

INSPECTION REPORT

EAST BARNET SCHOOL

East Barnet

LEA area: Barnet

Unique reference number: 101351

Headteacher: Mr N Christou

Reporting inspector: Mr J Plumb
16930

Dates of inspection: 9th – 13th December 2002

Inspection number: 249962

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of students: 11 to 19 years

Gender of students: Mixed

School address: Chestnut Grove
East Barnet
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Ms F Armstrong

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16930	Mr J Plumb	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it</p> <p>The school's results and students' achievements</p> <p>How well are students taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9770	Mr J Baker	Lay inspector		<p>Students' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its students?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
30941	Mr K Brammer	Team inspector	English	
12844	Mr M Saunders	Team inspector	English in the sixth form	
15268	Mr J English	Team inspector	Mathematics	
12890	Mr T Jardine	Team inspector	Science Biology in the sixth form	
18057	Mr M Baxter	Team inspector	Chemistry in the sixth form	
18638	Mr C Shaw	Team inspector	Art and design	
11190	Dr W Burke	Team inspector	Design and technology	
20247	Mr R Parry	Team inspector	Special educational needs Geography	
12825	Dr N Carr	Team inspector	History Business studies in the sixth form	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students
10895	Mr D Wasp	Team inspector	History in the sixth form	
8672	Mr M Roberts	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
16950	Ms C Orr	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
29510	Mr N Mayfield	Team inspector	Music	

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
31821	Mr B McCann	Team inspector	Physical education	
15678	Ms J Radford	Team inspector	English as an additional language Religious education	
18888	Ms J Boulton	Team inspector	Educational inclusion, including race discrimination Citizenship Sociology in the sixth form	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Students' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	15
The school's results and students' achievements	
Students' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?	18
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO STUDENTS?	21
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?	25
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	28
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	30
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	35
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	36
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	42
PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	68

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average 11 to 19 community comprehensive school. There are 1,260 students on roll. The proportion of boys is significantly higher than the proportion of girls. It has an above average size sixth form. The school is situated on a split site: Years 7 to 10 on the lower school site and Years 11 – 13 on the upper school site. When they start school as 11-year olds, the students' attainment is average. The socio-economic mix of the students is broadly in line with the national average. There are ten per cent of students eligible for free school meals. Eighteen per cent of students are included on the school's register of special educational needs (SEN), a proportion in line with the national average. Thirty-eight students have statements of special educational needs. The proportion of minority ethnic students is above the national average and currently there are four refugee students. The number of students with English as an additional language (EAL), 18.9 per cent, is high but very few of these students are at an early stage of learning English. The school is at the cutting edge of a number of exciting local and national initiatives. It is in the Barnet Excellence Cluster, an on-site nursery is planned and the school has been selected by the Engineering Council as one of only three schools in the country to trial the Technology Enhancement Programme. There are a number of initiatives being piloted to support students who are disaffected with education.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

East Barnet School is a very good school. It is an exciting comprehensive school where learning is a delight and all members of the school community feel valued. Standards are above the national average and in a number of subjects, including English, standards are well above average by Year 11. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The headteacher successfully inspires staff and students alike to achieve their very best. Management is very good. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Very good teaching and learning result in very good achievement and above average standards.
- The pastoral care for students is very good.
- Assessment procedures are very good.
- Leadership is excellent. The leadership of the headteacher is inspirational.
- The priorities on the school development plan are excellent. Management systems are very good.
- This is an all inclusive school in which students consider it a delight to learn and feel valued for who they are.
- Attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good.
- Very good provision and excellent leadership and management in English, art and design, design and technology and physical education.

What could be improved

- The curriculum for modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9 is over-complex and needs to be reviewed in order to improve students' learning.
- There is a need for better access to and use of computers in subjects across the curriculum.
- The accommodation could be improved. It is cramped for the number of students on roll and there are a number of disadvantages in being located on a split site.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvements since the last inspection in March 1997 have been very good. The systems in place for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and for sharing good practice in Years 7 to 9 are now very good and the quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is at least good. Management systems to ensure the consistent implementation of whole-school policies are very good. The long-term strategic plan is excellent. There has been some but not sufficient improvement in the deployment of information and communication technology (ICT) resources. The provision for students' spiritual development has been improved and statutory requirements for the provision of religious education are now met. In addition there have been significant improvements in: standards throughout the school; the provision for music, the teaching of mathematics and modern foreign languages, students' attitudes to learning and their behaviour; and the provision for art and design, food technology and textiles in Years 7 to 9. Pastoral care has improved. The curriculum on offer in the sixth form is now very good. Pastoral care of students is a significant strength. The capacity to improve further is excellent.

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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	A	C	B	A
A-levels/AS-levels	*	*	C	

Key

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

* The 2001 average point score figures are calculated differently from previous years and so straight comparisons between 2000 and 2001 are not possible.

Attainment on entry is broadly average. In 2002, results in the national tests for students by the end of Year 9 were above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools (as determined by free school meals) standards were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. The number of five or more GCSE passes at grades A* - C in 2002 were above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. In the sixth form AS and A-level results range from broadly average to well above average in 2002. These results are particularly impressive because there are far more boys on roll than girls than is average for a school of this type and size and girls tend to do much better than boys in these examinations nationally.

Standards in English are above the national average for Year 9 students and well above the national average for Year 11 students. Standards in mathematics and science are above the national average throughout the school. In ICT standards are below national expectations in Year 9. In all other subjects standards are average to above average or well above average for both Year 9 and Year 11 students. Standards of achievement are good or very good in all subjects except for the first modern foreign language in Year 9 because students only have one lesson a week in this subject. In the sixth form standards are in line with or above course expectations in A-level subjects. In GNVQ Intermediate business studies standards are above average. Standards of achievement are high for students with SEN and very high in some subjects such as science for gifted and talented students. Students with EAL often attain well above average standards.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Students take a delight in their learning. They enjoy all aspects of school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Behaviour in lessons is exceptionally good. Whilst moving around the school behaviour is very good. Students are courteous. Exclusions are rare.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Personal development is very good. Relationships between teachers and students are excellent. Race relations are outstandingly good.
Attendance	Good. The good attendance results in very good learning. Because students are secure and happy at school they like coming. Punctuality is good and lessons get off to a crisp start.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students in:	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.

Overall the quality of teaching is very good. Teaching is at least good in Years 7 to 9 with a significant proportion of very good teaching. This is a very significant improvement since the time of the last inspection. Teaching is very good in Years 10 and 11. In English and science the quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Gains in learning in lessons are at least good and often very good. The teaching of mathematics is good throughout the school; it is marginally better in Years 7 to 9. Some excellent teaching was seen in English, geography, mathematics, physical education and religious education in Years 7 to 9 and in art and design, business studies and personal, social and health education (PSHE) in Years 10 and 11. Most teaching has very good features: cracking pace; very good subject knowledge; excellent management of behaviour; an interesting range of teaching and learning styles; and learning outcomes which are shared with students. Only one per cent of teaching is unsatisfactory, characterised by not meeting the learning needs of the students. Teaching of students with SEN is at least good and teaching of students with EAL, those identified as gifted and talented and disaffected students is very good overall.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The broad, balanced and relevant curriculum enables all students, including those who are gifted and talented, those with special educational needs and those who are disaffected with education, to achieve high standards. There is room for improvement in the planning for modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9 and also in planning for the delivery of ICT skills across all subjects. The planning for drugs education could be improved.

Provision for students with special educational needs	Good. The provision for students with SEN is good. Provision for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties in the educational inclusion centre is very good.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Good. The provision for students with EAL is good and so they achieve high standards. The criteria used to identify the needs of those students at an early stage of learning English are very good.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for students' moral and cultural development is very good. Provision for students' social development is good. Provision for students' spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its students	Very good. Procedures for monitoring behaviour and attendance are very good. There is a robust system for dealing with racist incidents. Child protection procedures are good. All students are cared for very well and feel valued. Assessment procedures are very good.

Partnership with parents is very good and this contributes significantly to students' huge gains in learning. The headteacher plans to engage more parents in learning and this vision inspired his intended bid for technology status.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership is excellent. Management is very good. The leadership of the headteacher is inspirational. Management systems are very good. The strategic plan for improvement is excellent with an emphasis on student achievements. The aims and values of the school are outstanding.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body has a very good sub-committee structure to enable it to meet most of its statutory responsibilities effectively. However, students do not experience a daily act of collective worship and statutory requirements for the use of ICT across the curriculum are not met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. There are very good systems for monitoring and evaluating performance. The headteacher and chair of governors know the strengths and areas in need of improvement in the school.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Financial planning is very good. All staff are deployed effectively and efficiently which contributes to the high standards achieved by students. The application of best value principles is good.

There is a good match of suitably qualified and experienced teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum. There have been some improvements to the accommodation since the last inspection but significant additional improvements are needed. Resources for learning are satisfactory in most subjects. There are not enough ICT resources to support the teaching of ICT skills across subjects.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fact that this is a happy school which successfully promotes students confidence and self-esteem. • The quality and approachability of the teachers. • The outstanding leadership of the headteacher. • The college-like atmosphere on the upper school site which encourages their children to become mature adults. • The fact that their children delight in coming to school, enjoy their lessons and achieve high standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would like to have a new school building preferably on one site with disability access. • Some parents expressed a concern about homework.

Inspection findings indicate that parents / carers are right about the fact that this is a happy school which values all students and has the highest expectations for all of them. The leadership of the headteacher is indeed inspirational and the teachers are hardworking and dedicated to providing a high quality education for all students. Students delight in coming to school and in their learning. Parents / carers are justified in their concerns about the building and, if it were not for the commitment of the teachers, weaknesses in the accommodation could have an adverse impact on the learning for students. Inspectors found that homework is used well to support students in their learning.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form has 253 students on roll, a figure above the national average. Almost all of the sixth-formers are from within the school but sixth-formers are admitted from other schools including on rare occasions from special schools. There are eleven students with statements of special educational needs, a figure well above the national average and which is unusual for a sixth form in a school. Numbers have risen significantly since the last inspection but the cramped accommodation reported then remains. The school hopes to redress the problem about insufficient and inadequate accommodation through the Private Funding Initiative (PFI). This is an inclusive sixth form and students from a wide range of abilities and circumstances are offered places. Each student is interviewed and offered a place suited to her or his need. The profile of need ranges from immature students not yet ready for the world of work or college and students with SEN to students with aspirations to study medicine at university. The fact that a student with SEN has the same right of access as a higher attaining student is what makes this sixth form special. Although attainment on entry is varied there are a significant number of higher attaining students in the sixth form; this is a truly comprehensive sixth form. There is a very good range of AS and A-level courses, the range of vocational courses is good and there are plans to increase and improve the number of vocational courses on offer. The enhancement curriculum is very good and enables students to acquire important life skills. Retention rates in the sixth form are very good.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The provision in the sixth form is very good. The wide range of student needs is well met. Standards in AS and A-level are average to above average. Because of the high proportion of very good and excellent teaching, students achieve very well measured against their prior attainment. Fourteen per cent of teaching observed was judged to be inspirational; a high figure of excellent teaching. Students gain in maturity and the vast majority become successful and independent learners. They enjoy life in the sixth form particularly the college-like ethos and they appreciate being treated as mature adults. Attendance is good. The sixth form is cost effective. Value for money is good.

Strengths

- The overall very good and high proportion of excellent teaching delivered at a cracking pace motivates students and so achievement is very good.
- The college ethos encourages the students to become mature adults.
- Relationships between teachers and students are very good.
- The curriculum on offer is very good.
- Attitudes and behaviour are very good.

What could be improved

- The accommodation could be improved.
- There could be more formal systems for consultation with students about how the sixth form could be improved.
- The process for applying for university 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

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Art and design	Very good. Standards are above average for AS and A-level students. Standards achieved measured against students' prior attainment are very good. Teaching is very good and so students develop good technical skills and produce prolific and detailed studies of natural and man-made forms.
Biology	Good. Standards are above average for the AS students and average at A-level. Teaching is very good and students learn well as a result. Clear learning objectives are shared with students and topics are lucidly explained.
Business	Very good. Lively teaching promotes good achievement. Good use of Internet resources and case study materials tied to specific business topics. Standards of work seen are above average. AS / A-level examinations are average. GNVQ and AVCE results are average.
Chemistry	Good. Standards are at national expectations in Year 12 and above in Year 13. Teaching is very good and contributes to the very good progress made by students. Students' attitudes to chemistry are excellent.
Design and technology	Very good. Students enjoy having the opportunity to solve relevant problems. Teaching and learning are very good. Standards are well above average for A-level students. Achievement is very good.
English	Very good. The quality of teaching is very good and students make very good gains in their learning in lessons. Standards were below national expectations in 2002 but achievement measured against students' prior attainment was good.
History	Very good. Standards are average in Year 12 and Year 13. Teaching is very good as are gains in lessons. Achievement is good.
Information and communication technology and computing	Very good. Standards are above average at A-level. Achievement is good. The quality of teaching is very good and students find the work set to be challenging and so make very good progress.
French	Good. Average A-level standards. Teaching is good overall and some is very good. Achievement is good overall.
Mathematics	Good. Standards are above average at AS and A-level. The quality of teaching is good. Achievement is good.
Physical education	Very good. Standards at A-level are well above average. The teaching of AS and A-level is very good and has a significant impact on students' learning and achievements. Achievement is very good. Leadership and management of the subject are excellent.
Sociology	Good. Standards are above average in Years 12 and 13. Teaching is consistently good and students of all abilities learn well as a result.

Work was sampled in several other subjects. In the physics lessons observed standards were average and the teaching was very good. Very good teaching was seen in the enhancement programme, in the module on food and also in the module on the boundary between science and religion. Achievement in both the enhancement lessons observed was very good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are led and guided.	Very good. Students, whilst in Year 11, receive very good advice about the courses on offer in the sixth form. If the sixth form cannot meet their needs they are given helpful guidance about what is on offer elsewhere but the school goes out of its way to meet the needs of the individual. Induction into the sixth form is very good and students interviewed said that they had settled down to sixth form life smoothly. Subject staff give of their time freely to support students and all students interviewed stated that the support they receive from their academic tutor is very good. A proportion of students stated that they are concerned about the way in which the application process for university is managed and this is being addressed by the school. The concerns students expressed about careers guidance relate to difficulties surrounding the bedding down of Connexions in North London. The school has responded robustly to this problem and has been successful with a bid to establish a Connexions information centre on site to address the problems students have encountered.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Very good. The head of sixth form manages the sixth form really well but there is a need to establish more robust forums to consult with students about how the sixth form can be improved further. Monitoring of performance in the sixth form is very good. Inspection evidence suggests that standards are rising. Scrutiny of value added data indicates that sixth form students make very good progress measured against their prior attainment.

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"> • They enjoy the demanding and challenging teaching they experience in their subjects and the support their teachers give them. • They like the college atmosphere in the sixth form and the fact that they are treated as mature adults. • They enjoy life in the sixth form and are very happy because of the opportunities laid on for them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They consider that the accommodation could be improved and would like a common room. • They would like to be consulted more about important decision making which impacts on their lives. • They would value having a whole day set aside in school to complete their application form for university and they would like to be able to do this electronically.

Inspectors agree fully with all of the positive findings from the sixth form survey which elicited a 50 per cent response. Interviews with students confirmed their positive views. The school recognises that they are justified in their concerns about the accommodation and the headteacher and governing body have done all that they possibly can to improve the sixth form accommodation: the fairly recent coffee shop is an excellent facility. The school has plans to redress the problems surrounding the process of filling in the application form for university. The inspection team judges that systems for more effective dialogue with students about how the sixth form could be improved should be put in place.

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 average. Attainment in the 2002 National Curriculum assessment tests for students at the end of Year 9 in English, mathematics and science was above the national average. Compared with similar schools, as determined by the proportion of students eligible for free school meals, standards were well above the national average in mathematics and science and above the national average in English. These results are impressive because there are significantly more boys than girls in this school. Boys' results were well above those of boys nationally in English and science and above in mathematics.
2. By the end of Year 11 in 2002, the proportion of students who attained five GCSE passes at A* - C (58 per cent) was above the national average and well above the average for schools which have a similar number of students eligible for free school meals. The GCSE results are again particularly good because there are significantly more boys than girls on roll. In 2002, 65 per cent of the girl students attained five GCSE passes at A* - C. The school came very close to its robust target of 60 per cent of all students attaining five GCSE passes at A* - C and results were a marked improvement on 2001.
3. Except for a dip in 2001 there has been continuous improvement in GCSE results since 1998. Even in 2001 the GCSE results measured against prior attainment indicate that the Year 11 students in that year made very good progress. Variations in the performance in National Curriculum tests for 14-year-olds must be seen in the context of the profile of the different cohorts from one year to the next. Historical trends and data suggest that National Curriculum tests and GCSEs have improved significantly since the last inspection. Considering achievement at Key Stage 3 was an important issue at the time of the last inspection this indicates a very good improvement in standards in this key stage.
4. Standards of work seen in English in Year 9 are above the national average and in Year 11 they are well above the national average. Standards of work seen in mathematics and science are above the national average but students identified as gifted and talented achieve very high standards in science by Year 11. These standards are particularly good because there are significantly more boys than girls in this school and evidence indicates nationally that girls do better than boys. Reading and writing standards are above average in Years 7 to 9 and well above average in Years 10 to 11. Within the school a reading for pleasure culture is developing. Standards of writing are improving because the English department insists on students using correct grammar and a wide range of vocabulary to support an extensive range of writing styles. In mathematics standards of graphical representation are very good but there is insufficient emphasis on problem-solving activities. In science students studying separate sciences at GCSE do particularly well as do students with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
5. In art and design standards are well above the national average by Year 9 and also by Year 11. In geography, history, music and physical education standards are above the national average throughout the school. This indicates a very significant improvement in standards in music since the last inspection. In drama standards are average by Year 9 but for students taking GCSE drama standards are well above average by Year 11.

Standards in design and technology are above average by Year 9 and well above average by Year 11 and so there has been a significant improvement in standards in food technology and textiles by Year 9 since the previous inspection. Standards in modern foreign languages are average throughout the school but could be better; the curriculum planning for modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory and this impacts adversely on standards. In ICT standards are below national expectations by Year 9. For students taking a GCSE in ICT standards are broadly average in Year 11 and for those students taking GNVQ Intermediate standards are judged to be above average. In religious education, the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus are at least met, and in a number of areas exceeded by Year 9 and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. By Year 11 standards in the core religious education programme meet the expectations of Barnet's Agreed Syllabus and those following a GCSE course attain at least average standards. Citizenship, quite understandably, is at an early stage of being delivered, but evidence indicates that students are on course to meet the expected standards required by the end of Year 9 and Year 11.

6. Students with SEN make at least good progress and so achieve at least good standards measured against their prior attainment. Because of very good support a number of students with statements of special educational needs achieve high standards. Students with very challenging behaviour associated with their special educational needs in Years 7 to 9 make good progress in managing their behavioural difficulties because of the high quality support they receive in the educational inclusion centre which enables them to be included in many mainstream lessons with targeted support. An excellent work-related programme enables a group of disaffected students in Year 10 to make good gains in confidence and so develop a sense of self worth which in turn raises their standards of achievement. Analysis of examination results suggests that students with EAL achieve very well and attain standards higher than the school average in the national tests for 14-year-olds and also at GCSE. This is supported by inspection evidence as students with EAL made very good progress in most lessons observed where they were present. Students identified as being gifted and talented make very good progress and achieve very high standards, for example in single science GCSE subjects. Minority ethnic students who are not students with EAL and children in public care are carefully monitored and achieve high enough standards measured against their prior attainment.
7. Progress in literacy across subjects in Years 7 to 9 is at least good and often very good because teachers are implementing the literacy strategy effectively. However, not all teachers are as rigorous as they could be at correcting students' spelling errors and so the spelling of some students is not as good as it should be in relation to their ability. Numeracy standards across subjects are average in Years 7 to 9. Standards in ICT skills across subjects in Years 7 to 9 are not as high as they should be.

Sixth form

8. Value added measures used by the school indicate that students in the sixth form make very good progress and achieve high and very high standards measured against their prior attainment. Because of the commitment to equality of opportunity and the desire to provide a meaningful education for as many sixth form age students as possible there is open access to the sixth form. In celebrating the success of the sixth form it is to be noted that the results include students who have completed AVCE business double award from a relatively low GCSE base and so achievements are much better than indicated by the average point score system used to benchmark attainment. This is an inclusive sixth form in the fullest sense of the word: there are

students with SEN; some immature students with challenging behaviour; and very good calibre A-level students, and evidence indicates that they all do really well. The drop-out rate from courses is very small.

