sixth form area and the library. In developing this, the ICT co-ordinator has been greatly assisted by the technical and educational perception of the systems manager, whose contribution to planning has been significant and more recently the support of the senior manager who has overall responsibility for ICT. Relationships between staff in the faculty are good and their teaching is monitored by the co-ordinator. Marking of students' written work and assignments is done promptly and helpfully. In addition to grades, there are explanatory comments that leave students in no doubt as to the standard of their work and how to improve it. The analysis of examination results, however, needs to be more rigorously developed along the lines proposed. There are effective back-up and security systems in place and also very effective measures for child protection in relation to Internet access.

## HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

### Physical education

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

#### Strengths

- Examination results are consistently above the national average.
- Students achieve very well.
- Teaching of AS and A-level is very good.

#### Areas for improvement

- The provision of a permanent base for all theory work.
- The possible staffing implications of the increasing numbers of students following the examination courses.
- The provision of a permanent base for all theory work.

221. During the period 1999 - 2000, A-level physical education results have been above the national average. This is true both in the proportion of students obtaining at least a pass grade (A to E) and for the proportion obtaining a higher grade pass (A to B). In 2001 for example, 50 per cent of the 14 students entered gained A to B grades. Based on the analysis that the faculty undertakes from Year 9, through GCSE to sixth form these results represent very good achievement. Standards reached by students in the current Year 13 as seen in lessons and in their written work are above expectations and reflect their recent AS results. All eleven students obtained passes with six achieving A to B grades. Their folders are well organised and show clearly that the requirements of the

syllabus are being met. They are comfortable using the correct technical language and show a good understanding of work undertaken previously.

222. All students in Year 13 have made good progress since they started the course and they are achieving well. They have a responsible attitude to their studies. Twenty-one students have chosen to begin the examination course in Year 12. Students in both Years 12 and 13 are enthusiastic about physical education. Although it was not possible to observe any practical lessons, teachers' records indicate that students' practical ability is of a good standard. Several have gained representative honours at borough or county level and one student is an international swimmer. As well as following their academic studies, several students, including one who is an international athlete, assist teachers in coaching younger students in activities such as netball, football, cross-country running and swimming. The heavy demands made on the limited amount of indoor accommodation means that regular access for students in Years 12 and 13 is often difficult.
223. The teaching of AS and A-level physical education is of high quality and has a significant impact on students' learning. Expectations are high and lessons are structured effectively, resulting in very good learning. Teachers ensure that students clearly understand the aims of the lessons so that they know what they are to learn. Students are encouraged to use ICT to support their learning and they are increasingly beginning to do so. They spoke appreciatively about the positive relationships that they enjoy with their teachers and about the level of help and guidance that they receive. In lessons, although several students in both year groups prefer to remain fairly quiet, the majority are able to express themselves clearly in class discussions, for example on aspects of sports psychology or about the distinction between leisure and recreation.
224. The faculty continues to be very well led and managed with a clear sense of direction and purpose. The consistency of approach that is apparent in the teaching and organisation has clearly contributed to the impressive results that continue to be achieved. The teachers do not benefit from the provision of a permanent base where visual displays, books, videos and other items of ICT equipment could be housed and could be readily accessible both to staff and students. There are also clear staffing implications if the number of students opting for examination courses continues to increase.

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

There are no courses provided in this area of the curriculum.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA**

The inspection focused on AS-level and A-level art and design. However, music was sampled in the sixth form. No students were entered for an examination in 2002. Two students are starting the AS course in Year 13, none in Year 12. One lesson was observed. Teaching is good.

## Art and design

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

### Strengths

- The good quality of teaching and learning.
- Standards reached in observational drawing, experimental studies, photography and journals are above those expected.

### Areas for improvement

- ICT usage.
- A double lesson for extended working in Year 12.
- An additional dedicated workspace.

225. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above those expected nationally. These standards are achieved because the teaching is usually very good. Students' achievement in relation to standards on entry at the start of the sixth form is good. Students' attitudes are very positive in spite of the lack of a dedicated working space and the single lesson structure provided for students in Year 12. Students model their approach to art and design on their teachers' practice as well as on the art movements they study. More girls take art at this level. Less use is made of ICT than might normally be expected.
226. Standards of work seen during two Year 12 and two Year 13 lessons, from studying samples of work and from talking to a representative sample of students are judged to be above those expected nationally.
227. Students in Year 12 are developing individual approaches to drawing and painting compared with GCSE work. Although early in the school year they are experimenting with materials, starting to consider how they will develop their journals and most show a very positive approach to their work. A one-hour lesson in Year 12, however, is rather short for developing practical work or for undertaking critical studies.
228. Examination results suggest that the current Year 13 students are likely to have attained above average A to B and A to E results at AS-level in 2002. A number of them experienced problems with time management in Year 12 and this is still evident as two girls arrived late and thus delayed the start of one lesson by several minutes. These students are limited by not having a dedicated working space. They have to pack their work away at the end of a lesson. They have no personal space to display work in progress or to reflect on what has been achieved. This also limits the scale of work undertaken.
229. Teaching is always at least satisfactory. In three-quarters of lessons seen teaching was very good. Expectations are generally high and students benefit from seeing models of good practice, as shown to them by the teachers. Teachers' knowledge is very good. Students are taught to look analytically and draw confidently and expressively. In these ventures they are well supported by the expert advice offered to them. Both boy and girl students work equally hard. Year 12 students are taught by three different teachers, each bringing a different perspective to the subject, for example experimentation, observational drawing and art historical studies. Opportunities are available for students to attend evening life classes but not all students choose to attend these sessions. Visits to the Tate Modern have inspired the Year 13 girl students' interest in modern art but the single boy student prefers more

traditional art forms. One higher attaining student in Year 13 has produced a series of three expressive panels exploring the colours, forms and textures of a derelict railway station near her home. Another student is a dancer and her drawings reflect her understanding of the effect of controlled movement on the human form. A regular feature of art and design provision is the trips to art galleries, with the occasional art trip abroad as, for example, a combined art and history trip to Prague in 2001.

230. Students enjoy art and design lessons. Students in Year 12 manage their time better than students in Year 13. The three male students in Year 12 are particularly keen to succeed and support one another well.
231. The overall standard of work in art and design in the 2001 examination results was average and was similar to the standard reported in the last inspection. During the period 1999 – 2001 standards at GCE have varied from above average to average. In 2001 all students gained a pass grade but the number gaining the higher A to B grades was below average. At AS-level in 2001 not all students gained a pass grade. There is no significant difference in male and female performance at examination level although more female students take art and design. The 2002 A-level results are lower than those recorded for 2001 but the grades attained are in line with the predicted grades.
232. Strengths are evident in photography, journals and printmaking. Written work is usually of a good standard. ICT is not a significant part of students' current work. The department is hoping this should improve with the acquisition of better software.
233. The acting head of department was appointed in September 2002 and she provides good leadership. However, at present the monitoring of teaching and learning does not ensure consistency of practice. ICT facilities do not include video conferencing with other art students in nearby schools.

## Drama and theatre studies

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

### Strengths

- Leadership is very good.
- Teachers' enthusiasm and subject knowledge.
- Very good accommodation and facilities.

### Areas for improvement

- Better A-level standards.
- Increase in numbers of students in both years.

234. The A-level theatre studies course is well established within the English department, although with its own head of subject. Most students begin the course from a basis of GCSE drama taken in Year 11. The poor performance of boys compared with girls in GCSE drama may account for the very small numbers of boys choosing the subject at A-level in recent years.
235. A-level examination results in the past three years (1999 – 2001) have been below average when compared with those gained in English and film studies. Numbers taking the examination have been too small to make appropriate comparisons with any

available national data, but both entry figures and results have been disappointing in the context of whole school and departmental attainment.