9. For students following AS and A-level courses performance has ranged from broadly average to very high for the last three years (2000 – 2002). In 2002 strong performing subjects were mathematics, chemistry, computing, physical education and French. AVCE business results in 2002 were in line with the national average; a very significant improvement on the performance in 2001, and reflect considerable value added measured against students' prior attainment.
10. Inspectors note high standards in mathematics, chemistry, design and technology, business studies, physical education, art and design and sociology. Students cover religious education as part of the enhancement programme and meet the expectations required by the locally agreed syllabus and this is a very significant improvement since the last inspection. Through the enhancement programme students achieve very important life skills such as how to prepare a healthy meal whilst living away from home at college on a very tight budget. Achievement in key skills is not as high as it could be because a significant number of students consider that the key skills package is not highly valued by the universities and so are not motivated to do well in the course despite very noble efforts on the part of the school to make it work.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Students have very good attitudes to learning throughout the school. Virtually all students like school and are keen to do well. Students take part enthusiastically in the very wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities on offer. For example, last minute practice and rehearsal were much in evidence for the school's production of 'A Night at the Musicals' in which over 130 students are involved. Also the school's success in a wide range of sports and gymnastic activities speaks for itself.
12. Behaviour is very good and often excellent in lessons and students respond very well to discipline which creates an orderly environment conducive to good and very good learning. Behaviour around the school, in the dining room and in the playground is also very good. There were no signs of aggression or bullying and the exclusion rate is very low for a school of this size. There has been a very significant improvement in the behaviour of students in Years 7 to 9 since the last inspection. In fact the atmosphere on the lower school site is calm and students experience much fun and enjoyment in their learning. The ethos for learning on this site has been transformed since the last inspection. Students with emotional and behavioural difficulties make very good gains in managing their own behaviour because of the very good support they receive in the educational inclusion centre and so are able to be successfully included with their peers in most subjects. Exclusions are rare.
13. Relationships between students are very good. They work very well together in lessons when in pairs or groups and support others with their learning. Students are also aware of the feelings of others as was witnessed in a school assembly where a solo singer was reassured by warm applause before she sang and applauded enthusiastically afterwards in appreciation. Race relations are outstandingly good. Students in Year 7 spent a tutor period discussing intercultural harmony as a follow-up to an impressive assembly on the theme of human rights, and older students consider that 'there is no discrimination in the school and everyone is welcome' and that this is a very positive feature of the school. Relationships between students and staff are excellent, as was clearly demonstrated in a Year 7 English lesson where staff gave students

considerable confidence which resulted in students readily asking questions and so making very good gains in their learning.

14. Students' personal development is very good. They show maturity and a willingness to take on responsibilities both within the school and the community. A wide range of responsibilities are undertaken appropriate to age which includes Year 7 students acting as guides for prospective parents and the most able mathematicians in Year 10 helping Year 7 students in their mathematics lessons. All year groups have two representatives on the school council which, amongst other functions, has complete responsibility for running the school's annual talent show.
15. Attendance is good, being above the national average. Authorised absence is below the national average and unauthorised absence is well below. Nearly all students arrive on time for school and are punctual for lessons. Good punctuality, together with good attendance, has a positive effect on attainment and progress.

Sixth form

16. Sixth form students have very good attitudes towards their work and their attendance is good. They really enjoy life in the sixth form and the vast majority of students would strongly recommend the sixth form to others. They are proud of their school and consider it a privilege to be part of the East Barnet School community. In a third of lessons seen students had an excellent attitude to learning. This is the result of the very good and excellent teaching which motivates students and sustains their interest. For example, in a Year 12 photography lesson the teacher's enthusiasm rubbed off on the students who were highly motivated, extremely interested and listened very attentively. Across all subjects students recognise that they are being encouraged to develop their independent study skills. They appreciate being taught the skill of note taking in business studies. Students' confidence is built up as they make presentations in history. Their ability to think and solve problems as part of a team is encouraged when they have opportunities to work in small groups, as evidenced in a Year 13 biology lesson. The excellent relationships between teachers and students result in very significant gains in learning at all ability levels. Almost all students say that they want to learn and that they appreciate the opportunities they are given to study their subjects in depth. Minority ethnic students are well integrated into the sixth form. Students respond very well to the many rich opportunities given to them for their personal development. Sixth form students take on numerous whole-school and community responsibilities. These include providing support for students in virtually all subjects in Years 7 to 9, helping with the development of students' literacy skills in primary schools through the 'Arsenal Double Club' project and planning and running a senior citizens' Christmas party for local pensioners.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. There has been a very significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, particularly in Years 7 to 9 when concerns were expressed about the quality of teaching and learning in these year groups. Teaching is now at least good in Years 7 to 9 and a considerable amount of very good teaching was observed across a range of subjects for these year groups. In Years 10 and 11 the quality of teaching is very good overall. Teaching is now a key strength of the school and makes a very significant contribution to students' good and very good learning. Ninety-nine per cent of teaching was at least satisfactory and 81 per cent was at least good. Forty-three per cent was at least very good and ten per cent was excellent. Only one per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory.

18. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. Because teachers have impressive subject knowledge in drama they successfully inspire students to try new ideas and techniques and give them the confidence to experiment for themselves. This contributes very significantly to very good learning in drama lessons. Because the mathematics teachers are all good mathematicians they can explain mathematical processes very carefully to the students and so the students begin to understand them well and what they have to do in their mathematics lessons and so they make good and very good gains in their learning. Planning is a key strength in the teaching. In English the careful planning of a range of stimulating activities for all abilities ensures that all students enjoy the subject and make very good gains in their learning, as evidenced in a superb Year 7 lesson where students made very good progress in their understanding of *The Tulip Touch* novel. The sharing of the planned learning outcomes with students at the start of lessons is common practice across all subjects as is the reviewing of what is learnt at the end of lessons. This provides teachers with valuable information to plan to raise standards in the next lesson. The planning meets the needs of a wide range of students in most subjects, including those with SEN and those who are gifted and talented. On the rare occasion where teaching was unsatisfactory the planning of the lesson failed to meet the needs of all students in the class. Teachers manage students who show challenging behaviour very well and so ensure they do not disrupt the rest of the class; consequently the learning of other students is not interfered with. Teachers use encouragement, praise and humour effectively to inspire students to learn, as seen in an inspirational Year 10 business studies lesson.
19. Teaching is fit for purpose in all subjects. The teaching methods are very good. In design and technology the buzz of activity and students' interest contributes to very good learning of important life skills. In a Year 9 textiles lesson on the absorbency properties of fibres students' interest grew and their curiosity was aroused by the amount of liquid absorbed as well as the way in which the fibre swelled. This fascination and fun resulted in very good learning about the use of fabrics for different purposes. Teaching, delivered at a cracking pace and with high expectations, leads to very good learning in all subjects, particularly in science and physical education lessons. Effective use is made of questioning to check students' understanding before moving on and also to extend students' thinking as evidenced in a Year 10 citizenship lesson on the evils of racism. Very good use is made of homework to consolidate what has been learned in lessons and to challenge and extend students further.
20. The teaching of literacy across subjects is at least good but not all subject teachers pay sufficient attention to correcting students' spelling and this is an area in need of improvement. The teaching of numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory. There are weaknesses in the teaching of ICT skills across subjects as a result of subject teachers and students not having access to equipment when needed to support their teaching and learning.
21. Students with SEN benefit from good support from classroom assistants and make good gains in their learning as a result. Teachers use the targets on their individual educational plans to inform their teaching for these students and to monitor their progress. The quality of teaching for students with EAL and for those students identified as gifted and talented is very good and these students achieve high standards.
22. Students' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is at least good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 to 11 as evidenced in English, science, art and design and indeed almost all other subjects. Learning is not as effective as it could be in Year 9 modern foreign languages because of insufficient time to cover the programmes of

study in students' first foreign language. Students' intellectual, physical and creative development is very good as illustrated in a stunningly good Year 10 lesson on raising students' awareness of the misuse of drugs through role play in the drama suite. Where teaching is inspirational students are encouraged to learn from one another and to elicit information from a wide range of sources as evidenced in a stunningly good Year 10 business studies lesson. Students' awareness of their own learning and what they need to do to improve is very good.

Sixth form

23. The quality of teaching is very good overall in the sixth form with a significant amount of inspirational teaching which is imaginative and creative. One hundred per cent of teaching is at least satisfactory and 89 per cent is at least good. Fifty-three per cent is at least very good and 14 per cent is excellent; this is a high proportion of excellent teaching. This is a very significant improvement on the sixth form teaching observed during the last inspection. The quality of teaching for students with SEN is very good. Some excellent teaching was seen in biology, chemistry, physics, design and technology, English and history. The relevance of the teaching in design and technology to everyday life is a very significant strength. Students enjoy having the opportunity to solve real-life problems and they pay tribute to their teachers for giving them such opportunities. Relevance also featured strongly in the food module as part of the enhancement programme when students had the experience of planning and making a healthy meal on a very tight budget. This was excellent preparation for living away from home, a prospect faced by many sixth form students when they go away from home to attend college or university. In history teaching takes place at a cracking pace and lessons are enlivened by the use of stimulating and varied tasks that engage students' interest. This was seen to very good effect in a vibrant and enjoyable Year 12 balloon debate, during which students took on the roles of key contributors to the cause of Italian Unification and argued the various cases with passion and understanding. Above all, there is a sense of shared purpose in lessons and this gives students confidence to express their opinions and to take part in discussions. In English the best teaching sets students creative and intellectual challenges which promote their achievement. For example, a lesson which introduced students to the conventions of revenge tragedy had those students analysing portraits of monarchs of the time, considering other historical sources, writing their own revenge scenarios, performing and evaluating them, and reflecting at the end on what had been learned. This is teaching of quite exceptional quality, pace and purpose.
24. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and they live for their teaching which is enthusiastic and fired with energy. Analysis of homework in lessons is a very good feature used effectively to rectify errors and to enable students to improve their work. Relationships between teachers and students are excellent, as evidenced in the banter and dialogue between a group of Year 12 students and their teacher in an enhancement lesson on the border between science and religion. Because of the confidence students had in their teacher they asked some penetrating questions and so made deep gains in their understanding of important philosophical and theological issues.

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

25. The quality and range of the curriculum available to students in Years 7 to 9 is good. The curriculum embraces the range of subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and citizenship. In addition students in Years 7 to 9 receive discrete drama provision, a second modern foreign language and PSHE. Students in Year 7 have a choice of French or Spanish as their first modern foreign language, a choice they carry through to the end of Year 9. The provision of only one lesson per week for the first language in Year 9 is insufficient for students to make the progress that they could and it affects standards in Year 9. It also has an effect on what students do in Years 10 and 11. Although ICT is embedded in the programmes of study of most subjects, there are insufficient computer resources to make its integration into those programmes effective and, consequently, the provision is insufficient to enable students to develop their skills adequately. However, there has been an improvement in the provision of ICT in Years 7 to 9 since the last inspection and the minimum statutory requirement is now met. Although the ICT National Curriculum requirements are met the requirements in the National Curriculum in other subjects for the use of ICT are not met. Since the last inspection a very good programme to develop literacy skills has been introduced for students in Years 7 to 9. The numeracy strategy is satisfactory.
26. In Years 10 and 11 students are offered a good range of subject choices, which includes some vocational education. The provision of additional vocational courses is currently under consideration at all levels of the school's development planning. A notable feature is the provision of an excellent work-related programme as an alternative curriculum for students who are not engaged by the normal curriculum and might be at risk of exclusion. The success of the programme is evident in the low level of exclusions. Work experience opportunities are offered to all students towards the end of Year 10 as an integral part of their careers programme. The PSHE programme continues into Years 10 and 11 with the addition of careers to the range of topics covered. The school has made a good start in its provision for citizenship in Years 10 and 11. The statutory requirement for religious education in Years 10 and 11 is now met and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. However, the use of ICT across subjects is not as good as it should be.
27. Curriculum provision for students with special educational needs is good. The curriculum they follow is the same as other students in Years 7, 8 and 9. In Years 10 and 11 they take courses leading to GCSE. With support many achieve as well as other students. For example, a student with a specific learning difficulty (dyslexia) gained very high GCSE grades in the 2002 examinations. The only exception to the main curriculum is for a very small group of students, mostly in the lower school (Years 7 to 9), who have emotional, behavioural or social difficulties that make them vulnerable. Recently the school has extended further its philosophy of 'I want to learn' by opening an educational inclusion centre. This initiative is designed to provide for those students who exhibit behaviour that affects their learning, and that of others, and which may lead to exclusion. Attendance at the educational inclusion centre is short term with the intention of returning the student to the full mainstream curriculum. Evidence gathered from observing students working with the centre manager and discussion with students indicates that this facility is a benefit to them and the school community.
28. Students with special educational needs receive support in selected lessons according to their needs, or as a requirement if they have a statement of special educational needs. The school provides fully for these requirements as outlined in the statements.

SEN teachers and class assistants work collaboratively with subject teachers to provide sufficient support so students can learn independently. The co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) and SEN teachers negotiate with GCSE examination boards for students who need extra time, a reader or amanuensis. The learning support base provides students with access to the Internet, wordprocessing, and programs that assist with spelling, vocabulary and numeracy. The library has an attractive collection of books suitable for students with special educational needs that they use frequently.

29. The provision made for students with EAL and for those who are gifted and talented is very good. In science gifted and talented students have the opportunity to excel through the single science options at GCSE. Talented musicians and talented sports students have opportunities to do well..
30. The provision for students' personal, social and health education is satisfactory. PSHE is taught throughout Years 7 to 11. Within the PSHE programme the provision for sex education is satisfactory. There is a clear outline of the areas to be covered in each year and some guidance is given to teachers on delivery. The provision for drugs education is satisfactory. There is a programme of areas to be covered in each year, which includes a Drugs Education Day in Year 8. The curriculum is delivered through a variety of activities and an excellent lesson was seen in Year 10 where students wrote and performed their own 'radio scripts' to illustrate how drug dealers persuade people to take drugs. However, the curriculum planning does not currently cover drugs education in sufficient detail.
31. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. The range of extra-curricular activities provided for students is very considerable particularly in sport, drama and music. Educational visits are provided in a number of subjects including many residential experiences and students take good advantage of the opportunities available. These opportunities make a very significant contribution to students' learning. However, the school recognises that it needs to develop more intellectually-based clubs and activities.
32. Careers education provision is good and well delivered and so gives students good guidance on their next stage of education and life beyond school. There is a wide range of literature available in the area set aside for the on-site Connexions Information Centre which covers practical occupations to university courses. There is a detailed careers education programme for Years 10 and 11 delivered by specialists. Good use is made of computer programs to help students decide what career they might want to follow and which college or university they might want to attend. In addition a large number of students undertake the Morrisby Test (a psychometric test which suggests suitable career paths for students) to help them with their career choice. The school worked closely with Prospects Careers Service (this service has been absorbed into Connexions) and used their literature to supplement the school's careers programme. Work experience is undertaken by all Year 10 students.
33. Links with the community make a very good contribution to students' learning. All Year 10 students undertake work experience locally. The school works closely with Barnet Education Business Partnership which enables business studies students to visit local companies and to attend marketing workshops. Members of the community and local organisations contribute to the Year 8 Engineering Day. Very good use is made of the local community as an education resource and local businesses make donations to the school both financially and in kind.

34. Links with partner institutions are very good and make a significant contribution to students' smooth transfer into the school, guidance on educational options beyond school and students' personal development. There are very good links with primary schools which include East Barnet School's staff team teaching in primary schools. Middlesex University is also supporting the school in its bid for Technology College status and many PGCE students train at the school.
35. There is good provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The culture, 'I want to learn', pervades all the school's activities.
36. Provision for spiritual development has improved since the time of the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The school has completed an audit of provision which has served to raise awareness of how much each subject contributes to students' spiritual development. In English and drama students have very good opportunities to appreciate the spiritual dimension to life through exploring the power of language in poetry and plays, and there are good opportunities for creativity and self-expression in art and design and design and technology. In religious education students learn about ways of worship in different faiths and ponder on the mystery of 'the fantastic universe with all its bits and pieces'. However, in other subjects there are some missed opportunities because, although the planning is in place, it has not yet been fully translated into action. The lack of provision for a daily act of worship also results in lost opportunities for further spiritual development. However, the acts of worship in the assemblies seen made a positive contribution to students' spiritual development.
37. The school's provision for moral education is very good. Students respond very positively to teachers' expectations of high standards in work and behaviour. There is a clear code of conduct which students understand and accept, and achievements in all areas of school life are regularly celebrated. Students learn about the difference between right and wrong in assemblies and form time as well as in the daily routines of school life. Moral issues are dealt with very effectively in the programme for personal, social and health education. In most subjects of the curriculum, teachers use opportunities well to make students think about moral issues. In religious education, for example, students consider absolute and relative morality in dilemmas relating to the sanctity of life. Environmental issues such as global warming are explored well in geography.
38. Provision for students' social development is good. Students develop self-confidence in expressing themselves through working in a variety of different groupings in lessons, sports activities and in dramatic and musical performances. In a drama lesson students supported each other very well by applauding spontaneously after each group presentation. Students have many opportunities to learn how to work together co-operatively, through participation in sports' teams and school clubs, as well as field studies, cultural trips and journeys abroad. There are good opportunities for students to learn to take responsibility through membership of the school council and through taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. However, students in Years 7 to 9 do not have sufficient opportunities to develop leadership skills through becoming responsible for daily school duties. The school's strong community links encourage students to develop a good understanding of citizenship. Visits from local magistrates give older students the opportunity to find out how justice is administered. Students are given good opportunities to take an active role in community life, for instance by entertaining senior citizens at Christmas and supporting local and national charities.
39. The school makes very good provision for students' cultural development. Within the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities, students are given many opportunities to

appreciate their own cultural traditions. School productions and musical activities, as well as visits to concerts and the theatre, enable students to enjoy and take part in traditional and modern entertainment. In history, students benefit from excursions to castles, museums and battlefields, and there are farm visits in geography and trips to art galleries in art and design. Students find out about different traditions in Europe through visits and work experience. There is a varied and extensive programme of sport. Opportunities for students to learn about the diversity of non-European cultures have improved since the last report, although they are still limited in art and design. Students learn about the beliefs and practices of Hindus and Buddhists and they encounter poetry from a wide range of cultures. Issues concerning food and appropriate eating utensils for different cultures are discussed in design and technology.

Sixth form

40. The curriculum provided for students in the sixth form is very good. Those students interviewed by inspectors said that there was an outstandingly good match between what they wanted to study and what the school was able to provide for them. The intake into the sixth form is very broad and the entry requirements are somewhat more flexible than in a significant number of schools. Not being mature enough to work independently or having special educational needs does not exclude students from this sixth form as the needs of a wide profile of students are catered for. Sixth form provision promotes equality of opportunity for all and there is a wide range of options on offer. There are of course a significant number of students with the potential to achieve very good A-level results and access the university or employment of their choice. There is a truly comprehensive and inclusive curriculum package in the sixth form, but being far from complacent the school plans to increase the number of vocational courses it can offer to students.
41. The sixth form curriculum is well managed. There are issues as the AS-level package beds down and this inevitably has led to some timetabling hiccups although the school has bent over backwards to try to ensure that students get the combination of subjects they would like to follow in the lower sixth. On occasions special arrangements are made to accommodate specific and tailor-made requirements of individual students. However, pressures on the timetable mean that a significant number of students cannot participate in recreational sports during school time and a proportion of them are 'miffed' about this but realise that it is not the fault of the school. There is a very extensive and broad range of AS and A-level courses and the provision of vocational courses is good and has improved since the last inspection. The school provides exceptionally well for students who desire to take business studies GNVQ and supports some students with low self-esteem very effectively. It is particularly effective in supporting a small cohort of students who are not sufficiently mature to transfer to college at the end of Year 11 and it does very well by these students. The provision for gifted and talented students is also very good. There is a good focus on preparation for university entrance with an emphasis on interview techniques, thinking, research and independent revision skills. Students are provided with very good opportunities to explore beyond their immediate neighbourhood and prior to the inspection students were on an overseas trip which included an opportunity for work experience.
42. The model adopted by the school to deliver key skills is to teach them through a discrete lesson. This is not particularly successful as despite noble efforts on the part of the school students consider that the key skills are not valued by the universities and consequently they do not take the programme seriously. The school has attempted to deliver the key skills using a range of models and recognises the need to review its

provision of this programme once again. The sixth form enhancement programme is exceptionally good. It makes a very significant contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Important practical and life skills are developed and alongside these down to earth skills there are opportunities to discuss deep theological and philosophical questions about whether there is a God who created the universe. Provision for vocational courses is good and developing.