236. In 2002, five students took the A-level examination, attaining one C, two Ds, one E and one U. In the previous year only two students were entered, gaining one D and one E. In 2000 three C and two E grades were awarded. Currently, there are five students taking the AS course in Year 12 and five completing the course in Year 13.
237. The results do not reflect the good quality of teaching and learning observed in the lessons seen during the inspection week. Teachers bring skill and enthusiasm to their drama work and students show good understanding and use of drama disciplines and techniques. The examination requirements are well understood in Year 13, and in Year 12, students have made a promising start to the new course. Good collaborative working, trust and experiment were evident when Year 13 students used text as a basis for an improvisation. In Year 12, work on a Shakespeare speech was bold and creative. In both years, students are developing sound understanding of some key movements and figures in international drama.
238. Although teaching is good overall, there is lack of sufficient pace, challenge, and expectation in some lessons. Small friendly groups and excellent teacher/pupil relationships provide a very encouraging and supportive environment. Students clearly enjoy and value their work in theatre studies and gain much from it, but they inevitably lack the experience of working with a larger group and thus being exposed to a wider range of ideas and stimuli. These are important features of work in drama at this level.
239. Teachers work hard to make up for the lack of numbers and range of experience, and their lesson preparation is very good. Lesson quality, however, ranged from satisfactory to very good. Teachers do not evaluate and share the best practice so that all lessons do not have the intellectual rigour and the excitement in learning which were evident in the best.
240. A dynamic and very efficient head of department works in partnership with a teacher who joined the school last school year to cover all sixth form work and extra-curricular activities. The excellent space and facilities provided for drama are well used and they have made their studio a stimulating centre for drama work at all levels. Sixth form students enjoy a good range of theatre visits. They take part in the theatre performances required as part of their course and also in the annual school productions.
241. Despite rather disappointing examination results, theatre studies is making a significant contribution to students' speaking and listening skills, their confidence and their personal and social development. The subject is well supported in school and faculty and with better student recruitment should be able to expand its sixth form work successfully.

## **HUMANITIES**

The inspection focus was on geography, history, government and politics and religious studies. Latin, sociology and psychology were sampled. A few students continue Latin in the sixth form. In 2001, one took AS-level and two gained an A grade in A2. In 2002, two students took AS-level and one gained an A grade in A2. In the one lesson sampled in psychology, attainment was above average. All students contributed to a group presentation on research methods for the study of aggression and media influence. The teacher has excellent

knowledge and promotes very good relationships. In the sampled sociology lesson achievement was satisfactory but students revealed a confusion over civil religion and its relationship to major world faiths.

## Geography

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

### Strengths

- High quality teaching encourages students to be enquiring and perceptive so their attainment is above expectation by the end of the course.
- Students have excellent attitudes because they enjoy the intellectual rigour of questioning and debate.
- Students receive clear information on their target grades, and regular marking gives them very good and prompt feedback on progress and how to improve.

### Areas for improvement

- The quality of accommodation in some lessons is unsatisfactory in non-specialist rooms.

242. In 2001 the percentage of Year 13 students who attained A and B grades in the GCE A2-level examination was above the national average. All students passed with grades A to E. This is consistent with the trend of recent years, and is continued in the recent 2002 results. There is a trend for more boys to take geography, and for them to attain a greater proportion of higher grades than girls do. At the end of Year 12 students take the AS-level examination. In 2001 standards were above average, and a large proportion of students continued to study A2 geography in Year 13. Attainment in 2002 was similar.
243. Students achieve very well by the end of Years 12 and 13. They organise their notes very efficiently, making very effective use of bullet-points, tables, graphs, annotated sketch-maps and photographs. They listen carefully to questions and use facts persuasively to support oral and written answers. Students acquire very good fieldwork skills; for example they test a hypothesis on the relationship of water velocity with the roughness of the bed of the River Harbourne in Devon. Students are very competent in applying the Bradshaw model and statistical methodology in their analysis of data. They use ICT very competently in presenting their reports.
244. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Lessons are very thoughtfully planned in relation to the AS and A2 syllabuses. Teachers draw upon students' learning from GCSE at the early stages, gradually introducing new and detailed techniques. They prepare students very well for residential fieldwork in Devon so time is spent productively. Teachers use students' fieldwork knowledge, understanding and skills throughout the sixth form course. Much appropriate use is made of collaborative learning through discussion in small groups. Students enjoy questioning and arguing with each other to tease out issues. For example, Year 12 students evaluated differences in the importance of aspects of the quality of life in cities for the age groups 18 to 24 and 60+ from a 1998 survey. The pace of lessons is vigorous, and teachers provide current information from newspapers and journals to present the dynamic nature of geography. Students have clear grade targets. They know how to improve from very systematic marking and comments. They bring excellent attitudes to their studies.

245. Very clear direction is given to sixth form geography by the head of department. Each teacher has responsibility for a module of work, but there is joint planning and an overview of both courses. Geography has become a popular subject in the sixth form, but with large classes some rooms are unsatisfactory and poorly ventilated.

## Government and politics

Overall, the quality of provision in government and politics is **very good**.

### Strengths

- Very good achievement for students from a wide range of backgrounds.
- Good teaching leads to learning of a good standard and confidence in expressing opinion and supporting arguments orally and in written work.
- Very good attitudes to study and personal development to reach mature levels of working independently in preparation for study at university.

### Areas for improvement

- No significant areas were identified for development.

246. In GCE A-level government and politics the examination results in 2001 reached national expectations. They have remained steady over four years (1998 – 2000). Results are high in comparison with other A-level subjects in the school. The standard reached by Year 13 students, judged by lessons meets national expectation overall, with variation from well above expectation to that expected. All reach expectations based on their prior attainment while 40 per cent exceed expectations. Students from a range of distinct ethnic and cultural backgrounds are well supported by teaching aimed at diagnosing individual needs in using political terms and language, and practising written and oral presentations
247. Student achievement is very good. Many Year 12 students choose the subject knowing little about politics, but are interested to learn. Teachers use good resources, giving very good support to absorb political ideas and facts. In debate all Year 13 students are confident to articulate their own views and listen with sensitivity and interest to each other. Thirty per cent achieve very mature levels of argument, supported by detailed evidence, reflecting on the tenth anniversary of Black Wednesday in comparison with the present arguments over the euro within the party of government.
248. The good quality of learning reflects good teaching on the GCE AS and A-level course. Students benefit from their teachers' good use of up-to-date subject knowledge and key skills. Very good planning reflects the need for rapid progress in knowledge and understanding in Year 12 giving a good basis for mature thought and independent learning in Year 13. The teachers work very well together presenting a variety of teaching styles to address the needs of students, and informally assessing individual needs. Drafting, defining, presenting plans and reading essays are used very effectively to develop all students' ability to use argument with example and avoid narrative answers. On occasion the more able students are less engaged in some tasks than those who rely heavily on teacher support in skills development. Analysis of the learning gains of different groups of students, and the specific needs this identifies, is an important priority to ensure that teaching enables all to perform to the best of their capacity to learn.

249. Very good leadership of the department and very good student attitudes go far to overcome poor accommodation. More opportunities to attend lectures and witness politics in action would help develop the subject further

## History

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

### Strengths

- Standards of attainment are above expectations in work seen and students make very good progress in their AS and A-level history courses.
- Very well planned teaching leads to very good learning characterised by structured working, relevant examples, and mature independent and analytical historical thought.
- Student attitudes are very good. They are motivated to succeed in raising their own levels of attainment by comparing essays and ideas in open discussion led by their teachers.

### Areas for improvement

- No significant areas for development were identified.