43. There is a well-planned programme of work experience for students following vocational courses. Those students on this course who were interviewed spoke very highly of their work experience placements. Students following AS/A-level modern foreign language courses have opportunities of work placements abroad and this is excellent; some interviewed recognised that in the 21st century they may spend part of their working week in London and part in Geneva or Brussels. Students with a clearly defined and thought-out career path, such as the student who wants ultimately to become a doctor, said that the school has given them practical advice and supported them in getting the kind of work experience they require to equip them for what they want to do. Sixth form students have opportunities to visit and attend courses at the extensive range of London higher education colleges and universities. Key employers come into school to address sixth form audiences. A Connexions Information Centre is being established on site and the school would like to offer all sixth-formers career interviews this year.
44. Provision for students' personal development is very good. Students are given opportunities to organise charity events, fancy dress parties and their own ball. They are trained to act as peer counsellors. Throughout the school they are given many opportunities to support younger students in a wide range of subjects. There is a head boy and head girl system but some students consider that they should be involved in electing these key post holders in the sixth form. All of the sixth-formers interviewed spoke affectionately of the sixth form and said that they really enjoyed their life in the sixth form and got a lot out of it.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

45. This is a very caring school where the individual needs of students are paramount. Induction arrangements for students entering Year 7 are excellent and start with visits to feeder primary schools by the head of Year 7 and Year 7 students. On arrival at East Barnet School students follow a very well structured 'I want to learn' programme in which certificates of achievement are awarded termly. This programme ensures that students fully understand the procedures and expectations of the school culture that are encompassed in the 'I want to learn' culture.
46. Pastoral care and monitoring of academic progress are the responsibility of form tutors who generally stay with their students for their first four years at school. They therefore know their students very well and this, together with the excellent relationships that exist between students and all staff, gives students confidence to raise any concerns that they may have, knowing that they will be dealt with sympathetically.
47. Procedures for monitoring and supporting students' personal development are very good. There is an extensive range of documentation for monitoring personal development and this is used consistently across Years 7 to 11. Heads of year work in an effective partnership with their tutor teams. Students giving concern are monitored very closely and given the support they require. Heads of Years 7 and 11 specialise in leading their particular year but where possible students will have the same head of

year during Years 8, 9 and 10. Additional pastoral support is also available through the school counsellor and the Befrienders' Group (a group of students trained to be listeners).

48. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. The behaviour policy, the prevention of bullying policy and the policy on rewards and sanctions clearly define expectations, unacceptable behaviour and the rewards and sanctions procedure. These procedures are consistently applied throughout the school and behaviour of each student in each subject is regularly monitored with appropriate action taken when concerns are identified. Students and parents are consistently reminded of behaviour expectations which are part of the 'I want to learn' culture and which are included in the year handbooks and the homework diary. There is a very good anti-racist policy and a robust system is in place to deal with any racist incident. The support for students with special educational needs is very good. There are effective links with external agencies.
49. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Registration is completed efficiently and in accordance with statutory requirements. Regular attendance and punctuality are part of the 'I want to learn' culture and both are monitored very carefully by tutors and year heads. For example, the head of Year 10 has recently introduced a first day of absence contact with parents which has improved attendance this term.
50. Child protection procedures are good. All staff are aware of the procedures and their importance. There is excellent liaison with other agencies. The policy is in need of revision. The school is aware of this and has a revised policy in draft form which is to be finalised shortly.
51. Health and safety procedures are very good. The health and safety officer, the union representatives and the governors each carry out an annual inspection of the premises and report their findings as appropriate. Risk assessment documents are in place for physical education, design and technology and science and good use is made of outside professional expertise to ensure the latter two meet the latest requirements. The health and safety co-ordinator is very conscientious in carrying out his duties and the caretakers are very diligent about dealing with or reporting any health and safety issues. Accidents are dealt with appropriately. There are correct procedures in place for informing parents of accidents, and procedures for the disposal of clinical waste meet requirements. Staff and students know who the trained first-aiders are and where they can be found in the case of an emergency. There are regular fire evacuation practices.
52. Students' personal safety and wellbeing are addressed as part of the personal, social and health education programme and are well supported by outside speakers such as the school nurse, the local police, the railway police and bus safety representatives. There is an Internet policy to ensure that students do not access inappropriate websites.

Assessment

53. The procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are very good. The use of information technology to store, retrieve and analyse assessment data is very good at whole school and faculty level. The 'I want to learn' culture, introduced since the previous inspection, underpins the school assessment and marking policies as well as being reflected in subject areas. All teachers have received training, for example, in strategies for improving the performance of boys. The needs of the gifted and talented students are identified. Special provision is made for them, for example the Friday extension reading sessions in the library. There is a consistency between whole-school and faculty assessment and recording policies. Student planners contain pages devoted solely to self-assessment and are well used to ensure that students understand not only where they are in their learning but also how to improve further. National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades are understood by students and shared in the annual reports to parents.
54. The headteacher, with the willing co-operation of the assessment co-ordinator and teaching staff, has changed the culture from that which existed at the time of the previous inspection. The very good assessment procedures are stronger and assessment is now something teachers do with students rather than to them. Self-assessment and individual and group target setting are regular features of the present provision. The senior management team monitors two departments annually. Newly trained teachers make presentations to more experienced colleagues about useful strategies, for example the importance of helpful written comments on students' work, for improving students' motivation. The school also benefits from the outcomes of research and when possible recruits well-known figures, in the world of assessment, to share research findings with teachers. As a result of these innovations staff are better assessors than at the time of the previous inspection and systems are more secure.
55. The use of assessment information to inform curriculum planning is good. The headteacher recognises that he started the school on an assessment for learning journey five years ago and that the journey is ongoing. By changing the teaching and learning styles and attitudes towards assessment he has helped students to become more independent learners as they progress from Years 7 to 11. Each student has an academic tutor. Once each term their learning is reviewed and new targets set. This individual approach has a beneficial effect for all students. The first group to fully experience this new system is now in Year 11. It is the students who are now most active in inducting new staff into this culture. They are proof of the benefit of involving students more equally in the assessment process.
56. Assessment procedures for students with SEN are very good. The assessments are used effectively to set specific targets for these students which in turn are used to plan lessons for them. The progress of students with SEN is rigorously monitored against the targets on their individual education plans. The assessment procedures for students with EAL are robust, so their English language learning needs are carefully identified and the progress made by students at an early stage of English language acquisition is very good. Such students are given targeted support in lessons until they have the language and confidence to cope independently. The monitoring of minority ethnic achievement is very good.

Sixth form

Advice, support and guidance

57. The quality of advice, support and guidance for students in the sixth form is very good. All sixth form students interviewed stated that teachers made themselves available, often before the start of school and also at the end of the school day, to offer very good academic support. They all considered that they felt confident to approach a teacher whom they knew well regarding any personal problem that they had. For many, but not all, this would be their academic tutor. The head of the sixth form has put very good procedures in place to offer guidance on further education, higher education and career opportunities so that students can move on with confidence when they leave school. Students interviewed considered that the arrangements to support them in submitting their application form for university could be improved by setting a whole day aside for the process and enabling forms to be completed electronically. Approximately 50 per cent of students returned the sixth form questionnaires and 35 per cent of these returns indicated a level of dissatisfaction with the careers advice they receive. Investigation during the inspection suggests that there have been some tensions over the bedding down of Connexions in North London. The school has recognised this difficulty and has responded by bidding for funding to establish a Connexions information centre on site to redress the problem. Although successful in its bid this is at an early stage of development and the centre was not up and running by the time of the inspection.

Assessment

58. Assessment procedures in the sixth form are very good. Students receive effective and helpful feedback about their work. The assessments used to identify the needs of students with SEN are very good. Assessments in Years 12 and 13 are related closely to the requirements of the examination boards. Students are given regular oral and written feedback from their academic tutor who is also a subject specialist in the area where advice is given. Self and peer assessment is as important as tutor assessment in fostering growing independence and self-monitoring skills. Assessment conversations, for example in design and technology, allow students time to reflect on what they have achieved before being able to assess how well they have done and move forward.
59. Very good procedures exist for monitoring individual students and for seeing that they keep on track to achieve the highest standards possible. During the inspection very good active teaching and learning strategies resulted in students being fully involved in assessment and self-reflecting on their own learning. Interviews with Year 12 students reveal a number who are struggling with time management problems as they try to balance the requirements of the different courses. Year 13 students are more in control and confident in themselves as a result of the ongoing support received from their tutors.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. Parents have very positive views about the school. Virtually all parents expressed delight with the fact that their children were expected to work hard, with the quality of teaching, with the leadership and management of the school and the fact that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. The vast majority were pleased with all other aspects of the school except the amount of homework. The

inspection team fully supports parents' positive views but considers that very good use is made of homework.

61. Parents are very well informed about the school through excellent fortnightly newsletters, the school prospectus, the sixth form prospectus and the governors' annual report. Information about the curriculum is also very good with details of the curriculum for each year given in the year handbooks, the Key Stage 4 curriculum handbook and the sixth form prospectus. Parents are also meaningfully involved in GCSE options discussions and in GCE AS-level options for students entering the sixth form. In addition, parents of Year 10 students are invited to a curriculum evening to discuss how to study for GCSE examinations.
62. Parents are very well informed about their children's progress. Each year group has an annual consultation evening, and in addition, Year 7 has a settling-in meeting in October, and Year 13 have two consultation evenings, one in September after the AS results and one in March. There are very good relationships between parents and staff and parents are welcome to have informal discussions at any time. Also the school keeps parents fully informed of any concerns. Annual reports are good and clearly indicate students' attainment levels, effort, personal attitudes and homework performance. Year 10 and Year 11 reports give useful guidance on how to improve but similar guidance is not sufficiently robust in the reports given in Years 7, 8 and 9.
63. The school works very effectively with parents / carers of students with special educational needs. Arrangements for the annual review of students with statements of special educational needs are very good. Parents and students are involved in setting the targets on individual education plans (IEPs). The SEN policy reflects the changes brought about by the new Code of Practice for SEN but there is scope to involve parents even more sharply in the setting of IEP targets.
64. Parents make a very significant contribution to their children's learning at school and home by raising substantial funds for the school, supporting homework and helping the school in many ways. These include helping with work experience placements, conducting mock interviews, assisting with drama productions and making donations in kind. The headteacher has a vision to engage parents / carers in the learning process and this has informed part of his bid for technology status. The second strand of his 'I want to learn' culture is to create a school 'without walls', open to the whole community to learn and develop skills relevant to the 21st century.
65. Parents are very supportive of the school and its values. They have signed the home/school agreement, there is very good attendance at consultation evenings and school productions, they provide transport for school teams and deliver and collect their children for out-of-school activities. This gives a strong message to the students of the value their parents place on education.

Sixth form student views

66. Students really enjoy being in the sixth form. They consider that they are taught well and that teachers have high expectations of them. They believe that they receive a very good balance of challenge and support in their studies. They are encouraged to take independence for their own learning. All students interviewed said that teachers are very approachable and always accessible to discuss any difficulties they experience with their work. A significant proportion of students consider that there could be a wider range of more stimulating extra-curricular activities and there is concern amongst a number of students that recreational sport is not available for them. This is to be seen

in the context of the implementation of a very demanding AS programme with all of the timetabling difficulties it brings. Students say that they greatly appreciate being treated as mature adults and they like the college atmosphere created within the sixth form; evidence gathered by the inspectors confirms their views.

67. Students interviewed in Year 12 were very satisfied with the induction process and they thought that the written information provided for them about courses and the interview process before making final decisions about which subjects to take was very helpful. They thought that the range of courses on offer was very good and met their needs well. Year 13 students considered that they were given good guidance about the next step in their adult life and each student interviewed felt confident that there was somebody available with whom they could discuss their aspirations and fears in confidence. Sixth form students have embraced the school's 'I want to learn' culture. A minority of students consider that their work is not always thoroughly assessed, and scrutiny of comments on returned questionnaires indicates some concern in this respect in physics. Students interviewed considered that their views are listened to sensitively but a number thought that they could be better consulted on important decisions such as the election of the head girl and the head boy. Although students appreciate the coffee shop arrangement a number are not happy about the lack of a sixth form common-room but accommodation is very tight on the upper school site.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

68. Leadership is excellent. The leadership provided by the headteacher is inspirational. Within four years he has successfully created a 'I want to learn' culture where students desire to learn and students and staff alike really enjoy coming to school. Under his leadership there is a very clear educational direction. He has successfully built an excellent team of senior managers who have effectively managed change and brought about significant improvements. His passionate concern that all students will achieve their very best has resulted in the ethos for learning being radically transformed for the better since the time of the last inspection. At the time of the last inspection there were very significant concerns about the quality of teaching and learning and the behaviour of students on the lower school site. Behaviour on the lower school site is now very good and the quality of teaching and learning is at least good in Years 7 to 9; this improvement is no mean achievement. Leadership at middle management level is very good with pockets of excellence in English, design and technology and physical education. Almost all heads of faculty and heads of year inspire, motivate and influence staff within their faculties and year teams.
69. The school's aims and values are excellent and parents greatly appreciate them. This is a fully inclusive school which successfully values every student. As a result all students consider it a privilege to belong to this school community, including some very disaffected students who were interviewed by inspectors. An environment has been created where it is safe to make mistakes and to learn from them. Staff are creative, imaginative and successful in the ways in which they build the confidence and self-esteem of students. All staff have high expectations of all students and the newly qualified teachers as well as some long-serving members of staff interviewed said that they consider it a joy to teach in this school. There is a vibrant excitement about the future, particularly the vision of the headteacher to create a community school which engages parents / carers in effective learning alongside their children. Staff bubble with excitement and enthusiasm about this vision of a school without walls: a community school accessible to all.

70. Management is very good. Senior and middle managers carry out their duties very effectively. They are crystal clear about their roles and responsibilities and feel trusted by the headteacher to do a good job. Effective management systems have been put in place and very good channels of communication have been set up so that **all** staff consider that they are fully consulted and involved in important decisions concerning all aspects of school life. This is an open and transparent school and this is the secret of its success. The headteacher allows no room for cynicism or complacency and consequently all staff strive to do even better than they do without being stressed and nervous because they know that the headteacher and chair of governors are there to support them. The motto of the quite extraordinary caring headteacher is: 'an error does not become a mistake unless there is a refusal to correct it and to learn from the experience'. The headteacher successfully delegates very significant responsibility to his senior and middle managers and gives them space to succeed. Staff have responded by fulfilling their responsibilities with energy, enthusiasm, commitment and a sense of fun. The headteacher is also robust as evidenced by the manner in which he transformed an unsatisfactory situation in music to one where music is now growing from strength to strength.
71. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance are very good. Faculties are involved in self-review and this has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in almost all subjects but this practice is not yet consistent across all faculties. Opportunities for modelling good practice are not so effective in the humanities faculty as in other faculties. There are effective systems for monitoring departmental development plans and the whole-school development plan and the headteacher and chair of governors have a very good knowledge of what is going well in the school and what is in need of improvement. Heads of year monitor and evaluate the school's provision to meet the pastoral needs of all students. They work very effectively in partnership with the SENCO and head of the educational inclusion centre to support students with SEN and also those who are disaffected, not keen to learn and at risk of exclusion. Their very effective teamwork has enabled a number of students with very challenging behaviour to be fully included in all aspects of school life. For those who require it, counselling is well managed within school. Heads of faculty and departments carry out a thorough analysis of examination results and use information gathered from this exercise to inform planning to raise standards, including changing the syllabus and examination board where appropriate. The monitoring of minority ethnic achievement is very robust and results in raised achievement for minority ethnic students because information gained from this analysis is used very effectively to improve the quality of provision for these students. Every effort has been made by the headteacher to recruit minority ethnic staff to reflect the student body and he has been successful in recruiting a number of excellent teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds, including a first-rate newly qualified teacher.
72. The management of SEN is good. The requirements of the new Code of Practice for SEN are met and the designated governor with responsibility for SEN is effective. The provision for students with EAL is well managed. Excellence in Cities funding has been used well to manage the provision for students who are gifted and talented and a new educational inclusion centre has been established on the lower school site to support disaffected students at risk of exclusion. On the upper school site disaffected students are very effectively managed as the result of a very well-managed work-related programme of study which meets their needs very well.
73. The long-term strategic plan is excellent in setting priorities for whole-school development with an emphasis on students' achievement and the school has been very successful in raising standards as a result. This is a very significant improvement

since the last inspection. The yearly plan is an effective management 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.

74. The governing body is very good in meeting its statutory responsibilities except for ensuring that all students experience a daily act of collective worship and that ICT is used effectively to support the teaching of all subjects. There is a very good structure of sub-committees and governors are very supportive of and involved in the school's strategic vision. The sub-committee structure enables governors to shape policy and uses governors' expertise effectively to support the management of all aspects of school life. The chair of governors is on the ball: she is very supportive of the headteacher but she is not afraid to challenge him and keep him on his metal. Governors visit the school regularly to support staff and attend governing body meetings.
75. Financial planning is very good. The level of funding appears to be generous but there is considerable duplication of expenditure involved in the complexities of managing a split-site school. Funding available is spent on the current student body to improve the quality of education available to them and to raise standards and so the carry forward is very small. However, prudent financial planning based on expertise and experience ensures that the priorities on the school development plan are met. The governing body is appropriately involved in setting the school's budget. The school is well supported by an excellent bursar and a very effective finance sub-committee of governors who monitor expenditure rigorously. The minor recommendations in the most recent auditors' report have been acted upon. The application of the principles of best value is good. The school receives a range of grants and these are all appropriately targeted in the interest of the students for whom they are intended. The funding allocated to support students with special educational needs is supplemented from the school's general budget and used effectively to support these students.
76. All staff, including teachers, classroom assistants, administrative staff and site management staff, are effectively and efficiently deployed. They all make a valuable contribution to the learning of students in the widest sense of the word in this school with a family atmosphere. They know all about the students and this is a very valuable asset. Taking into account the quality of teaching and learning, standards attained, the very good behaviour of the students, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students and the level of funding available, the school provides good value for money. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
77. The school is well staffed, and there is a good match of suitably qualified and experienced teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum. There are some particularly well-staffed departments, for example in science where there is a good balance of the various specialists and in design and technology where some of the technicians have teaching qualifications. Technician and other non-teaching support staff are good and these staff are well supported and provided with suitable training to fulfil their roles.
78. Induction procedures for staff new to the school are comprehensive, and in particular the support given to newly qualified teachers is very good. The newly qualified teachers interviewed said that they were very well supported and that they considered it a joy and a privilege to teach at the school. One long-serving member of staff interviewed said that, 'since the new headteacher has taken over I want to come to work and that did not used to be the case'.

79. There is an effective process in place for performance management. This is increasingly being seen by the teachers as one which provides well for their professional development. It is effectively linked to the in-service training arrangements. Individual departments mostly incorporate these arrangements well into their planning to meet school, subject and individual requirements. The performance management arrangements were highly praised by the school's threshold assessor. The school's assessor for 'Investor in People' commended the school for its commitment to equality of opportunity and for the manner in which all staff are valued.
80. Overall the quality of accommodation is satisfactory. The governing body and the caretaking staff have been particularly effective in managing and maintaining these ageing premises very well. Recent additions such as the garden and covered terrace on the lower school site and the coffee shop on the upper school site enhance the environment for students. The accommodation for design and technology is very good and the faculty uses the space available to it very imaginatively. There is good accommodation for mathematics. However, in many other subject areas teachers work very hard to make the very best use of rooms where window frames are rotting, damp penetrates and conditions are not conducive for learning. Their dedication and commitment enables them to overcome many of the difficulties but the buildings on both sites present many problems. Teaching and learning are adversely affected by inappropriate accommodation for business studies and modern foreign languages. However, a business studies teacher was observed making excellent use of hatted accommodation to teach her subject even though it was not suitable for what she wanted to do. The science accommodation is in dire need of refurbishment. There is a vision and plan to redress these problems and so the headteacher has to balance keeping the learning environment as safe as possible and indeed as cheerful as possible whilst not currently throwing good money on 'bad buildings' when the anticipated outcome is a complete new build, preferably all on one site. However, it is a significant and immediate concern that there is not enough space to satisfactorily educate the ever increasing numbers and if it were not for the dedication of a committed teaching force the situation could be dire for the students.
81. The provision of learning resources is satisfactory in the majority of subjects. Resources are good in English, mathematics and design and technology. In mathematics, for example, every student has a textbook. There are also sufficient other books for reference use. In science every student has a book suitable for the level at which they are working. The department can provide sufficient consumables but there is not always sufficient finance to enable major items of equipment to be replaced. There are some weaknesses in history, modern foreign languages and music. Visual resources are poor in history where the teachers do not have access to their own television set for regular use. There is a shortage of overhead projectors in modern foreign languages. In music in Years 7 to 9, there are insufficient ICT resources. This is also the case in several other subjects, particularly science, art and design, geography and physical education, and this adversely affects the delivery of ICT skills across these subjects.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

82. Leadership and management of the sixth form is very good. There is a thorough overview of performance and trends to inform decisions on where to place resources. Heads of faculty monitor the sixth form subject/course provision for which they are responsible and there is very good dialogue with the head of sixth form so that there is a strategic overview. However, formal dialogue with students could be increased so as to inform measures to improve the sixth form provision in the interest of the students. Some sixth form students are concerned that they are not consulted about important decisions such as choosing the head girl and the head boy. Although sixth form students are represented on the school council there are not enough formal structures to involve students in important decision making about life in the sixth form. There are no sixth-formers represented as observers at governing body meetings and the school has not used a questionnaire internally to find out what concerns/worries sixth form students have. The Ofsted student questionnaires indicated that a number of sixth form students did not consider that their views were listened to sensitively. Extensive interviews with sixth-formers did not confirm this view, indeed they said that they were listened to by individual members of staff and that they were given a lot of help. However, they expressed a concern about the lack of formal consultation structures for corporate discussions about issues such as the lack of a common room and the fact that a whole day is not set aside for filling in the application form for university. Nonetheless, they considered that the head of sixth form, their subject teachers and academic tutors support them well in their choice of courses to study and in the progress they make in their programmes.

Resources

83. Overall resources in the sixth form are good. In some subjects, for example science, where the laboratories are currently being up-graded, 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. A number of rooms on the upper school site are cramped and the exterior condition of the school is in poor condition although the governing body and headteacher do all that is humanly possible to keep it up to as best a standard as possible. One of the rooms used to teach sociology is grim, unsuitable for group work and severely limits teaching strategies. The site is arranged and managed in such a manner as to create a college/university type ethos and the student coffee bar is valued by the sixth form students. Nonetheless, they would value having their own common room and improved private study areas.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

84. 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) Improve the curriculum planning for modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9 by:
 - ensuring that Year 9 students have sufficient time to cover the programmes of study in their first modern foreign language and so raise their level of achievement; and
 - reviewing the provision of two modern foreign languages for all students in Years 7 to 9, particularly for lower attaining students.
(*paragraphs: 5, 25, 156 and 157*)
 - ii) Meet National Curriculum requirements to use ICT to support the teaching of all subjects across the curriculum, particularly in Years 7 to 9 by:
 - ensuring the provision of sufficient ICT equipment to enable teachers and students to have access to it as and when it is relevant to their programmes of study. (*paragraphs: 5, 25, 26, 81, 121,125,146, 147, 152, 155, 168 and 175*)
 - iii) Continue to improve the quality and amount of accommodation, particularly the hatted accommodation. (*paragraphs: 80 and 120*)

Sixth form

- i) Continue to improve the amount and quality of the accommodation used for teaching in the sixth form. (*paragraph: 83*)
- ii) Review the procedures for consultation with sixth form students so that they have more opportunities to air their views about what could be improved in the sixth form. (*paragraphs: 67 and 82*)
- iii) Improve the procedures to support students with their application forms for university. (*paragraphs: 57 and 82*)

In addition to the key issues above, the following minor issues should also be included in the governors' action plan:

- Improve the provision for drugs education by reviewing the planning for drugs education to ensure that the content of the package is sufficiently detailed. (*paragraph: 30*)
- Improve the range of extra-curricular activities by ensuring that there are more intellectually stimulating options available for students to complement the range of excellent sport, drama and music opportunities. (*paragraphs: 31 and 66*)
- Improve the quality of provision for citizenship by drawing all of the strands of delivery together to provide a balanced programme identifying what is to be taught, when and where to each year group. (*paragraph: 130*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 - 11	129
	Sixth form	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students		84

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 - 11							
Number	13	43	49	23	1	0	0
Percentage	10	33	38	18	1	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	8	23	21	7	0	0	0
Percentage	14	39	36	11	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	1007	253
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	115	11

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	33	4
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	227	15

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	239

Student mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14

Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving
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23

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.7
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	1.2

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

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

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002 (2001)	108 (121)	95 (78)	203 (199)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	81 (95)	82 (92)	87 (90)
	Girls	76 (77)	68 (66)	68 (68)
	Total	157 (172)	150 (158)	155 (158)
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	77.39 (86)	73.9 (79)	76.4 (79)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	39.4 (46)	54.7 (51)	39.9 (46)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	61 (68)	90 (95)	83 (91)
	Girls	74 (71)	75 (72)	68 (66)
	Total	135 (139)	165 (167)	151 (157)
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	66.5 (70)	81.3 (84)	74.4 (79)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	29 (31)	51.7 (51)	54.2 (52)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002 (2001)	118 (130)	80 (65)	198 (195)

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	62 (65)	104 (121)	111 (125)
	Girls	52 (34)	75 (60)	77 (65)
	Total	114 (99)	179 (181)	188 (192)
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	58 (51)	90 (93)	95 (98)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per student	School	43.67 (40.2)
	National	39.8 (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	37	89
	National		81.0

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

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	54	43	97
	Average point score per candidate	208.5	235.8	220.6
National	Average point score per candidate	n/a	n/a	n/a

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	54	43	97	0	0	0
	Average point score per candidate	208.5	235.8	220.6	0	0	0

National	Average point score per candidate	(16.5)	(17.7)	(17.4)	n/a	n/a	n/a
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

n/a = not available

Ethnic background of students

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
901	11	0
0	0	0
144	3	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
29	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
5	0	0
5	0	0
8	0	0
6	0	0
31	0	0
127	0	0

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

*** check the 127 figure above with the school

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	82.1
Number of students per qualified teacher	15.6

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	26
Total aggregate hours worked per week	644.75

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	91.9
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	21.9
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Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	4,534,453
Total expenditure	4,580,727
Expenditure per student	3,697
Balance brought forward from previous year	102,972
Balance carried forward to next year	56,698

Key Stage 4	19.7
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	16.3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	24.8

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1258
Number of questionnaires returned	280

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	43	4	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	57	38	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	55	4	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	47	14	3	1
The teaching is good.	44	53	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	44	6	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	28	3	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	79	19	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	39	50	6	1	5
The school is well led and managed.	66	30	1	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	43	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	42	2	1	3

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

Other issues raised by parents

Parents praised the openness of the headteacher whom they found to be very accessible and approachable. They considered this to be an all inclusive and very happy school. Parents considered that the provision for SEN was outstandingly good with a strong focus on building students' confidence and self-esteem. They thought that the culture for learning on the lower school site had been radically transformed for the better since the last inspection and they greatly appreciated the college atmosphere created on the upper school site. They considered that the buildings could be better and expressed a number of concerns about a split site.

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

- Standards at the end of Year 11 are well above the national average
- Students' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is very good
- Students work hard and have positive attitudes to their work and to each other
- The leadership and management of the department are excellent
- Improvement since the previous inspection is excellent

Areas for improvement

- Students require more regular access to ICT
- Many students do not spell as well as they should and more emphasis needs to be placed on this by teachers

85. Standards on entry to the school are average. In national tests in 2000 and 2001, girls and boys aged 14 attained standards well above both the national average and those gained in schools taking students from similar backgrounds: these results indicate very good achievement and were a considerable improvement on performances in previous years. In 2002, standards are above the national figure and above the average of similar schools. Teachers' assessments in the last three years were below the test results. Standards over this three-year period are similar to those in mathematics and science.
86. Standards in English and English literature at the end of Year 11 are consistently well above the national average for boys and girls and those attained by similar schools. Although the percentage of students gaining A* - C in English dipped to average in 2001, the 2002 figures in both subjects are again well above average. Far more students are entered for these examinations than in most other schools, therefore their achievement and results are particularly good. There are also significantly more boys than girls in the school and this also makes these results stand out even more.
87. Standards of speaking and listening are well above average, although some boys in Years 7 to 9 do not listen carefully enough, particularly towards the end of the longer than average lessons. Students of all ages speak confidently and well: they readily volunteer to answer and read aloud in class; they support and co-operate with each other well; and they use paired and group talk very effectively to refine and extend their ideas and explore new ones. A Year 8 class was seen vigorously discussing possible verdicts in a mock trial arising from their reading of *Goodnight Mr Tom*; whilst a Year 10 class held good quality, well-argued debates on the social, ethical and moral issues raised in the film *Let Him Have It* which deals with the Craig and Bentley murder case.
88. Reading standards are above average in Years 7 to 9 and well above in Years 10 and 11. As a result of the school's successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, a reading for pleasure culture is developing, aided by such schemes as the reading passport and good use of the library. Some lessons begin with a short period of private reading, and teachers join in, thus becoming effective role models. By the end of

Year 9, most students are readily able to make inferences, deductions and predictions based on their reading of fiction, poetry, drama, media and other texts, and can read to find information. Because all students follow the GCSE courses in English and English literature, they read a wide range of challenging texts and make very good progress in their understanding and interpretations. The lowest attaining students in Years 10 and 11 enthusiastically tackle their course texts whilst those in the higher sets read fluently, critically and with assured maturity.

89. The standards and accuracy of writing are above average in Years 7 to 9 and well above in Years 10 and 11: they are improving because of the department's insistence on students' correct use of grammar and their development of a wide vocabulary and a range of writing styles. However, some students of all ages do not spell as well as they should, given their overall ability in English, although the department is targeting this skill in particular. By the end of Year 9, lower attaining students can write simple but interesting stories, descriptions, poems and responses to their reading, such as a character study of Lady Macbeth, whilst the most-able compare Macbeth with Macduff. By the end of Year 11, students show a good awareness of audience in their work and the most able produce carefully-considered and sensitive descriptions and analyses of media and literature texts; but lower attaining students often offer description, narrative and unnecessary biographical and historical information in their literature assignments instead of interpretations based on the text.
90. Students with special educational needs make very good progress in all classes and years, as do those for whom English is an additional language and those designated 'gifted and talented', because teachers plan carefully and work with support staff to meet these students' needs, offer them individual help in lessons and, if necessary, provide additional learning resources and challenges. Additionally, because the relationships between students are so good and they readily collaborate on work, their peers often give them considerable assistance.
91. The range of experiences which enrich students' learning is good. There are extra-curricular activities, such as regular theatre trips and visiting writers, as well as writers' and readers' clubs and an annual Book Fair. Additionally, there are close links with the drama department which give opportunities for taking part in school productions. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and their knowledge of citizenship are well catered for in teachers' lesson planning. A variety of ICT activities, including the writing of newspapers, leaflets and posters, is offered, although students' presentation skills using *PowerPoint* and their use of the Internet to forge links with other schools to share their ideas and writing have yet to be developed. Unfortunately, access to the ICT rooms is sometimes very difficult: hence, not all students have the same opportunities in each year.
92. Teaching is very good overall as is students' learning which is considerably enhanced by their good behaviour and positive attitudes in almost all lessons. Teaching is consistently very good in Years 10 and 11 and good in Years 7 to 9, though two excellent lessons were seen in these lower years. The best lessons are marked by clear learning objectives, teachers' high expectations of students and their careful planning of a range of stimulating activities for all abilities; this is especially the case in the two upper years. In these lessons, teachers have a full awareness of the needs of all students and impressive knowledge of the subject and its examination requirements. They also have the ability to make lessons enjoyable by involving students closely, giving them choices and opportunities to be independent, and using a wide variety of strategies to appeal to all learning styles. In an excellent mixed-ability Year 7 lesson, the teacher and support assistant worked superbly together to develop their students'

understanding of *The Tulip Touch*, giving them confidence to make their own decisions and ensuring that their opinions were fully justified by close references to the novel. In less successful lessons, teachers use a limited range of strategies, show little flexibility in their approach and do not always involve all students fully. A particular strength of teaching is the high quality of marking: comments on work are positive and encouraging and teachers often set improvement targets to students and suggest how they might be achieved.

93. The leadership and management of the department are excellent. Responsibilities are suitably delegated, newly-written, exciting schemes of work securely embed the National Literacy Strategy, all documentation is extremely thorough, planning for improvement is clearly linked to the school's priorities and communication is very good. Teaching and marking are well monitored, students' targets and achievement are closely tracked and the department is totally committed to establishing and maintaining the highest standards in all it does. The head of department has a clear vision for the future, and the quality of teamwork and commitment is excellent.
94. Improvement since the previous inspection is excellent. The several shortcomings identified have been systematically and most effectively dealt with. A literacy co-ordinator has been appointed and very good guidance on grammar and punctuation is provided in the revised schemes of work. Speaking, listening and reading aloud activities are frequent and girls are no longer passive in lessons. Classroom management is now very good and 'discourteousness' does not occur. Lesson planning incorporates all of the National Curriculum requirements, students' achievement has improved considerably and standards in all years are consistently higher than they were.

Literacy across the curriculum

95. The provision for literacy across the curriculum is very good and standards are above average overall. Each subject has a literacy policy and activities designed to develop students' speaking, listening, reading and writing are planned in many lessons.
96. Most students speak confidently and well because there are frequent opportunities for them to use talk to develop and extend their learning in pairs and groups. In almost all subjects, they are encouraged to evaluate their own and others' work and to make constructive suggestions for improvement. This was well illustrated in an excellent Year 10 personal, social and health education lesson in which students created their own short plays for a radio audience about the persuasive methods used by drug dealers; they then discussed them maturely and objectively. Similar evaluations are common in art and design, physical education, music, drama and design and technology. Students also readily volunteer answers in class and, when given the opportunity, read aloud.
97. Nearly all students read a variety of texts, including Internet research and newspaper and magazine articles to further their knowledge and to seek information but, in a few subjects, the reading requirements rarely go beyond the text books used. Some of the best practice is in religious education, art and design and geography. In these subjects, students use both the school library and the Internet very successfully and this is often reflected in their writing; however, some students in all subjects use websites uncritically, without questioning the quality of what they read because they erroneously believe that the printed word always carries scholarship and authority.
98. Standards of writing across the school are above average. Work is well planned and structured by all but a few of the least able, and students have a good vocabulary which

helps them to write fluently and effectively. However, standards of spelling are not commensurate with students' overall ability.

99. The teaching of literacy, both across the curriculum and in the weekly enhancement period for Years 7 to 9, is good. Most teachers, but not all, regularly correct spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes and also devise effective ways of helping less able students with the structuring of written tasks.
100. The management of literacy across the curriculum is very good, although practice and success vary both across and within faculties because not all heads of subjects are keeping it under review. Staff have been well trained and excellent schemes of work written which enable those who are not English specialists to make a significant contribution to whole-school literacy in the recently introduced literacy enhancement periods. Catch-up lessons now in Year 7 are helping students to make impressive progress and good use is being made of assessment data to set individual targets and to monitor achievement. Planning for further improvement is excellent and should ensure that standards continue to improve.

DRAMA

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

Strengths

- Standards are consistently well above the national average by the end of Year 11
- Teaching is inspirational and challenging
- The subject makes a significant contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and citizenship awareness

Areas for improvement

- There are some shortcomings in accommodation.

101. Standards are average in the weekly drama lessons in Years 7 to 9 and achievement is satisfactory: however, those opting to take the subject at GCSE in Years 10 and 11 attain standards which are consistently well above those nationally and, apart from 2001 when there was a slight dip, many students gain better results in drama than they do in most of their other subjects. In 2002, girls did particularly well when more than twice the national average gained A grades. Standards of work seen during the inspection, by both girls and boys, in Years 10 and 11 are well above average.
102. Students are introduced to the subject's disciplines and techniques from Year 7 so, when they start their GCSE option course, they have a good understanding of drama requirements. When they enter Year 10, they can improvise and role play, and use freeze frames, thought tracking and hot seating to create characters and to explore situations and concepts. They also know how voice and body language, levels and use of space contribute to effective performances. A particular strength is the way students co-operate with and support each other; they appreciate and evaluate their own work and that of others using examination board criteria. They respond readily to the teacher's direction, but are also able to make their own decisions and to use the freedom of the drama studio in a serious and creative way. This was well illustrated in a Year 10 class working on *Blood Brothers* who showed and justified how being brought up in distinctly different environments and societies affected the accent, dialect, posture, manners, movement and body language of the twins.

103. The drama curriculum in all years is very good. Besides developing students' knowledge of dramatists, practitioners and stagecraft, there are regular planned opportunities for the exploration of important social and moral issues, such as drug addiction, bullying and smoking. Additionally, schemes of work are linked to English lessons so, for example, all students study Shakespeare's language and theatre and, in Year 9, the scenes set for the English national tests. The department's contribution to citizenship is further enhanced through students' collaborative working in regular school productions and through visits which give important experience of the professional theatre, as well as frequent problem-solving and decision-making activities in most lessons.
104. All teaching is very good. Lesson planning is thorough and activities are both challenging and rewarding; it also includes appropriate activities and support for any students with special educational needs. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, know and have high expectations of all students and often inspire them to try new ideas and techniques, and give them the confidence to experiment for themselves. Students are thoroughly involved in the assessment process and know how well they are doing and the action they need to take to improve further.
105. The leadership and management are very good. Short- and long-term planning is excellent, schemes of work are thorough, and have useful links with other curriculum areas, and students' progress is well monitored. Resources are satisfactory: however, the quality of teaching and learning is adversely affected when lower school lessons are taught in the gymnasium. The building is inhospitable, the acoustics are poor and there is no access to the department's resources. Members of the department work well together, have a common philosophy and are constantly seeking new ways to ensure that students' learning is enjoyable, purposeful, relevant and challenging and that it equips them well for life within and outside school.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Standards of attainment are above average
- The quality of the teaching is good, especially in Years 7 to 9
- The relationship between the teachers and the students is very good
- Attitudes of the students to learning are very good, especially in Years 7 to 9

Areas for improvement

- Standards of numeracy, especially for middle and lower attaining students
- Assessment of learning during lessons, and intervention strategies when appropriate

106. Standards on entry to the school are marginally above average. Standards in mathematics in the first three years are above average. In the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002, the proportion of the students attaining the expected Level 5 or above was above the national average. The proportion of those achieving Level 6 was also above average. Compared with schools with a similar proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals, standards were well above average. Standards have improved steadily over the last five years compared to national norms. In previous years the girls have performed slightly better than the boys relative to national norms, but in 2002, especially at the higher Level 6, the boys did better.

107. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are above average. In the GCSE examinations in 2002, the proportion of students gaining a grade A* - C, and of students gaining grades A* - G were above the national average. Standards were well above those of similar schools. This is an improvement on the results of the previous year.
108. Improvement has been very good since the last inspection. Standards of attainment have risen in the first three years, and have been maintained in Years 10 and 11. The students' achievement, that is the progress they make in the long term, has improved in Years 7 to 9, and been maintained in Years 10 and 11. The attitude and behaviour of the students have improved in all years. The quality of the teaching has improved and is more consistent. Finally the organisation and leadership of the department have improved.
109. The achievement of the students in the first three years is good. In lessons, progress is normally good or better, influenced by the good attitude of the majority of the students, together with good teaching. It is very good in those lessons where the teachers have incorporated the methods and structures of the Key Stage 3 strategy, especially in Year 7. Achievement overall in Years 10 and 11 is also good. However, in some lessons progress is less good, because the students become more passive in their learning, and are less interested in understanding the underlying principles of the topics they are studying. In general students with special educational needs make good progress in all years, supported by smaller classes and some good individual help from learning support assistants. Students with EAL make good progress throughout the school.
110. Students cover all areas of the curriculum at an appropriate level. Standards in algebra are in line with expectations. Students in higher attaining sets in Years 10 and 11 can solve quadratic equations, whilst in the early years students are able to use simple formulae, although for many students, especially in middle and lower attaining sets, algebraic notation remains a puzzle. Standards of graphical representation are very good. Standards of numeracy are generally good in higher attaining sets, but not as good as they should be in the middle and low attaining sets. Too many students do not know their multiplication tables fluently enough and many students are unable to use strategies for working out unusual numerical problems in their heads, because they are not given enough opportunities to practise. Problem solving tends to be taught as an occasional activity, for example at the end of the year. As a result many students do not see mathematics as a problem-solving activity and tend to get confused if asked to solve a problem, for which they have not recently been taught a process. All students become familiar with the basic properties of shapes, and learn the basic principles of handling data at a level appropriate to their set. ICT is not yet effectively used to learn mathematics, although students are taught to use spreadsheets to solve a range of problems. Use of calculators for complex calculations is good, but many students are over-reliant on them when they should be working problems out in their heads.
111. The students' attitudes to the subject and their behaviour in the classroom are very good in the first three years, and good in Years 10 and 11. In most classrooms there is a relaxed and calm atmosphere, with the students clearly there to work. They are very respectful towards their teachers, and their peers. Standards of presentation in exercise books are very good; most students take a considerable pride in the quality of their work and try to be precise and accurate. Some of the students' work is exemplary. Most manage to do a very satisfactory amount of work each lesson, and for homework. Many students, especially in Years 10 and 11, seem more comfortable as relatively passive receivers of knowledge and understanding, and only a minority actively contributes in most lessons. The only occasions when behaviour was less than good in the week of the visit occurred when the work being taught was at an inappropriate level.

112. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. All the teaching in Years 7 to 9 is at least satisfactory, and in four out of every five lessons it is good or better. There are some very good lessons in Year 7. In Years 10 and 11, most lessons are at least satisfactory, and half of the lessons are good. The teachers are all good mathematicians, and they explain the mathematical processes very carefully to the students and make sure they understand the meaning of key words. They have a very good relationship with the students, so that in most cases there is a good atmosphere in mathematics lessons, where the students feel comfortable, and can contribute or ask questions if they want to. They ensure that the students organise their work well in their notebooks and their exercise books, so that the students have an excellent source of reference material for revision. There are well-developed systems to assess the progress of the students in periodic tests. The best teaching is in Year 7, where the teachers use lively visual materials and engage the students through skilled questioning and a range of different activities. In lessons where there are weaknesses, these often arise because the students' mistakes or misconceptions are not quickly identified, or the course of the lesson is not adapted to rectify these problems. There is generally not enough emphasis during lessons on improving the students' ability to work problems out in their heads or, in Years 10 and 11, on understanding the underlying concepts as opposed to being able to learn a process mechanically.
113. The department is well organised and operates well as a team, providing mutual support and sharing good practice in planning and teaching. Resources are well managed. The department is fully staffed with well-qualified and experienced teachers. This is a strength of the department. The head of department monitors the professional standards of his colleagues effectively, for example through lesson observation. The curriculum fulfils national requirements, but there should be greater emphasis on the role of mathematics as a problem-solving activity, and ICT is not effectively used as an everyday tool for teaching and learning.

Numeracy

114. The school is in the process of establishing a policy for teaching numeracy across the curriculum, which is beginning to raise awareness in different subject areas. Good applications of mathematics are found in many areas of the curriculum, for example in design and technology, where the students' spatial awareness provides good support for the design process; in science, where students use statistical methods confidently, and can make calculations involving various formulae; and in history where data is collected and displayed to illustrate events such as the black death. Standards of numeracy are generally good for higher attaining students, but the middle and lower attaining students are less confident when required to work with number to support learning in mathematics and in other subjects of the curriculum. Too many of them do not know their multiplication tables fluently enough and are insecure when they are confronted by a slightly unusual numerical problem.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Very good teaching and learning result in very good achievement in Years 10 and 11
- Students' attitudes and behaviour are very good
- The triple science course at GCSE meets the needs of gifted and talented students very well
- Leadership and management are very good

Areas for improvement

- The requirement to use ICT to teach and learn science is not fully met
- The accommodation is in urgent need of refurbishment
- Review the curriculum provision for lower attaining students in Years 10 and 11

115. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average for Year 9 and students' achieve well during Years 7 to 9. By the end of Year 11 standards are above average. This represents very good achievement during Years 10 and 11. In all years students with SEN and students with EAL make good progress and gifted and talented students make very good progress.

116. The results of the tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were above the national average and well above average for similar schools. The improvement in the results since 1998 has been at a rate faster than that seen nationally. Boys did exceptionally well in 2002. GCSE results were above the national average for all schools and for similar schools in 2002. Boys' and girls' results were similar. The results of GCSE biology, chemistry and physics, taken by the most able students, were well above average. The proportion of A* - C grades in the double award in science, taken by the majority of students, was above average. The very high proportion of A* grades and the high proportion of A* - G grades indicates that gifted and talented students, those with special educational needs and those with EAL did well.

117. By the end of Year 9 most students' attainment is above average. Students have well-developed skills in experimental investigation. For example, a Year 7 mixed-ability group confidently carried out an experiment to find the rate at which different forms of sugar dissolved. Most were able to explain the results by referring to the particle theory of matter. Higher attainers analyse the results of experiments well. For example, able Year 9 students skilfully carried out an experiment to find out how changing mass affects friction and produced detailed evaluation of their results drawing clear conclusions from their observations. They wrote up their results carefully and included a clear conclusion and detailed evaluation. Middle attainers in Year 9 could name several conductors and insulators and could explain electric current in terms of the flow of electrons. They knew most of the symbols used in simple circuit diagrams and were able to construct series and parallel circuits with help from the teacher in some cases. In contrast, lower attainers in Year 9 were unsure of the symbols used in circuit diagrams and needed extensive help from the teacher to construct a simple circuit.

118. By the end of Year 11 attainment is above average overall. Students studying separate sciences at GCSE do particularly well. Their notes on cells, tissues and organisms are very well presented and detailed; they show a deep understanding of the relationship between structure and function. They carry out investigations with a depth of knowledge and understanding which is above that expected of students of their age. For example,

an investigation into milk as a balanced food is clear and accurate, it makes good use of facts and data and explanations are logical and convincing. Higher attainers studying for the double award also attain very well. Their work on rates of chemical reactions shows a good understanding of the underlying concepts and scientific ideas. Graphs are well drawn, titled and the axes labelled with the correct units, and explanations of what the graph shows include references to scientific concepts and ideas. Higher attainers in Year 10 are able to identify many parts of the heart from a specimen which they dissected very well and they could state their function at a level above that expected for students of their age. Lower attainers, including several with special educational needs, were able to explain how energy is transferred and give examples from everyday life. This demonstrates very good achievement for these students with SEN. After carrying out an experiment to find the best insulator they could give scientific reasons for their choice.

119. The standard of teaching and learning is good overall; it was good during Years 7 to 9 and very good during Years 10 to 11. No lessons were judged unsatisfactory. The best teaching was characterised by high expectations of attainment and behaviour, pace and challenge, very good classroom management, and establishing prior learning at the beginning of the lesson and reinforcing it at the end. Teachers know the students with SEN and EAL very well and work hard to meet their needs. Teachers are implementing the techniques recommended by the national strategy to raise standards in Years 7 to 9 to good effect, for example most lessons included a starter activity, a main activity and a plenary session to reinforce learning. Most teachers mark students' work very well with written comments that recognise good work and state explicitly what they need to do to improve. Some teachers rely more on oral feedback but that does not leave a permanent record of strengths and weaknesses. Students' positive attitudes and behaviour in lessons improved their progress especially in Year 10 and in higher sets; however, there was some immature behaviour and noisy working in a few classes in Years 7 to 9. In two classes the tasks set proved too challenging for the ability of the students. Tailored worksheets are well used to help students with special educational needs but in some physics classes they are over-used for students who could make their own notes and seek answers themselves. There is some use of ICT to teach and learn science but students do not receive their full entitlement under the National Curriculum, in particular they do not carry out data logging.
120. The head of faculty provides very good leadership and management, ably helped by the heads of biology, chemistry and physics. The staff are well qualified in the full range of science subjects and are highly committed to their work. The comprehensive range of courses offered to students during Years 10 and 11 matches students' ability well apart from the single award in science that is taken by lower attainers and for whom the content is particularly demanding. The faculty documentation is thorough and systematic; it enables new and existing staff to carry out faculty plans and policies systematically. The departmental development plan matches the school development plan and contains well-chosen priorities that focus on improving the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by students. Not all classes can be held in laboratories and the accommodation is in urgent need of refurbishment. There is good access to books, sufficient access to equipment and materials but no access to computers in specialist areas.
121. The improvement in science since the last inspection has been good. Students' progress and behaviour are better. The standard of teaching has improved and it is better monitored and supported. However, access to ICT and the standard of accommodation have not improved enough.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Standards are well above average; the students' achievements in art and design are a strength of the school
- Teaching is very good and promotes very good learning at all levels
- The leadership and management of the department are very good

Areas for improvement

- There is not enough use of ICT for teaching and learning

122. Standards in the teacher assessment of students' work at the end of Year 9 were well above average in 2002. Students reached well above average standards in the 2002 GCSE examination. The inspection finds that standards are well above average in the current Year 9 although there are fewer students at the highest National Curriculum levels than the school found last year. However, this represents very good achievement, since students enter the school with broadly average knowledge and skills. Standards in the current Year 11 are also well above average. Again, this represents very good achievement; a large proportion of the year group take this examination and build very well on the knowledge and skills they learned in Years 7 to 9. Girls do better than boys, as is the case nationally. However, the standard of boys' work is much higher than boys nationally. This year the girls' GCSE standards were very high. Overall there has been a very good improvement since the last inspection, when standards at the end of Year 9 were average and at the end of Year 11 were above average.
123. By the end of Year 9 students are able to develop imaginative and expressive paintings from a range of influences, such as the work of Van Gogh or the study of aerial perspective. Most students show clearly how their work has been enhanced by continual refinement using the skills and techniques that the teacher has shown them or, in the case of higher attainers, that they have learned from an in-depth study of their chosen artist. Overall, their knowledge of the social and cultural background and circumstances of an artist, such as Edvard Munch, and how they affected his work is well above average. By the time they complete their GCSE course, the students' skills and understanding have been extended further. They can express their ideas and feelings in a good range of media. The quantity and quality of work is high. Students show a great deal of commitment in their homework and attendance at homework clubs. The boys' work is much more striking than is normally found, with lots of exploratory studies in sketchbooks using colour and a range of media. The department is very inclusive and lower attaining students and those with special educational needs also learn very well.
124. Teaching is very good overall and often excellent, especially for Years 10 and 11. The commitment and enthusiasm of the teachers communicate their very high expectations. Students respond with equal dedication and this shows in the respect which they show to the teachers and to their work. Teachers set homework to enrich the work done in class. In an excellent Year 10 lesson the teacher's planning and management of the term's work had enabled the students to develop not only high level skills in drawing, painting and collage but to use their research into German expressionism, Picasso and mediaeval art. This resulted in powerful and expressive paintings from all the students. They were able to describe what techniques artists had

used and how they applied these in their own work. It was also wonderful to see how the teacher praised the students for their efforts and showed them how much they had achieved; a great confidence booster! This approach to the students' development is evident from the beginning of Year 7. Teachers recognise the need to provide a firm foundation of knowledge and skill so that students have the tools to develop their own personal response and style. Teachers provide extremely good individual support and targets for students so that all students know how well they are doing and what is needed for improvement. When students are ready they are given the opportunity to take their own decisions, to evaluate and improve their work and decide its direction. Occasionally, a lesson may be less successful because the teacher has not made clear to the students exactly what they should achieve in the lesson. Sometimes the students are given too much information at once, which can confuse the slower learners.

125. The success of the department is due to the very good leadership and management. Since the last inspection the head of department has improved the curriculum; much more use is made of first-hand observation, for instance. He has developed the teaching and learning so that they are much more of a team effort, whilst retaining individuality. He has rigorously examined the system of assessment and feedback to students so that these now form a powerful method of raising attainment. Some areas still need strengthening. Very little use is made of ICT to enhance teaching and learning. The department uses a good range of artists to inspire the students. The displays of work around the school and in the art rooms are a constant source of wonder and inspiration. However, there is not enough material from a range of cultures and little use is made of the local community or the mass media, such as literature, news or film.
126. Given the enthusiasm and commitment of the teachers and the great strides already made, the school is well placed to build on its success and make further improvements.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- The personal, social and health education programme makes a good contribution to citizenship
- A thorough audit of the curriculum has highlighted subject areas where citizenship is being taught and areas for development
- Good resources have been provided in the library and teachers have received initial training

Areas for improvement

- More detailed planning to combine all areas of delivery and to establish a programme for each year group
- Improve students' understanding of how they can become informed citizens
- Develop more opportunities for students to take responsible action at school

127. In lessons and PSHE sessions where citizenship could be identified, students attain average standards at the end of Years 9 and 11. The majority of students are not aware that citizenship is now a compulsory subject and that they are studying it through a variety of approaches. However, Year 7 students have a secure understanding about environmental issues. Year 8 students know about courts of law and the difference

between murder and manslaughter. Year 9 students understand the health risks associated with drinking alcohol and Year 10 students are aware of the moral and social dilemmas relating to capital punishment, ethnic cleansing, drug dealing and teenage parenthood. Students are developing a satisfactory knowledge and understanding about citizenship but their skills of enquiry and communication are not yet sufficiently developed.

128. In PSHE lessons where citizenship was a major focus teaching was satisfactory overall and in one lesson excellent teaching was observed. In lessons where citizenship was part of the subject content, teaching was mostly good and one lesson was excellent. Objectives are shared with the students at the start of lessons and summarised at the end. This ensures learning is focused. However, in these introductions opportunities are frequently missed to inform students about the citizenship aspect of their learning. A variety of techniques are used to support students' learning, particularly group and pair work, discussion and debate. In one excellent lesson role-play was used very effectively. Students are made to feel secure about their responses to sensitive issues because they have very good relationships with their teachers who emphasise the confidentiality of sharing thoughts and feelings. Students are enthusiastic and interested in the topics but a few boys are reluctant to join in discussions without considerable encouragement.
129. Students participate in a range of citizenship activities through PSHE and subject lessons, theme weeks, fund-raising activities, the school council, visits from professionals and visits to a variety of venues. In one very good lesson seen during the inspection a police officer talked to Year 8 students about crime and its consequences. However, the contribution of the school council to students' knowledge of citizenship is not high because many students do not consider it makes any difference to their school life. The main delivery of citizenship is through PSHE which also covers religious education, sex, drugs, multicultural issues and careers education in one hour each week. This leaves insufficient time to fully develop the citizenship programmes of study throughout the school.
130. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. A good start has been made with the thorough audit that shows where in the curriculum aspects of citizenship are being addressed. Not enough detailed planning has followed this audit. There is a need to draw all strands of delivery together to provide a balanced programme identifying what is to be taught, when and where to each year group.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The very good quality of teaching and learning
- Above average standards by Year 9 and well above by Year 11
- High quality of graphic displays
- Excellent leadership and management

Areas for improvement

- Sharing of best display practice throughout the faculty.
- Further development of assessment for learning strategies in order to ensure growing independence from Years 7 to 11.

131. By the end of Year 9, students' standard of attainment is above the national average. In recent years teachers' formal assessments have confirmed that the majority of students reach the national benchmark of Level 5 with a significant number attaining Level 6. Above average practical skills are complemented by above average standards of written work including numeracy and ICT skills.
132. In GCSE in 2002, students' standard of attainment is well above average. Girls do better than boys. Results in 2002 are in line with those gained in 2001 for the higher A* - C grades with all students completing the course. The best performance in 2002 is in food and graphics although all areas perform well. During the period 2001-2002, students in this subject achieved higher grades than those they obtained in most of their other school subjects. Standards of work seen indicate that attainment is well above the national average by Year 11.
133. Students enter the school with average knowledge and skill development. In Years 7 to 9 they make good progress and achieve well as a result of the good teaching they receive and the wide range of experiences offered. Good standards are achieved in making a fuse tester, modifying recipes to make pastry cakes, using a computer-aided sewing machine to embroider logos on fleeces, designing and making clocks and producing personal planners. Students are enthusiastic and well behaved and relationships are very good. Enrichment activities, such as the food and textiles clubs, are popular with large numbers in attendance during the inspection week. One Year 7 girl summed up her experience, after one term, as 'this is a happy school'. Her class are fully involved and making good progress with soldering a circuit and locating it in a plastic housing which they had vacuum formed earlier. Their teacher gives them a good example in being environmentally friendly by reusing Velcro for fastening the casing to the base. Year 9 students' knowledge of new SMART materials is considerably improved by the textiles teacher's demonstration of the absorbency properties of the fibre Oasis. Students' interest grew and their curiosity was roused by the amount of liquid absorbed as well as the way in which the fibre swelled and they made good gains in their knowledge and understanding of the absorbency properties of Oasis. In one Year 8 class students learned to cut a thread on metal as well as to use the brazing hearth as they made and assembled the parts of a small clamp. At the same time, in a nearby workshop, Year 8 students made good progress as they cut finger joints and assembled boxes in readiness for their mechanical toy. In all these areas teachers, technicians and learning support assistants work very well together in supporting all students' learning. Rarely this very good provision breaks down. In one food lesson support was not adequate for a student with EAL with no command of the English language or for a boy with SEN who had forgotten his ingredients. In a busy practical lesson these two students' language and literacy needs were not met. In Years 10 and 11 the quality of teaching is very good. In Years 10 and 11 students specialise in a chosen area. High standards of research and presentation are evident in all areas. ICT is very well used for graphics, statistical analysis and presentation in coursework folders. One Year 10 group practise icing techniques before applying them to their Christmas cakes. This procedure proves invaluable because good progression is evident from the practice to the finished products.
134. In the best lessons quality criteria are shared with students before they begin work. The practical nature of the subject, however, even in otherwise good lessons, means that not all teachers allow time at the end for students to feedback to them on whether they feel they have been successful against those criteria. This is a missed opportunity on the students' part for self-reflection and for the teacher to gain insight into the students' perceptions.

135. Excellent leadership and management and the backing of a very strong team of teaching and non-teaching staff have ensured that very good progress has been made in improving the provision for food and textiles and accommodation and for improving teaching, learning, students' attitudes and behaviour and management procedures. Graphics displays are exceptional for clearly informing learning.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the provision for geography is **good**.

Strengths

- Students' standards of work are above average because teaching is very good overall
- Teaching is thoughtfully planned, knowledgeable, and has variety that motivates students to work hard and show much interest; consequently students' achievement is good

Areas for improvement

- A sharper focus in the department's development plan on how to meet targets
- Easier access to the school's ICT resources

136. An above average proportion of students gained A* - C grades at GCSE in 2002, and all students passed with grades A* - G. Boys and girls both perform above average. Although girls performed above boys in 2002, the difference was half that seen nationally. However, in 2001 their attainment was below that of boys. Attainment in the last three years shows good improvement. The percentage of students gaining the highest grades A* and A has increased, and shows improvement since the previous inspection.
137. The standard of work seen is above average by the end of Year 9. Students write extensively about the benefits and problems of tourism. They represent climatic statistics graphically and interpret these confidently for different parts of the world. Students locate places on maps of varying scales accurately. They use the Internet for research, especially for homework. They have fewer opportunities to use ICT in school because access to computers is difficult. Overall students achieve well in relation to their entry standards.
138. Standards are above average by the end of Year 11. Students have confident subject knowledge and draw well upon earlier learning. For example, they know population size is declining in Western Europe and the reasons for this. They conduct independent investigations to a good standard using fieldwork to test geographical hypotheses, such as why a river changes its course. Students achieve very well by applying their learning and developing enquiring minds. Those with SEN and those with EAL make good progress overall. Occasionally, however, lower attaining students experience difficulty with subject words when there is no list of key words or an easily accessible glossary.
139. Teaching is very good overall. It is good in Years 7 to 9, and very good in Years 10 and 11. The sample of lessons observed included excellent and unsatisfactory teaching. The best teaching was very well planned so that learning resources and tasks matched the abilities of all students and they learned very effectively. For example, in a Year 9 lesson on global warming students interpreted graphs accurately and quickly and deduced that world temperatures were rising. They summarised facts well from a video on the 'greenhouse effect' using a prepared sheet. Students with special educational

needs participated fully because a sheet with prompts assisted them to complete the task independently. Higher attaining students had a question to extend their thinking further. In Year 10, students quickly gained knowledge and understanding of the factors that influence population growth because the task was so well prepared and interesting. They learned how to improve their GCSE grades because the teacher showed them what was needed in answers for each grade. When teaching was unsatisfactory the range of learning needs was not sufficiently planned for, and class support was not used well. Consequently lower attaining students progressed slowly.

140. Leadership and management are sound. The work of the department strongly supports the aim to include all in a desire to learn, and this is seen in most lessons. This has contributed to raising attainment since the last inspection. Assessment is used well to improve the curriculum. Geography is well served by dedicated teachers and support staff and a conscientious head of department. The development plan could be much better. It could explain how targets will be achieved, list the resources required and their costs, and provide dates for checking progress by a named member of staff. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is good.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and high standards of effort, accuracy and presentation are encouraged
- Student outcomes of each lesson are consistent with the objectives set at the beginning
- Students display an enterprising and mature approach to their writing historical accounts of events or people and make good use of both primary and secondary materials in their research
- Variety of genres provided by teachers to widen student experience is good
- Very good management and leadership of the subject aid standards
- The strategies used for assessment reinforces learning

Areas for improvement

- Audio-visual facilities in classrooms used for teaching history
- ICT provision in classrooms for independent learning, particularly for the abler student

141. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average. These standards are achieved because the teaching is good. Students' achievement, in relation to standards on entry to Year 7, is very good. Students' overall grasp of history on entry to the school is below average. At the end of Year 7 standards are average or above. By the end of Year 9 standards are well above average and by the end of Year 11 they are well above average. GCSE results over time for the highest grades A* - C have exceeded the national average. In 2002 GCSE results were close to the national average. Girls did better than boys but the difference was not significant. The good assessment strategy used and the positive attitudes shown by most students' cause their learning to be of a very good quality. Students make very good progress as they move from Year 7 to Year 11.