250. The results in GCE A-level history in 2001 were above national averages particularly for high level passes (A and B grades) where 58 per cent at Drayton Manor compared with 35 per cent nationally. Results were very high in comparison to similar schools, and performance in history is significantly more successful than in other A-level subjects at the school. The trend has been steady over the last few years during which time the sixth form and this subject have gained significantly in popularity. The good standards noted in the last inspection have been maintained in the lessons seen during this inspection, which were above national standards.
251. Students make very good progress in AS and A-level study. The majority start with a B grade or above at GCSE. Year 13 students have made rapid gains in understanding historical ideas and language, talking with authority about the impact of the Industrial Revolution on public health and reform of parliament, and listening actively to each other and their teachers. They can express good opinions about historical sources, planning, drafting and discussing essays in class supported by examples. Good progress in coursework arises when teachers develop students' capacity to analyse and compare, encouraging high level ICT tools for footnotes, and bibliographies.
252. Year 13 students recollect and compare their knowledge and understanding from GCSE and AS-level with new topics, comparing approaches to European and British political history. Student files can be exemplary, drawing from teacher guides, sources and worksheets, annotated with their own notes, plans and instructively marked essays. Weak students do not benefit from monitoring and guidance to achieve this.
253. Very good teaching draws from students' comparisons of Mussolini with Hitler and Stalin, and the use of propaganda in twentieth century dictatorships. Very good learning is characterised by emphasis on understanding key words to focus students on hypothesis and supporting evidence rather than narrative. Students use quotations and read widely especially in up-to-date journals, and Internet sites available in the learning resources centre.
254. History is very well led and managed with excellent working relationships despite crowded rooms. The curriculum does not benefit from one unit drawn from Pacific,

African or Asian history to widen the knowledge base of all students, and attract more uptake from minority ethnic students.

## Religious studies

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

### Strengths

- Very good AS examination results.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which is effectively communicated to students.
- A committed head of department who has overseen the successful introduction of sixth form courses and the doubling of the uptake figures.
- The very good relationships that engenders a sense of a purposeful partnership in learning.

### Areas for improvement

- An insufficient range of reference books.
- Not enough student research and individual presentations to build a portfolio of current applications of ethical and religious principles.
- Insufficient use of ICT in teaching and learning.

255. The school had not entered students for AS or A-level examinations before 2002. The provisional AS results are well above average. All students passed with A\* to C grades and three quarters obtained an A or a B. These are much better results than those obtained nationally in 2001. Although it is too early in the A2 course to make a definitive judgement on the final attainment level, there are indications that students will probably reach standards that are higher than the national average.

256. The AS students entered Year 12 after only taking the half course GCSE and fifty per cent attained a grade B or a grade A. Some of the AS students are in Year 13, and one student did have the full GCSE course. A scrutiny of the work in their files indicates rapid progress in learning and diligence and involvement on the part of the students. Teachers have above average expectations of their academic potential and immediately set exacting work, especially in ethics. Students respond well to the challenge and are greatly helped by the high quality of the teaching. They were given very good instructions on how to write essays and decipher questions. The quality of most of the written work and research is high although there is not enough focus on considering a range of current applications of belief and theories. Marking is very good and at times exceptionally so, with detailed annotations on how to improve. All the students have met or exceeded the appropriate targets set by the school for their academic work in Year 12.

257. This good level of achievement continues to be apparent in the few A2 lessons seen in this early part of the Year 13 course. Students made good use of their previous learning and research on Noah to extend their understanding of the implications of the fall of man. There was a very good discussion on literal interpretations and symbolic aspects. Students made equally good progress in an ethics lesson when they quickly learnt the basics of Virtue Ethics and an outline of Aristotle's views. The new AS students have also made a good start to the course, being quickly engaged by case studies about normative ethics and a consideration of the definition and causes of religious experience.

258. The quality of teaching is good. Students benefit from the teachers' ability to effectively communicate their good subject knowledge and from their professionalism. For example, the head of the department is a member of Ealing's Agreed Syllabus Conference and incorporates fresh ideas and approaches into his teaching. Students are encouraged to widen their background knowledge by attending events such as the Young Peoples Faith Forum . The commitment of the teachers, allied with the maturity and positive attitudes of the students, results in a highly motivated learning partnership.
259. The management of religious education examination work in the sixth form is very good. New courses have been successfully introduced and student uptake is rising. There is more than double the number of Year 12 students compared to the Year 13 figure. Students are successfully encouraged to develop their research skills through, for example, the use of well-prepared website lists. However, other ways of using computers to aid learning, such as video conferencing, have not been explored. Statutory requirements are now met as all students study belief and ethics as part of a mandatory general studies course.