142. The standard of writing, research and interpretation improves each year. A Year 7 class examined the events of 44BC when Julius Caesar was murdered. Students wrote about the reasons for the killing of Caesar. Their writing was both accurate and lucid. Carefully structured teaching builds on knowledge gained in each year enabling

students to develop a very good understanding of history. This was seen in a Year 9 class investigating the horrors of trench warfare in World War One. Students used previous work on cause and consequence to work out the issues surrounding this sad event. Some of the writing showed a deep appreciation of the horror of stalemate invasion and the feeling of powerlessness and frustration of the soldiers dealing with it. The teacher skilfully used directed questions to build on students' answers to get them to clarify their interpretative writing. This focused and enhanced their research. Students were able to recognise the acts, mistakes and the fear present at that time. The level of empathy raised was part of their learning. The teacher's clear and confident explanation and the students' positive attitudes and their interest in the topic led to high quality learning.

143. The standard of work seen by the end of Year 11 is well above average. Students make good progress from Year 10 to 11. Virtually all work is well written though there are a small number of exceptions, one of which is the standard of spelling which is generally weak. Girls prepare their work to a higher standard than boys. Some of the work produced has the appearance of being unfinished. Other pieces show that if a small amount of extra time had been invested a higher mark could have been awarded. There is no evidence of significant underachievement in any work. Those with a learning need produce good work at their level and their writing expresses some enjoyment in the task. The highest attaining students are working at the A* - C level. Those students with an average ability do show some flair in research and interpretation which leads them to earning high marks. The majority of work produced is accurate with regard to the names of people and dates. In a Year 10 lesson on Winston Churchill, students were clear in their explanations, use of facts, opinions and use of references to validate evidence. There is also a good use of terms used in history such as 'cause' and 'consequence'. There are some issues even in the best work produced surrounding the accuracy of spelling and grammar. Most students demonstrate a mature attitude to research and do not simply copy notes supplied to them. They are conscientious, again with few exceptions, and take responsibility for their own learning. Homework is well used to consolidate learning. ICT could be more extensively used in the classroom to gather information. More use of the electronic media would aid the abler students to work more independently. There is little ICT available in the rooms. This use would provide more opportunities to access academic views via the electronic media to heighten discussion and debate by all students.
144. The teaching is good and students learn well as a result. The key skills of communication and number are taught as a part of a history lesson when appropriate. A Year 7 lesson prepared the front page of the Roman Times on 16 March 44BC. The articles developed the reasons for the murder of Caesar and the events leading up to the murder. The integrated exercise aided learning. Extra support is provided with sensitivity. Students' learning is enhanced through the wide range of research tasks they are set. A good example was observed of students examining the many reasons that led to the Second World War. This task required the use of a number of reference texts, primary and secondary sources and some use of the library ICT facility. Students gain experience of writing history accounts which include references and a bibliography. In some instances they do class presentations or prepare a poster display to illustrate for their compatriots the level of research they have undertaken. These are good. Students enjoy this more varied work which provides them with a challenge not only on accuracy but on presenting a point of view. An outstanding Year 9 simulation on the Treaty of Versailles led to a passionate debate on the rights and wrongs of the terms. In schemes of work, teachers show a level of high expectations. Group and project work in history is very good and it stimulates students' interest in the past.

145. The leadership and management of history are very good. Team working and communication within the subject are strong features and the quality of teaching continues to develop as a result of sharing good practice. The leader has a clear vision. The curriculum has a good range quality. There is good use of local facilities to help the learning taking place in the classroom. Inputs from outside speakers are much appreciated and add to the pool of information upon which students can draw to provide historical insight.
146. There has been improvement since the last inspection. Many improvements have raised the quality of work. Standards of achievement and attainment are rising. History is popular and especially so as an option in Year 10. The department has introduced a greater amount of enrichment to help students both study and enjoy their work. ICT is being used, though even greater use would raise standards higher, and the quality of research is improving.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The quality of the teaching and the relationships between teachers and their students that help establish a good working atmosphere
- The good level of teachers' subject expertise effectively supports and extends students' learning
- The high level of co-ordination between teachers and special educational needs support staff before and during lessons
- The leadership and management of ICT are very good

Areas for development

- To review programmes of study to provide a greater emphasis on the acquisition of ICT skills
- To develop the structure and use of assessment data and examination results
- To increase the number of workstations to provide one per student in all ICT rooms
- To provide interactive whiteboards in ICT rooms to support the teaching and learning processes more effectively

147. Attainment on entry is well below national expectations. This is apparent in the number of students in both Years 7 and 8 who type with one hand and use unorthodox editing procedures. At the end of Year 9 attainment is still below expectations but students have achieved well and made good progress over their level of attainment on entry. Although the average point score for 2002 was marginally below the national average it represented a continued improving trend since 2000.
148. GCSE results in 2001 were marginally below the national average with, unusually, boys doing significantly better than girls. Results in 2002 improved, again with a better performance by boys, as more boys gained the higher A*/A grades. Attainment at the end of Year 11 by GCSE students is broadly average with a substantial minority of students looking to be above average. Attainment by those doing the GNVQ (intermediate) course is above average.
149. Students make good progress and achieve good standards measured against their prior attainment. Students with special educational needs and English as an additional language make particularly good progress. The greater majority of students sustains a

high level of concentration and works at a good pace. They are learning keyboard skills quickly and by Year 8 can type using two hands and compose text directly onto the screen. Slower workers need more support to sustain their good progress but higher attainers are starting to explore the software as their familiarity grows and are starting to become more independent in their learning. Having learned how to apply simple procedures in using spreadsheets, students in a Year 10 lesson learned how to integrate conditional statements and look-up functions into their programs. Students in Year 8 using PowerPoint are making good progress at creating slides containing well-displayed text and images and simple animation procedures. Minority ethnic students were among the higher attaining students in that class who were working independently to extend their skills by adding sound accompaniments and music very successfully to their animated images. Students are achieving well and in their lessons are making good progress and that occurs mainly because they are taught well.

150. The quality of teaching is at least good and some is very good. Lessons are well prepared and, where necessary, well co-ordinated with the special educational needs support assistants. Lesson objectives are explained clearly and many lessons start with a short exercise to test students' recall of the previous lesson's work and to reinforce it. All teachers, including non-specialists, have sufficient subject expertise to teach with confidence and to encourage students' further development. Teaching is inclusive, bringing special support to those students with problems arising out of special educational needs or as a result of English being an additional language. The performance of minority ethnic students varies from the highest to the lowest but in similar proportions to all other groups. Relationships between teachers and students are very good and at times excellent and most teachers have good communication and interpersonal skills that enable them to stimulate positive responses. Written work and assignments are marked thoroughly with developmental comment added. Spellings are corrected and for students with obvious language problems, answers are often written out correctly in full. The absence of interactive whiteboards makes it difficult for teachers to demonstrate new procedures and to use students dynamically in their teaching.
151. Leadership and management of the ICT faculty are very good. The faculty is new and there are improvements needed but the head of faculty has a clear idea of future developments and forward planning is strong. Even stronger is the level of teamwork and co-operation within the faculty. Teaching is monitored both formally and informally and there is a willingness to share ideas and expertise by discussion and cross observation. There are good assessment procedures, although they need to be more analytical so that they can influence planning and monitoring more effectively. Programmes of study are sound but need to be more focused and directed to the speedier development of students' ICT skills so that they can use them more effectively in a wider context. The faculty has come a long way in a short time and the level of improvement since the last inspection is very good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

152. The use of ICT in the other subjects of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Although teachers have been trained to use ICT equipment and in many cases are prepared to use it, the degree of access to ICT resources is limited. No ICT room has more than 22 workstations for classes that in Years 7 to 9 are mostly closer to 30. Sufficient facilities need to be available for teachers as and when programmes of study require them to use them.

153. There are, however, some good features. ICT is used very well in design and technology, where there has been considerable investment in suitable equipment and students use computer-aided design software with a specific focus on its role in manufacturing. Gifted and talented students have had the opportunity to design toast-racks and have their designs cut by a laser cutter at the local university. The faculty technician is a trained teacher with considerable experience in computer-aided design and manufacturing and he is giving a strong lead with that expertise to students in the upper years. Students in Year 7 have been involved in video conferencing with a firm in Canada through the auspices of a local engineering company and students in Year 9 have used computer-controlled sewing machines to produce logos on garments.
154. ICT is used well in drama for students to write scripts and to plan stage settings. In English students research the socio-economic content of the literature they are studying, such as the social conditions in the United States of America that formed the background to Harper Lee's 'To Kill a Mocking Bird'. Wordprocessing and desktop publishing software are used also to make posters and prepare newspaper articles on a variety of topics and specifically in writing letters to the visiting author. Students research geography topics on the Internet and use spreadsheets to analyse statistics, illustrating their answers with coloured charts and graphs. Students with special educational needs work on a variety of support software programs to help them to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Students generally are skilled at using the Internet. They research specific topics in a variety of subjects and can access relevant websites as required to import images and data into a text document. In mathematics students have used a spreadsheet very effectively to calculate the area of an oddly shaped room and then the cost of flooring it with a variety of different materials all at different prices.
155. Planning for the broader use of ICT is well advanced and the appointment of faculty ICT co-ordinators is an effective and key element in that process. Heads of faculties and their ICT co-ordinators will, however, need to organise and manage the use of ICT more coherently if they are to integrate it effectively into their programmes of study.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

156. Arrangements for the teaching of modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9 are complex, and unsatisfactory. In Year 7, students take one of two languages, according to the half-year group they are in. The two languages offered alternate, in successive years, between French or German, and French or Spanish. In Year 8, all students continue with their first foreign language and they also choose a second foreign language for one lesson a week. In Year 9, students have two lessons of their second foreign language but only one lesson of their first. In Years 10 and 11, virtually all students continue at least one language to GCSE. This may be either their first or their second foreign language. Numbers taking two languages are very low.

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

Strengths

- In 2002, GCSE results improved to average overall, after a dip in the previous year
- Teaching in the lessons seen was good and on occasion very good
- Teachers manage most students very well and almost all students behave well
- The leadership of the department is good, and teachers work very well together as a team

Areas for improvement

- Students' achievement is unsatisfactory in their first foreign language in Year 9, because they only have one lesson a week
- The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is over-complex and needs to be reviewed in order to improve students' learning
- Strengthen the ICT programme in Years 7 to 9 because it is not established firmly enough
- Essential teaching equipment is not available in all the rooms where languages are taught

157. Standards in the lessons and other work in Year 9 are average overall. Many students' achievement is unsatisfactory in their first foreign language in Year 9 because they have only one lesson a week. By Year 9, in their first foreign language the higher attainers can recognise and write in the past tense in reasonable detail about, for example, their holidays and home town. Examples of more extended writing by these able students are, however, comparatively rare. The written work of many middle attainers and lower attainers is often limited to copy writing. All students develop their reading and listening skills reasonably well. They listen carefully to tapes and to the teacher and a few of the higher attainers, including the gifted and talented students, show good recall of vocabulary, guessing, often correctly, at meaning. Students' speaking skills are the most obviously affected by the one lesson a week pattern in their first foreign language. Many of the higher attainers and gifted and talented students are quite confident and can recognise the past tense, but they are much less secure in using it to answer questions. Middle and lower attainers are generally hesitant in speaking the foreign language and in recalling words they have already met. In their second foreign language students make satisfactory progress. Students with special educational needs make as much progress as others in the group when they have the support of the very effective classroom assistants, but at times they do not have that support and they make less progress. Those with English as an additional language generally make as much progress as others in the class. No specialist support assistant for them was seen during the inspection.

158. Teachers' assessments of students' performance at the end of Year 9 broadly confirm this pattern of standards. Results in 2001 and 2002 were close to the national average. However, in 2002 they did not show the improvement compared with their attainment on entry that was evident in English in the same year group.

159. The standards of Year 11 students' work in exercise books are average overall. No Year 11 lessons were seen because these students had school examinations during the inspection, but a small number of higher attainers were interviewed in the foreign language they study. Their responses varied; most were confident, and the most talented expressed their ideas well in talking about their past experiences and future plans. The written work seen shows that all students on entry to Year 10 tackle harder work immediately, linked closely to examination requirements. Many students find it difficult to make up lost ground that because of lack of time was not covered in earlier years. By Year 11, higher and middle attaining students produce work on tenses,

including the future tense, with reasonable levels of accuracy. Such work is satisfactory, but not as good overall as might be expected of such students at this stage. In preparing for coursework assignments, students have the close support of their teachers, who provide very detailed guidance. With this extra help, students produce adequate coursework. All students do a wide range of reading and listening tasks. Year 10 students generally listen carefully to tapes and to the teacher. Most can understand instructions given by the teacher, but many need the constant support of extra repetition of the tapes before they understand fully. Students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make as much progress as others in the group.

160. In 2002, GCSE results were average overall. In French, results were in line with the national average for A* - C grades and were just below in German. In Spanish, a small group of higher attainers obtained results well above the national average. These results represent satisfactory achievement compared with the standard at which students begin the examination course at Year 9. However, students performed in GCSE languages less well than in most of their other subjects, and the gap between the results of the boys and those of the girls was wider than is the case nationally.
161. Teaching and learning in the lessons seen were good overall. On occasion they were very good. Two teachers of the team of nine were absent during the inspection. Teachers work hard to overcome the difficulties of teaching a second foreign language to all students in Year 8 and the first foreign language in Year 9, both in one lesson a week. The complexities of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9, and the long lessons throughout the age range, affect learning over time. Most students do not cover sufficient ground in Years 7 to 9 and some do not make up all the lost ground in Years 10 and 11. Further difficulties occur in Years 10 and 11 because classes contain students with different lengths of experience of the language when they start Year 10. Nevertheless, teachers plan very carefully for the given time. They cover all language skills, and work hard to maintain students' interest and their own pace of teaching. The methods chosen depend significantly on being able to use an overhead projector to introduce and practise new vocabulary and structures in a stimulating and colourful manner. When this and other essential language-teaching equipment are missing, as is sometimes the case, standards of teaching and learning are affected adversely. Such situations arise because most teachers, on a significant number of occasions each week, teach outside a specialist language room. In most lessons, the foreign language is the main means of communication, and this helps the development of students' speaking and listening skills. Teachers manage most students very effectively, and most students respond well with careful listening and good behaviour. A small number, mainly lower attaining boys in Year 8, need firmer management when their attention wanders. Teachers allow time to assess students' reading and listening skills regularly in lessons and they give immediate feedback. They set homework and mark students' books carefully, but not all teachers require students to do follow-up corrections.
162. The leadership of the department is good overall and teachers work very well as a team. Documentation is meticulous and management very thorough. Citizenship and students' cultural and spiritual development have been addressed very well through a wide range of travel and study opportunities in school and abroad. The ICT programme in Years 7 to 9 is not yet firmly drawn up. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 lacks the cohesion necessary for students to achieve as well as they should.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Leadership and management are very good
- Standards of teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are very good
- There are very good cultural opportunities

Areas for development

- There are insufficient opportunities to teach ICT in Years 7 to 9
- There is insufficient emphasis on spelling key words

163. In the 2002 GCSE examinations four out of nine students attained grades A* - C and consistently all students gained grades A* - G. Group sizes have been small but are growing. In work seen, attainment is above average and students show particular strengths in appraising and performing. By Year 9 attainment is above average. Students show strengths in listening, appraising, performing and improvising music. Composing skills are less highly developed.
164. Year 7 students come to the school with average attainment and achievement is good by the end of Year 9. Good achievement is maintained at GCSE level. Students with SEN and those with EAL make good progress in music throughout the school.
165. Attitudes of students in Years 7 to 9 are good. Students are involved in their work and are mutually respectful. In Year 10 students are enthusiastic about their work and there is a collegiate atmosphere in the classroom.
166. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is good. In Years 7 to 9 teaching is well informed and lessons are well planned. Teachers make good use of assessment, and discipline is good. There is some very good teaching where pace is very good and aims are kept strongly in focus. Students' writing and speaking skills are well supported but some opportunities are lost to reinforce the spelling of key words. As a result students work well in small groups and their ability to reflect on their own learning is good. Supportive homework is set regularly. Students with special educational needs and those who are talented in music make similar progress. In a Year 7 lesson about drones students were given a challenging composition exercise. They were effectively tutored in group work and in the final performance there was a strong emphasis on social skills. As a result students gained a deeper understanding of a musical feature that was new to most of them. A Year 8 lesson on the Blues began with very detailed questioning which used students' answers to provide further challenges. The teacher's demonstrations were effective and students were well managed. As a result students extended their improvisation skills and were able to reflect on their progress. There was highly skilled teaching in a Year 9 lesson on Pachelbel. Searching revision and colourful illustrations established a very clear starting point for the lesson. A range of individual targets and close tutorial support brought students to increasing levels of sophistication in composing and improvisation. Students were keen to perform to each other and they were amazed by each other's work.
167. GCSE teaching in Years 10 and 11 is very good. Lessons are very well prepared and the pace is invigorating. In a Year 10 lesson on musical structure the teacher delivered a demanding lecture followed by exacting practical tasks. Learning blossomed. Students were able to build up their understanding and made huge efforts to improve.
168. The head of music has been highly successful in developing music in the school. There is a very good range of cultural activities. The concert band performs to a high

standard. Performances are given regularly in and out of school and are well attended. The curriculum is well planned but there are insufficient opportunities for students to learn about music through ICT in Years 7 to 9.

169. There have been extensive and significant improvements since the last inspection. Of these, improvements in the quality of leadership and management as well as the quality of teaching and learning are key features in improving students' attitudes and attainment.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Very good teaching in which expectations of work and behaviour are high
- An excellent programme of extra-curricular activities
- The interest and enthusiasm shown by the students in lessons and after school are very good
- The quality of leadership and management is excellent

Areas for improvement

- Extend the use of ICT particularly with examination classes

170. On the basis of the assessments undertaken by teachers, standards at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were well above average for boys and girls. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment by the majority of students in the present Year 9 is above average and remains similar to the picture described at the time of the previous inspection. In the most recent GCSE examination in 2002, 54 per cent of students entered gained the higher A* - C grades and all achieved A* - G grades. Although not as good as in previous years, these results are broadly in line with the national average. A lack of motivation coupled with below average practical ability by a minority of students contributed to this reduction in the number of higher grades. Physical education continues to be a popular option choice with almost 90 students in the present Years 10 and 11 following the course. A number of individual students of all ages attain well above average standards in a range of different activities.

171. A scrutiny of students' coursework together with teachers' records indicate that standards in the present Year 11 are above average for the course. Most students have a good understanding of the theoretical aspects of their work, particularly relating to factors that affect performance, and anatomy and physiology. Current predictions point to a potential increase in the percentage of students achieving the higher grades. Students in Year 10 have a good understanding of how the muscular system is affected by exercise. The depth of their knowledge and their use of the correct terminology are very good. Standards achieved by students in Years 10 and 11 are good.

172. The achievement of students in Years 7 to 9 is good. On entry, they have different prior experiences of physical education. Students have quickly developed a good understanding about the effects of exercise on the body. They know how to warm up correctly and can do so very effectively. Students in Year 7 are making good progress. This was clearly the case in a gymnastics lesson where girls produced some imaginative examples of paired sequences. They are also beginning to evaluate the work of others in a sensitive and constructive way. A class of Year 7 boys progressed

equally well in an outdoor basketball lesson on a bitterly cold day. Their excellent attitude contributed significantly to what was achieved. Students in Years 8 and 9 also achieved well in very difficult conditions. Students with special educational needs and students from minority ethnic backgrounds progress as well as others. Students who are following the GCSE course are making good progress as a result of their commitment and enthusiasm. This is underlined by the willingness of examination students to attend an additional lunchtime lesson each week.

173. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. It is never less than good. Teaching is very good in a significant number of lessons and occasionally it is excellent. The very good teaching makes a very significant contribution to students' very good gains in learning. Relationships between teachers and students are particularly constructive and encourage learning. A climate is created in all lessons in which students want to learn. A key strength lies in the teachers' high expectations of work and behaviour. Students have clearly been taught good habits through a very consistent and structured approach in all lessons. Students know exactly what is required of them and they respond accordingly. This consistency is having a positive impact on learning. Students are always correctly dressed for physical activity. Levels of participation are high throughout the school. This is another important contributory factor in the progress that they make. Although indoor accommodation is extremely spartan and somewhat limited, teachers make very effective use of available resources. Management of students is very good, tasks set are suitable yet challenging and teaching that is purposeful and well focused enables all students to learn effectively.
174. All members of the department contribute to an excellent range of extra-curricular activities for students of all ages. Thirty-two different clubs operate throughout the year. In the first half of the autumn term 630 different students took part in activities outside normal lessons. During the inspection football, netball, rugby, table tennis, trampolining, gymnastics and dance were well supported by students. The school has enjoyed a number of recent successes in various activities. The Under 16 football team won all their league games to finish top of their section in the Barnet league. The Year 7 netball team won the borough league and three of the school teams qualified for the play-offs. As well as team games, students have also been very successful in trampolining, gymnastics, dance, cross-country and athletics. Staff formally identify gifted and talented students. Additional help in the form of extra coaching is in the process of being organised in trampolining and table tennis. A former student is already employed to offer extra challenge and support in a number of lessons. The school has good links with one or two local clubs. These provide further opportunities for students to improve their skills. There are plans to extend these links across a wider range of activities.
175. The quality of leadership and management is excellent. The departmental staff are committed, hard working and enthusiastic. They are functioning very well as a team. They value the leadership that is shown by the head of department. Monitoring of teaching is very effective. Examples of good practice are shared. Teachers new to the school receive a great deal of support. There is a clear allocation of responsibilities involving all staff. This contributes to teachers' professional development. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The GCSE course has been introduced very successfully. The curriculum has been reviewed and revised. Assessment procedures have been evaluated and improved. Extra-curricular provision has been extended and some refurbishment has taken place. Line management is now more effective than it was at the time of the previous inspection. The staff have identified the need to develop additional resources to encourage the use of ICT to support learning.

176. The recent appointment of a sports co-ordinator means that teachers are now able to visit five local primary schools on a regular basis to support the delivery of physical education in those schools. In 2001 the department received the Sports Mark Award in recognition of its strong commitment to promoting physical education and school sport.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- In Years 7 to 9 attainment is above average as measured against the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and students achieve well because of good teaching
- GCSE results in 2002 were high
- Relationships within the classroom are good and students generally enjoy the subject

Areas for improvement

- In some lessons students do not have enough opportunities for active involvement or independent learning
- Spelling of key words and commonly used words is often inaccurate
- Standards of teaching and learning in the general religious education course in Years 10 and 11 are not as high as in the rest of the school

177. Students achieved well at GCSE in 2002. Twelve candidates were entered, all girls, and most of them gained grades A* - C. These results represented a significant improvement on the 2001 results when the proportion of grades A* - C was below average. No examinations were taken in the sixth form.

178. In Years 7 to 9 students achieve well. They come in with average standards and by the end of Year 9 their attainment at least matches the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus and exceeds them in many areas. Work seen during the inspection shows that most students have a good knowledge and understanding of the main beliefs and practices of Christianity and other world religions, for example Hinduism and Judaism. They are also good at explaining what they learn from religious beliefs and they use key religious words and phrases accurately. Students achieve well because they find the lessons interesting and they are keen to take part in discussions. Standards of written work are above average. Most students take a pride in presenting their work neatly and attractively, and they express themselves clearly. They record their information in a variety of ways, ranging from graphs and diagrams giving results of surveys on religious belief to personal opinions written in letters and formal essays. However, many students make careless mistakes in the spelling of commonly used words as well as specialist words, and these often remain uncorrected.

179. It was not possible to see any lessons in Year 11 during the week of the inspection because of internal examinations, but written work shows that those students in the examination class make good progress throughout the two years of their GCSE course and attain standards in line with the national average. Most students can select relevant information from text books and other sources and use it effectively in their essays. However, careless spelling is still a problem. Higher attaining students have a good knowledge of the history of Judaism and a clear understanding of the importance of symbols in religious ceremonies. Essays are well planned, with appropriate quotations to illustrate the points made. Lower attaining students achieve well. Their notes are detailed, showing evidence of careful research, and as a result their essays are informative if not always successfully structured. Students benefit from their teachers'

very helpful marking which includes suggestions on how to improve the quality of writing. All students in Years 10 and 11 have general religious education lessons as part of the personal, social and health education programme, and they achieve satisfactorily. The course covers most of the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, although not in the depth expected, because of a shortage of time.

180. Students enjoy their work. The study of world religions and the programme of visits and talks from outside speakers give them very good opportunities for moral and cultural development and they want to learn. Students of all levels of attainment settle down promptly and work well together in pairs and groups. Behaviour is generally good, although the immature behaviour of a minority of students, usually boys, sometimes has a negative effect on the learning of all students in the class. Students use ICT effectively in presenting their work and they make good use of the library and its computer facilities for research.
181. The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and in the GCSE course, and this has a positive impact on students' learning. In the lessons seen there was no unsatisfactory teaching, and in one lesson the teaching and learning were excellent. The major strengths lie in teachers' high expectations of work and behaviour, the good knowledge and understanding of the subject passed on to students by specialist and non-specialist teachers alike, and the good relationship between teachers and students which makes possible an openness of response. Students with special educational needs and students at an early stage of English language acquisition take a confident part in class discussions because they are well supported by staff and fellow students. Homework plays an important role in consolidating knowledge, as seen in a Year 8 lesson on Judaism where students could remember specialist vocabulary accurately. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good it is mostly because there is too much teacher talk and there are not enough opportunities for students to take an active part in the lesson or for independent learning. Furthermore, teachers do not always make the most of the many opportunities for spiritual development within the schemes of work. Teaching is satisfactory in the general religious education course in Years 10 and 11, and students say they enjoy the course because of the variety of topics covered and the regular change of teacher. However, teaching and learning would be improved in Year 10 if teachers had a wider range of resources and if they capitalised on the good knowledge and understanding acquired by students in earlier years.
182. Management of the subject is satisfactory overall. Recruitment problems have led to a sharing of responsibilities and this has adversely affected the organisation of the general religious education lessons particularly in Year 10. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in improving the provision for religious education throughout the school and particularly in giving sufficient time for the aims and objectives of the locally agreed syllabus to be fulfilled in Years 7 to 9. Standards have risen as a result. The limitations of time in the general religious education lessons in Years 10 and 11 still remain.

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

In the inspection, 14 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 tables below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002.

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	6	83.3	n/k	33.3	n/k	33.3	n/k
Biology	1	100	n/k	0	n/k	20	n/k
Business studies	4	100	n/k	50	n/k	45	n/k
Chemistry	1	100	n/k	0	n/k	20	n/k
Computing	8	87.5	n/k	50	n/k	38.8	n/k
Design and technology	1	100	n/k	0	n/k	30	n/k
Drama	2	100	n/k	100	n/k	55	n/k
English	7	28.6	n/k	14.3	n/k	10	n/k
French	1	100	n/k	0	n/k	30	n/k
Geography	5	80	n/k	0	n/k	22	n/k
Government and politics	2	100	n/k	50	n/k	40	n/k
History	2	100	n/k	50	n/k	45	n/k
Mathematics	4	100	n/k	75	n/k	50	n/k
Photography	3	100	n/k	33.3	n/k	43.3	n/k

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
Art	14	100	n/k	42.9	n/k	86	n/k
Biology	9	88.9	n/k	25	n/k	62	n/k
Business studies	23	100	n/k	42.9	n/k	80	n/k
AVCE Business Double Award	11	100	n/k	36.4	n/k	n/k	n/k
Chemistry	4	100	n/k	25	n/k	75	n/k
Computing	17	88.2	n/k	29.4	n/k	65	n/k
Design and technology (Resistant Materials)	9	100	n/k	28.6	n/k	82	n/k
Design and technology (Graphics)	11	72.7	n/k	28.6	n/k	62	n/k
Design and technology (Textiles)	1	100	n/k	28.6	n/k	80	n/k
Drama	13	100	n/k	38.5	n/k	88	n/k
English	36	85	n/k	36.1	n/k	75	n/k
French	5	100	n/k	60	n/k	88	n/k
Geography	6	100	n/k	66.7	n/k	93	n/k
German	2	100	n/k	0	n/k	40	n/k
History	8	100	n/k	37.5	n/k	78	n/k
Mathematics	13	100	n/k	46.2	n/k	85	n/k
Music	3	100	n/k	33.3	n/k	73	n/k
Physical education	10	100	n/k	63.3	n/k	96	n/k
Physics	10	80	n/k	30	n/k	56	n/k
Politics	8	100	n/k	25	n/k	78	n/k
Sociology	24	95.8	n/k	29.2	n/k	78	n/k
Spanish	1	100	n/k	0	n/k	60	n/k

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
GNVQ Business	26	84.6	n/k	30.77	n/k	7.7	n/k

n/k = not known

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The inspection focused on AS and A-level mathematics, biology and chemistry in depth. Physics was also sampled. Standards in physics were similar to the national average. The teaching observed in two physics lessons was very good.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Standards of attainment are above the national average
- The quality of the teaching is good
- The students' attitudes to learning are very good

Areas for improvement

- There should be more challenge for students and greater emphasis on independent learning

183. The number of students entered for the GCE A-level examination has varied between 15 and 20 in recent years. In the 2002 examinations just under 50 per cent of the students who entered the examinations achieved grades A or B, and all of them achieved a grade A - E. These results are good. Results in 2001 were above the national average and they were better than the results in 2002. Average point scores were well above the national average. A small number of students retake the GCSE, and in general the proportion that manages to attain a grade C is above the national average. There is also good provision for those who are unlikely to significantly improve their GCSE grade, enabling them to improve their numeracy to support studies in other subjects, for example in business studies.

184. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The standards of attainment and the achievement of the students have been maintained and the leadership and the management of the subject have improved. There are more effective systems for assessing the progress that students make, and for reviewing the effectiveness of courses.

185. Standards of work seen in the AS and A-level courses are above national expectations. The students have a good choice between two courses, one of which includes statistics and the other applied mathematics. The standard of presentation of work is good. The students take care with their work, and use precise and appropriate processes as taught to them. They keep good notes of the topics they are studying, with plenty of worked examples by way of illustration, giving them a very good basis for revision. Their work is generally accurate and of a good standard. In pure mathematics students learn the skills and techniques required by the syllabus: for example, in Year 13, students learned how to use the formula for integrating by parts; in

a Year 12 lesson, they were beginning to learn the tools for analysis in co-ordinate geometry. In applied mathematics they study the laws of motion in a variety of circumstances and under different conditions, and in the statistics units, students were seen reviewing the applications of discrete and continuous distributions. The students' progress over the period of the course is good, influenced both by the quality of the teaching and by their own conscientious attitude. However, they are more comfortable learning standard processes, and rely too much on memory recall rather than on their ability to work out solutions to problems from first principles. Although some are diffident about contributing actively to the lessons, they ensure that they record all necessary information, and satisfy the requirements for additional work outside lessons.

186. The teaching in the AS and A-level course is good. The teachers have a good understanding of the key requirements of the course and are good mathematicians. They are particularly good at providing the students with a clear and precise model of the processes and the language required to deal with the range of problems that they encounter. In some cases they present the lessons in a way that challenges the students to think through the underlying concepts and achieve a good understanding as well as an ability to master the processes and methods for solutions to problems. However, in some other lessons, the students are directed more, with greater emphasis given on the adoption of standard processes rather than thinking for themselves. One very good lesson was seen where theory and practice were very skilfully combined when the teacher and students applied Hooke's law to determine the motion of an object on a rubber string under the effect of gravity, and then verified their findings practically. Lessons are well organised, and the students' work, and periodic tests are well marked. Teaching in the other courses is good. The teachers take advantage of relatively small groups to match the level of difficulty to the students' needs.
187. The course is well planned and managed. Resources for learning are sufficient. The students are very 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

- Very good teaching leads to very good learning
- Students' achievement is good in Year 12
- Teachers give students extensive individual support
- Diagnostic marking tells students how well they have done and how to improve
- Students support one another and share ideas freely in group work

Areas for improvement

- Students' skills of evaluation and critical analysis
- Students' research
- Insufficient access to ICT

188. A-level and AS results in 2001 were in line with the national average. In the last three years A-level results, based on students' point scores, have varied from above average

to average. The proportion gaining A or B grades has been about average but the proportion gaining A - E grades has been below average. Students' achievement based on their GCSE results has been satisfactory. The number of candidates has been too small to compare boys' and girls' results or those of minority ethnic groups. Retention rates have been average. Biology is taken by several students as a supporting rather than a main subject, for example to physical education, and this has an impact on standards in Year 13.

189. The standard of work of the current students in Year 13 is average. Students are achieving in line with predictions based on their GCSE results. In the lessons seen students tried hard to understand the difficult subject of dihybrid inheritance. They answered searching oral questions posed by the teacher with varying degrees of confidence and success. They worked productively in pairs sharing ideas and supporting one another whilst addressing a problem set by the teacher. By the end of the lesson their knowledge of the subject and examination techniques had improved considerably. In another lesson students had to use several books to answer an A-level style question on linkage in dihybrid inheritance. The most able students made good progress using the texts and the work they did in Year 12 to answer the question; less able students found the task difficult but did not give up. The most able were able to deduce that linkage is an advantage in biology.
190. The standard of work in Year 12 is above average and students are achieving well. They applied themselves well in a lesson on the structure and function of carbohydrates. They were able to follow the complex information lucidly presented by the teacher. They had a reasonable grasp of the basic chemistry of carbon and chemical bonding. They concentrated well and made use of their own textbook and other books from the departmental library to try to solve a problem, working co-operatively in small groups. By the end of the lesson students had a much improved understanding of the topic. The most able could suggest why carbon is the basis of life rather than silicon. In another lesson on how molecules move in and out of cells most students predicted that surface area would be the most important factor but the most able realised that distance was also important. They carried out the practical exercise with varying degrees of skill and pace but all managed to complete it. They showed a good understanding of transport in cells during a discussion after the practical.
191. Teaching is very good and students learn very well as a result. The main strengths of the teaching are: clear learning objectives that are explained to the students; challenging topics that are lucidly explained and illustrated; methods that require students to think for themselves; and good use of time and resources. Teachers display very good knowledge of their subject in the questions they ask, explanations offered and tasks set. The lesson on dihybrid inheritance in Year 13, for example, involved searching questions to reinforce prior learning, clear explanations of the topic, work by students in pairs and a reprise to ensure the learning objectives had been met. Students are very appreciative of the work of the teachers and respond well in class. The regular change of activity and interactive nature of the tasks help maintain their concentration. A few students show greater oral ability in class than their notes would suggest. Presentations are used to develop literacy and oracy and specific teaching of statistics is undertaken to help carry out fieldwork. The degree to which students learn varies widely depending upon their commitment. For example, half the current Year 13 are taking biology as a supporting subject for physical education and they do not study any other science subject. They are particularly interested in those parts of the syllabus that are clearly related to sports but not so keen where they cannot see a connection. They find those parts of the syllabus where a knowledge of chemistry is an advantage, difficult.

192. The quality of students' files varies widely in terms of their organisation and content. Some are well organised and contain work of high quality whilst others contain work that lacks detail and specific information. There are some good examples of problem solving in class and for homework. Year 12 files contain examples of work drawn from the Internet and named references. However, some files contain few signs of research in spite of the good access to books. Year 12 students are unsure about what evaluation involves and Year 13 students know what it involves but it does not feature strongly in their files apart from the special study. Students have written some short essays but there is little other evidence of critical analysis. Year 13 students say they have had discussions on the Human Genome Project and theories of evolution in class but a summary of the main points made is not included in the files seen. Students appreciate the very good diagnostic marking of their work that gives a clear indication of how to improve standards.
193. The subject is very well led and managed by the head of biology who works very closely with the other teacher involved. The scheme of work reflects subject requirements. There is no access to ICT in specialist areas and only limited access in the sixth form library. Target setting based on students' performance at GCSE is well established.

Chemistry

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

Strengths

- Teacher knowledge, planning and expectations are very good and result in very good learning
- Student skills in practical investigation, research and managing their own learning are very good
- Positive student attitudes, co-operation and mutual support contribute to their very good learning
- Good assessment of modules of work provides students with knowledge about their progress against national standards

Areas for improvement

- The use of prior knowledge by students to predict possible outcomes from investigations in Year 12
- Critical evaluation of the outcomes from investigations in Year 12
- Data analysis is a weakness in both Year 12 and Year 13
- Literacy skills limit the ability of some students to describe the outcomes of their investigations with precision

194. The GCE A-level examination results show a pattern of improvement since the last inspection from below the national average to above the national average. The attainment and improvement of girls and boys during this period are similar. The standards seen in lessons confirm the 2001 results which are at national expectations in Year 12, and above national expectations in Year 13. A-level results in 2002 are likely to be above the national average but at the time of the inspection the national comparative data for 2002 was not available. Achievement in the sixth form is very good. Students with SEN make excellent gains in their learning and those with EAL make very good gains. Most Year 12 students use chemical nomenclature with confidence, analyse data, and produce accurate graphs to identify the link between the

molar mass of an element and its characteristics. They have good practical techniques and recording skills which enable them to identify patterns in evidence. However, a small number have an incomplete understanding of ionic bonding and their data analysis skills are weak. Some students have weaknesses in using prior knowledge to predict the outcomes of investigations, and the evaluation of experimental procedure sometimes lacks rigour. Most students following the Year 13 course meet the national expectation and they have a good understanding of equilibrium constant, reversible reactions and energy change. Their skills of critical analysis and research are developing well, their organisation and precision in practical work is good, they manage their own learning and they work well together. However some students have weaknesses in presentation and data analysis, and in both years the weak literacy skills of some students limit the precision with which they describe the outcomes from their work.

195. Teaching is very good and makes the major contribution to the overall very good progress made by students. Teachers are enthusiastic, confident in their subject knowledge and their lessons are well planned. They have consistent expectations, their questioning is challenging, they systematically build on prior learning and homework builds on and consolidates laboratory work. All teachers have productive partnerships with students which promote lively discussion and thought-provoking problem solving. Support for individual students is very good. Questioning encourages students to think and receive feedback about their progress, although the expectations against which students can judge themselves in lessons are not always explicit. Assessment at the end of each syllabus module and in marked work is good and provides students with a clear idea of their progress against national expectations. Opportunities for students to develop precision in verbal responses are sometimes missed and the lack of modern technology hampers the development and application of ICT skills in practical investigations. Well-organised and timely technical support make a significant, positive contribution to teaching and learning.
196. Student attitudes to chemistry are excellent and they respond readily to challenges. Their support for each other both within and beyond the lessons is very good. Students show a high level of commitment, and retention throughout Years 12 and 13 courses is good.
197. The head of subject provides very good leadership. Good use is made of a commercial scheme of work, which leads to a productive balance between theory and practical investigation, direct teaching and student self-study but there are some weaknesses in the development of students' cross-curricular skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. Good communication between the teachers ensures consistency of approach, they keep up to date with the subject, and the curriculum is enriched through links with a university which enables students to develop skills in spectroscopy and attend student lectures. The partnership between teachers and students is very good although there are no means to obtain systematic feedback from students to inform subject self-evaluation.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

The focus of the inspection was on design and technology. Food technology was sampled as part of the sixth form enhancement programme. The quality of teaching was very good. Students achieved well and learnt very relevant life skills about budgeting for and preparing a healthy meal when the purse strings are very tight. They produced some excellent meals,

enjoyed the activity and said that what they learnt would be very useful to them when they left home to go to university or college.

Design and technology

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

Strengths

- The very good teaching and learning
- Well above average standards of attainment by the end of Year 13
- The high standards of literacy, numeracy and ICT in students' coursework

Areas for improvement

- The study skills and time management of a number of Year 12 students

198. By the end of Year 13, students' overall standard of attainment in work seen and from talking to students is well above average. More boys than girls take the course at this level. Boys perform better than girls. In the A-level examination in 2001 students' overall standard for the higher A - B grades was below average with three students failing to gain a grade. Over the previous three years from 1999-2001 students performed well above the national average. The best year was in 2001 when students in this subject achieved considerably higher grades than they did in most of their other school subjects. At AS in 2001 and 2002 students attained fewer higher grades than might be expected with not all students being graded.
199. Problems have occurred with implementing the new AS course. This may explain the previously lower standards, but currently a number of Year 12 students are poor attenders and do not have good study skills or efficient time management structures. As a result they are falling behind with their coursework assignments. By contrast when they get into the workshop situation they reveal a very good ability to plan ahead. They can also call upon well-developed craft skills as was evident when working on a prototype for a tape dispenser. Year 13 students by contrast are well organised and very involved with work. Standards of written work, ICT and numeracy skills, as evident in students' folders of work, are well above average. Students enjoy having the opportunity to solve real-life problems. They pay tribute to their teachers for enabling them to have such good opportunities. One student is seeking a solution as he designs a display stand for a well-known department store; another is solving a storage problem in a physical education store room whilst another is helping an infants' school as they develop 'Jolly Phonics'. Both Years 12 and 13 students are supported by a very good team of teachers and technicians, who have very secure subject knowledge of resistant materials, graphics, textiles and computer-aided design and manufacture. They plan well and deliver thought-provoking lessons on such topics as the rights and responsibilities of the designer in society. During the inspection little time was allowed for students to discuss what they had learned. They were largely in a listening mode except when teachers engaged with them in one to one tutorials. When offered the opportunity to express opinions, however, these students revealed very good levels of knowledge and understanding as well as curiosity to know more.
200. Ongoing experience of being an examiner at A-level informs the leadership and management at this stage. Very good opportunities are offered, for example for new recruits to the profession to work alongside more experienced colleagues. The two best lessons arose from close collaboration between teachers. In both cases the students benefited from the expertise of more than one teacher. These teachers talked to one another about perceived problems and either worked from individual strengths to solve them or engaged in team-teaching and shared expertise.