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

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

### Strengths

- A broad English curriculum offers students a choice of either English literature or English language and literature courses at AS and A-levels.
- Standards of attainment remain near or above the national average.
- Leadership and management in the subject are very good.
- Teaching is very good. Teachers are ready to evaluate and improve their own practice.

### Areas for improvement

- Accommodation is unsatisfactory and adversely affects the quality of teaching and learning.
- Teaching styles, also affected by the accommodation, do not always encourage initiative and interaction, and students are often too passive in lessons.
- The subject attracts only half as many boys as girls.

260. English literature is a popular A-level subject, and the introduction of the alternative English language and literature course has been very successful. The first students who took this examination in 2000 achieved results above the national average and this standard has been maintained in the last two years. In the well-established literature course, students have also attained results above the national average in the previous three years (1999 – 2001). This year the results maintain this standard. The number of boys taking A-level in English has dropped in recent years. However, despite these low numbers, boys do as well as girls or better, in contrast to national trends. The numbers of students gaining grades A to B in the AS-level examination this year (2002) was also above the previously recorded national average in 2001.
261. The better than expected work seen during the inspection reflects these examination standards and indicates that by the end of the year students can match last year's AS and A-level attainment. Students begin these courses with a good background from their GCSE English work. Commendably, the school enters all its students for GCSE English literature, and their work at this stage of the school year is good preparation for the new demands of A-level. They work steadily to understand and meet the new

requirements. Written work shows that they are developing skills and confidence in literary analysis and expressing their ideas in well-structured essays. Written work is marked carefully. Some outstanding examples of detailed and helpful written feedback were seen in students' files, with attention given to the varying needs of all students.

262. All sixth form teaching is at least satisfactory and the majority of the lessons seen were good. Teachers prepare their work carefully and with close reference to the demands of the examination. Their interest in the subject is evident, for example in the literature lessons where a McEwan novel or a Sylvia Plath poem were closely studied and in the language lessons where a variety of new topics and structures were being introduced.
263. However, there was a lack of active student participation in several lessons observed and the teaching styles and room arrangement in cramped traditional classrooms did not encourage it. Students sitting in rows facing the teacher took notes and responded to questions but seldom talked to the whole group or brought their own ideas and findings to the lesson. They were attentive and conscientious, but rather passive in their responses, allowing the teacher to do most of the work. In language work seen in two such lessons there was not enough encouragement to students to investigate and compare their own language experience in relation to the texts and concepts being studied.
264. In two lessons where teachers had arranged the class in a circle and demanded more of the students there was a very noticeable improvement in challenge and pace. This greater involvement brought a sense of enjoyment and exploration to the lesson and showed students that in sixth form work they have much to learn from one another and from their own initiatives.
265. The curriculum offered by the faculty extends beyond these two courses to include film studies and media studies. Each has its own subject head but all lie within the English area and they are studied and taught with much enthusiasm. Small classrooms and poor facilities for viewing and movement also adversely affect the quality of teaching and learning in these lessons. Despite these difficulties, they make a significant contribution to the work of the faculty, as well as to the variety and attraction of the sixth form curriculum and the school's examination successes.
266. The head of faculty provides very good leadership and direction and there is a strong sense of team commitment. In discussing their work, teachers were readily responsive to observations and comments, and able to evaluate strengths and areas for development. Their professional approach owes much to the supportive culture established in the department and to the effective sharing of teaching tasks and opportunities. The significant contribution being made by teachers new to the school shows how well this is working.
267. The head of faculty has identified the developments in teaching strategies which should further improve the work of a busy and successful department and is sharing them with his colleagues. He and his team have the capacity and the will to make these further improvements. In doing so, they should enrich their students' learning experience and provide them with good preparation for the next stage of their education.

## French

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

### Strengths

- In 2001, A-level results maintained the above average standards of the previous three years. The three students gained A or B grades.
- Standards of work seen are above that expected.
- Teaching is good overall; lessons are mostly well structured with a wide range of activities to help students build up knowledge and understanding.
- The subject is well led, and a good range of learning resources is being built up.
- Students share ideas freely with the teachers and all work well together.

### Areas for improvement

- Students do not keep records of their independent work that can be monitored by teachers.
- Students are not required to do follow-up corrections of written work.
- A very small number of students do not participate readily in class discussion.
- Students go to local language days and conferences, but most have not been to a French-speaking country. A visit is being planned.

268. The focus of the inspection was on French, but German and Spanish were also sampled. In both German and Spanish, the available evidence indicated that good teaching leads to success in examinations. Furthermore, the take up of Spanish, which is very well led, is consistently high. The head of French was absent during the inspection, but two French lessons were seen, examples of work done were inspected and students were interviewed.

269. In French in 2001, three students, all girls, gained A or B grades in A-level examinations. The number of students is too small for valid generalisations about the quality of attainment in examinations. However, all the students performed as well as or better than expected in relation to their GCSE grades. Over the past three years (1999 – 2001), results have been of similar quality. The percentage average point scores have improved. All students have completed their courses. However, girls have performed consistently better than boys, in line with the national picture. In 2001, AS results were above average and almost all students did as well as expected in relation to their GCSE grades.

270. Standards in lessons and other work seen in Year 13 are above that expected. Students make good progress as a result of effective teaching that demands much of them. Lessons are well planned. In one Year 13 lesson, with a teacher who was a native-speaker, the delivery was entirely in rapid and demanding French, which students clearly understood well. Students were led carefully to examine the text of a novel set in the time of the Second World War, and they began to understand the range of feelings the main characters experienced. Two students responded particularly well in expressing their opinions of the characters' dilemma; the other students listened carefully and were helped to contribute too.

271. Students in Year 12, at the start of their course, achieve the standards expected, and are moving successfully from GCSE work. Most are able to express their opinions and answer factual questions simply but accurately. They expand their vocabulary, for example through the study of immigration into France. A few are less confident in

speaking and need more reminders from the teacher to keep careful records of new words.

272. In the two French lessons seen, one in each year (Year 12 and Year 13), the teaching was good. As a result of the good teaching, students learn well. The principal features of the teaching are well-structured planning, brisk pace and a range of varied and imaginative resources and approaches. The teachers are native speakers, and understand very well how students can be led to absorb new vocabulary. Very good work on current affairs produced last year by current Year 13 students, after they had studied newspaper articles taken from the Internet, demonstrates the high expectations the teacher had of these students.
273. Written work in Year 12 starts with a carefully constructed study of basic grammar and moves on rapidly to more complex areas of sentence construction and expression. Marking is purposeful and concentrates on grammatical accuracy as students move to more demanding and lengthy essay writing on a wide range of interesting themes. The most talented students produce work of flair and imagination. Essays are marked assiduously, but students are not required to write out follow-up corrections to reinforce their learning. This is an area for improvement.
274. Students learn well. They are attentive, work productively and respond very positively to the supportive teaching they experience. They listen to one another sympathetically and accept the teacher's help willingly when their pronunciation is corrected. Year 13 students have benefited greatly from very good support during the last school year from a foreign language assistant. The new assistant had not arrived. Students are not expected to keep weekly logs of independent reading, listening and speaking, so that teachers can monitor the development of their skills. Although most students learn to work on their own, a few need closer monitoring and guidance, to help them make full use of the Internet, and develop research skills and their own areas of private study.
275. Although the head of department was absent during the inspection week, there was ample evidence of good leadership and management in the effective use of very good resources, rigorous planning and a new scheme of work that closely incorporates the demands of the examination. Students are made aware of their target minimum grade at an early stage of Year 12 and have regular feedback on their attainment. They are not so clearly aware, however, of how far they have progressed towards their targets. Nevertheless, teachers provide a great deal of extra guidance, and take students to local language days and conferences. A study visit to France is currently at the planning stage.