BUSINESS EDUCATION

AS and A-level business and GNVQ and AVCE business were all inspected in depth.

Business Education

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

Strengths

- The trend in results since 1999 has been good on all A-level, AVCE and GNVQ courses
- Clarity of vision and forward planning
- Students achieve well in comparison with their previous attainment
- The teaching of business education is good; subject knowledge is a strength and marking is used well to extend students
- Breadth of curriculum on offer to students is good
- Students are industrious and have positive attitudes to learning
- Shared sense of purpose in the faculty which produces corporate involvement in the approach to inclusion

Areas for improvement

- Independent learning, particularly outside lessons, to develop the skills of interpretation and enquiry
- The number of absences, particularly on the vocational courses
- Accommodation adversely influences the quality of some learning experiences, particularly that involving group work

201. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average. These standards are achieved because the teaching is good. Students' achievements, in relation to standards on entry to the sixth form, are good. The clear assessment strategies and the positive attitudes of students also contribute to the good quality of students' learning. Students make good progress as they move through the sixth form. Standards of work seen in Year 12 and Year 13 lessons, from studying samples of work and from interviewing a representative sample of students, are judged to be above average overall.
202. Students in Year 12 make good progress. A GNVQ class produced good examples of the 1998 Working Time Regulations by accessing the Internet to secure relevant information. They respond to the dynamic nature of the subject and are able to separate and compare conflicting perspectives on the economic performance of the UK economy over a period of time. They maintain good notes and show good study skills in selecting and synthesising information, for example on marketing or production processes. Those of middle or lower attainment are less secure in their grasp of what their studies require in terms of research. A greater level of differentiation is required. Students are, however, able to contribute well to sessions dealing with oral reports. Teachers check files well to ensure students are consolidating their learning.
203. Students in Year 13 show good knowledge of business in relation to current theory and business practice. Students in Year 13 recognise the difference between a merger and a takeover by examining the examples of 'Easyjet', 'Go' and 'British Airways' no frills airlines. Considerable awareness of modern growth was demonstrated. The majority of students make effective use of the subject-specific vocabulary they are required to learn. All students are able to make full use of the electronic media to gather relevant and up-to-date data on economic activity. The higher attaining students appreciate the

economic writing in the quality newspapers and frequently quote them as sources. They use the business reports of the BBC and appropriate journals to support their own research. Good writing, discussion and argument occur in class. Even in the best writing there are problems with spelling and the accurate use of grammar. Students are given a clear perception of the importance sound finance has in business trading. Examples quoted covered the recent high profile business failures in America and Europe. This provides students with an international perspective. Students are able to undertake research individually and in groups. Coursework assignments encourage key skills development, especially ICT skills.

204. Examination results for AS and A-level at the end of Years 12 and 13 are overall in line with the national average. The GNVQ and AVCE business results have also been in line with the national average and reflect added value of a positive residual. Recent vocational results have maintained this standard. Students make significant progress and surpass their previous attainments. In 2001 the Year 12 AS proportion of A - B grades gained was above average. In Year 13 the top A-level grades in 2001 were just below average. In the past most students have obtained a good grade (A - C) and few have failed. In 2002 these high standards have been maintained. While the results for the A-level have been consistently close to average there has been a slight decline in the numbers gaining one of the higher A/B grades. The results obtained represent good achievement and value added for most students by the end of Year 12 or 13 in relation to attainment on entry to the sixth form. There is no significant difference in most years in the performance of boys and girls or students of different heritage. Retention rates are good.
205. The quality of teaching is good in both years. Teaching is inclusive, ensuring that all students are challenged and supported effectively and that they are fully involved in the lesson, including both higher attainers and those with SEN. There are good opportunities in some lessons for students to think analytically and show the product of their thoughts. All students receive oral and written feedback targeted at improving their writing. Students need to show more independence in their research particularly that undertaken at home. Students are expected to be engaged in their own learning and to contribute to discussions in class. Group work is well structured and it is generally productive. A variety of tasks are normally introduced so that pace and momentum are maintained. A Year 12 class worked on a detailed examination question on 'Price – the key to perfume purchases'. This exercise sharpened both the students' writing and numeracy skills. Teachers are able to offer students a good level of support when necessary. As a result of this effective teaching and the positive attitudes of most students plus their hard work, learning is good. However, the quality of rooms used to provide business education is poor and represent an obstacle for teachers to overcome.
206. Leadership and management are very good. The teacher in charge of business education monitors all the work associated with the subject. A variety of strategies are used to assess the quality of learning which include classroom observations. Planning is good and effective. High expectations are communicated to students. Routines are established which support the development of business and vocational education.
207. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. All reported issues have been dealt with. However, the control of attendance remains an issue to be fully resolved. Students are now encouraged to study outside class time and to use a wide range of business data. Not all do but many are starting to follow their teachers' directions. The Internet is used to access good quality information and it is put to good use, increasing students' awareness of current economic issues. A greater facility to

use the electronic media in the classroom is likely to raise the quality of research even higher. The cross-curricular themes of equal opportunities and citizenship receive serious consideration. The nature of business education lends itself to both aspects of learning, and teachers take full account of this fact. Teachers are committed to raising standards higher to benefit a greater number of students.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Information and communication technology and computing were inspected in depth.

Information and communication technology and computing

The quality of provision in information and communication technology (ICT) and computing is **very good**.

Strengths

- Students achieve well in relation to prior attainment as a result of very good and very supportive teaching
- The quality of the relationships between teachers and their students that helps establish a good working atmosphere
- The level of teachers' subject expertise that effectively supports and extends students' learning
- The leadership and management of ICT are very good

Areas for improvement

- To develop the structure and use of assessment data and examination results
- To consider the provision of a vocational ICT course in Years 12 and 13

208. GCE A-level results in computing in 2001 were above average. In 2002 the pass rate at grades A - E improved and the proportion of students passing at the higher A/B grades improved quite considerably. In 2001 the new subject of ICT was offered in the curriculum in addition to computing. Standards at the end of Year 13 are broadly in line with the national average and for a minority of students they are above average.

209. Students make very good progress. Starting from an average baseline they work hard, particularly at their coursework assignments. These projects are all business based and in many cases have benefited from their researching the operational procedures used by local companies. One Year 13 student is designing a very good quality stock control and re-ordering system for an engineering supplier. In lessons students sustain a high level of concentration and work at a good pace. Minority ethnic students achieve well also and any disadvantage arising out of English language needs are countered by a high level of teaching support, both in and out of lessons. Students are very co-operative and work well on their own and together. They are supportive of one another during practical work, sharing knowledge and ideas.

210. Good opportunities arise to enable students to consider the social and moral issues that arise in their work particularly in regard to computer-related legislation such as the Data Protection Act. These opportunities make a very significant contribution to students' social and moral development. In a Year 13 lesson students considered the potential for modern communications technology to be used by terrorists to interfere with the running of power generating stations or water treatment stations and, using that as an excuse, how governments could abuse their powers to tap e-mails and

phone calls. These activities contributed to their very good learning. At a different level a student noted how difficult it was for the visually impaired to obtain information from a computer-based train timetable machine at a railway station. He questioned whether a computer-based timetable could be programmed to 'speak' its information and the extent to which action buttons and instructions could be identified in Braille.

211. The quality of teaching is very good. Lessons are very well prepared so much so that in the event of technical or other problems an alternative programme of study is immediately available. Teachers have a very good relationship with their students and use this to establish an informal but functional class environment that encourages application. Teachers' subject expertise and examination experience is very good. This is used to positive effect in advising students on the design of data tables, thereby enabling them to avoid redundant or repetitive features. This gives students confidence and drives the high quality explanation and discussion and particularly the very strong individual support given to students during practical assignments. Support in lessons for students is very strong and helpful. In a Year 13 lesson on database design, the teacher drew from one such student the need for unique identifiers within each of his 'tables' to make them functional and efficient. Marking is detailed and analytical and formative comment is supplemented by feedback to groups or individuals. As a result, students are aware of their standard of work and what they need to do to improve. Students find the work challenging, especially in Year 13, but they are enjoying what they are doing and have no regrets at choosing either subject.
212. Leadership and management of the ICT faculty are very good. The faculty is new and there are improvements needed but the head of the faculty has a clear idea of future developments and forward planning is strong. Even stronger is the level of teamwork and co-operation within the faculty. Teaching is monitored both formally and informally and there is a willingness to share ideas and expertise by discussion and cross observation. There are good assessment procedures, although they need to be more analytical so that they can influence planning and monitoring more effectively. Programmes of study are sound but need to be reviewed to consider the introduction of vocational courses so that there is a wider range of options accessible to students. Rigorous and effective changes have been made to the programme of study in the sixth form to offer students an additional strand of advanced study and the degree of improvement is good.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Only physical education was inspected in depth.

Physical education

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

Strengths

- Examination results are consistently well above the national average
- Teaching of AS and A-level is very good
- The quality of leadership and management

Areas for improvement

- Implement the existing plan to increase the provision for ICT
- Increase the opportunities for recreational activities for all students

213. The department has maintained an impressive 100 per cent pass rate since advanced level courses were first introduced in 1996, a figure above the national average. At A-level in 2002, seven of the eleven students entered obtained A - B grades. At AS, seven of the fourteen students achieved the higher grades. These results are very good. Physical education continues to be a popular choice in the sixth form where a total of 36 students are currently involved in examination work.
214. Standards reached by students in the present Year 13 as seen in lessons and in their written work are well above average and reflect their good AS results. Although standards of presentation vary considerably, the student folders are generally well organised. They show clearly that the requirements of the syllabus are being met and that the course is being covered in detail. Students are very confident in using the correct technical language. They show a good recall of previous work. Most are able to build on that prior knowledge to increase their understanding. This was the case in a lesson on energy systems, where students were able to apply what they had learnt previously to meet new challenges set by the teacher.
215. Students in Year 12 have made very good progress since they started the course. They are achieving well. They have a responsible attitude to their studies. In the one AS lesson observed, students made a number of sensible and perceptive comments on aspects of motivation. Students in both Years 12 and 13 are very 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. A number of students are achieving particularly well in football, trampolining, volleyball and swimming.
216. The teaching of AS and A-level physical education is very good and has a significant impact on students' learning and their eventual achievements. Expectations are high and lessons are structured effectively resulting in consistently good learning. Teachers ensure that students clearly understand the aims of the lessons so that they know what they are to learn. Relationships between teachers and students are very good. Most students in both year groups are comfortable contributing to discussions or answering questions. Students spoke enthusiastically about the subject. Retention rates and attendance are very good. At present there are insufficient opportunities for students to use ICT to support their learning. The need to increase resources for ICT has rightly been identified by the department as a priority.
217. Although it is not possible for the school to provide a timetabled recreational period for all students, a significant number take part in extra-curricular activities. Football is a particular strength. The 1st X1 are the current holders of the Middlesex Cup. Both the 1st and 2nd XI are respective league champions. The senior team also reached the semi-final of the English Schools FA Cup. A small number of students are following the Community Sports Leaders Award. Students also take part in a community programme of literacy and football coaching in association with Arsenal Football Club and local primary schools. They also assist teachers in running teams in the lower school as well as helping with some extra-curricular clubs.
218. Leadership and management are excellent. There is a clear sense of direction and purpose. The consistency of approach that is apparent in teaching and learning has clearly contributed to the impressive results that continue to be achieved. These results are all the more creditable because they come against a backdrop in which accommodation and resources are no better than adequate. Improvements since the last inspection are very good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design was inspected in depth. Although examination results in drama are very good the subject was not sampled because the drama suite on the upper school site was out of action during the week of the inspection because of the Year 11 mock examinations. Music was sampled. Standards achieved in music are good.

Art and design

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

Strengths

- Standards are above average
- The teaching is very good
- The course is lively and popular

Areas for improvement

- The use of cultural and social influences for art work is sometimes too narrowly focused

219. The results in the AS and A-level examinations in 2001 were in line with the national average. The results in 2002 were better. However, results have been lower than at the time of the previous inspection for two years. During the inspection, standards were above average in both Year 12 and Year 13. This represents very good achievement; students with a wide range of previous attainment do well on the very demanding AS and A-level courses.

220. The students' work exhibits a wide range of influences from the world of art and design. They develop good technical skills and produce prolific and detailed studies of natural and man-made forms. These may then be combined, for instance, into surreal paintings or sculptures. The sketchbooks show how serious and involved the students become and they have a clear idea of how to develop creative and exciting pieces. They have the confidence to tackle new media, whilst building on their previously acquired strengths. Critical studies reveal an above average depth of understanding.

221. Teaching is very good. Students, including those with SEN, make very good progress. Teachers have a very good understanding of the subject and very high expectations of what the students can achieve. Teachers give very good, accurate feedback to students on how well they are progressing and clear advice and targets for improvement. Students respond to this very positively and work hard to achieve high standards. In a Year 13 group the teacher gave a lively introduction which combined a demonstration of fresco techniques with an animated account of Michelangelo painting the Sistine Chapel. This provided technical instruction to one student and inspiration to the others. There are some very individual responses. In one case a student was combining the techniques of Julian Schnabel with images from Botticelli. Paintings and sculptures that the students produce are displayed all over the school. These attract amazement and compliments from everyone as well as a large number of students to the course.

222. The management of the post-16 course is very good. Expert teachers work as a team to plan and deliver a continuously evolving programme of study to provide the best they can for the students. Some areas require further development. Although some students make use of ICT to enhance their work, this is not sufficiently planned by the school. As in the 11-16 school, teachers do not plan enough material from a range of cultures and

little use is made of the local community or the mass media, such as literature, news or film. Students receive good advice on higher education and careers and many go on to further study in art and design. Given the recent improvement in examination results and the dedication and commitment of the teachers, the school is well placed to continue further improvements in the future.

HUMANITIES

History and sociology were the focus of the inspection. Religious education was sampled as part of the sixth form enhancement programme. Students engaged in a lively debate on the arguments for and against evolution and creation. The lesson observed was very well taught and it was enjoyed by the students. They gained a good understanding of how science can answer the question 'how?' but not the question 'why?'.

History

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

Strengths

- Students develop historical skills very well in both years
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and there is a sense of shared purpose in lessons that gives students confidence
- Students enjoy their studies and are stimulated by the pace and variety of lessons
- The department is managed very well and with considerable enthusiasm
- The subject makes a very strong contribution to citizenship and to the development of students' communication skills

Areas for improvement

- Questioning techniques in Year 12 need to be sharper in order to probe students' understanding more thoroughly
- There is a shortage of library materials to help students develop their independent research skills
- More use should be made of ICT and the Internet

223. There are currently 23 students on the AS course in Year 12 and 10 studying A-level history in Year 13. In recent years, results at AS and A-level have been broadly in line with national averages for the proportion of students achieving a pass and for the proportion achieving the highest grades. In the most recent examinations (2002), for example, all students achieved at least a D grade at A-level and all but one passed the AS examination in Year 12. The standards reached by students as seen in the current inspection are also in line with the national average in both years. On the AS course in Year 12, students are beginning to use a wide range of evidence to produce structured arguments and their skills of source interpretation are also developed well. Their oral progress is good and evidence from their written work suggests that most are able to replicate that progress in note taking and essay writing. In this context, some very detailed and well-organised notes were seen in Year 12 folders on the effects of the 1848 Revolutions on Italian Unification. Some lower attaining students are struggling with the complexity of advanced level work, but they are given good support in lessons both by their teachers and by the opportunity to work with higher attaining students in small groups. Standards achieved in Year 12 are good. In Year 13, students build on their earlier progress by developing higher order skills of analysis and evaluation. At this stage, their written work is very well structured and they use apt and relevant examples

to support their conclusions, for example in some very detailed essays on the consequences of the 1832 Reform Act on the British political system. In both years, students are articulate and show considerable commitment to their studies. As a result, they make good progress.

224. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers use their subject expertise very well to promote very good learning and plan lessons very well with clear aims and objectives that are shared with the students. As a result, students make gains both in the range of their knowledge and in the depth of their understanding of history. Lessons are conducted with pace and are enlivened by the use of stimulating and varied tasks that engage students' interest. This was seen to very good effect in a vibrant and enjoyable Year 12 balloon debate, during which students took on the roles of key contributors to the cause of Italian Unification and argued the various cases with passion and understanding. Above all, there is a sense of shared purpose in lessons and this gives students confidence to express their opinions and to take part in discussions. In order to develop this further, questioning techniques should be refined in Year 12 to probe students' understanding in greater depth. Students have ample opportunities to work in small groups, although the very large number of students in Year 12 sometimes inhibits fuller discussion. The rapport between teachers and students is very good and the latter are very positive about their work and thoroughly enjoy the study of history. This was demonstrated fully in an excellent Year 13 lesson, in which students conducted individual research into the nature of Hitler's dictatorship and presented their findings with considerable confidence and skill to their peers.
225. The subject is led and managed very well with strong support from other members of the teaching team. The progress of all students is monitored rigorously and the evaluation of written work is thorough, so that students know precisely how to improve their performance. There is a wide range of resources in classrooms to support students on their courses, but more resources are needed in the library to help students develop their independent learning and research skills. The department is developing the use of ICT and the Internet more widely, but students would benefit from more advice about how to use the wealth of information now available to them. Students have ample opportunities to attend historical conferences and to listen to leading historians. The subject makes a very strong contribution to the development of students' communication skills and to their knowledge and understanding of citizenship issues.
226. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Overall, this is an increasingly popular and successful sixth form provision at the school. Teaching is very good, relationships in the classroom are very positive and the department is led and managed with considerable expertise. The key issue now is to ensure that this very good provision is maintained.

Sociology

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

Strengths

- Achievement of students is good in relation to their GCSE results
- Attitudes of students are very good; students are attentive, enjoy their lessons and work hard to succeed
- Teaching is consistently good
- Marking is thorough and gives students a clear indication of how to improve their essays and coursework

Areas for improvement

- No teacher has formal responsibility for the department
- Learning resources are limited mostly to handouts and textbooks and there are no computers in the main teaching room

227. Sociology is offered at GCE AS and A-level. Courses are gaining in popularity and there are 36 students in Year 12. Over the previous three years attainment has fluctuated a little but has been broadly in line with the national average. Several students have attained higher grades and the percentage has mostly been in line with the national average. In 2002 a higher percentage of girls than boys attained grades A and B. Girls attained better in sociology than they did in their other subjects; boys did not attain as well. Students' achievement, over time, has been good when compared to their GCSE results. Before 2002, boys and girls achieved comparable standards, though more girls than boys joined the courses.
228. Students' work seen during the inspection indicates above average attainment in Years 12 and 13 and good achievement, based on GCSE point scores. Higher attaining students are confident and articulate and extend their thinking beyond the initial topic. Students in Year 13 showed evidence of this in the way they were able to relate several theoretical approaches to crime and deviance. Students in both years have a sound understanding of the theoretical foundations of the subject because their first unit of study in Year 12 focuses on key concepts and methodology and provides a firm base for future learning. Students' files are organised and presented very well. Students take pride in their work. Students are set many essays which are marked very thoroughly with constructive advice to help them improve. Lower attaining students lack depth in their essays, especially in the evaluative content.
229. Teaching is consistently good and students of all abilities learn well as a result. Teaching has clear aims that are shared with the students at the start of each lesson and key terminology is written on the board. Relationships are very good and students are prepared to ask for help and clarification. When teachers use contemporary events to illustrate sociological theories and provide students with relevant newspaper articles learning is very good. However, the lack of range of teaching methods used in some lessons limits student participation and independent learning. Resources used in lessons are mostly limited to handouts and textbooks. There is very little evidence in students' files of the use of ICT in lessons or for research. However, the good display in the main teaching room is based on information gained from the Internet. Students' attitudes are very good..
230. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The teacher who is leading the subject at present is managing it very well but there is no formal head of

department. The two teachers in the department work closely together and meet frequently to plan and discuss future strategies. The main teaching base provides good accommodation but not all lessons are taught there and accommodation elsewhere is grim, unsuitable for group work and severely limits teaching strategies. The main room does not provide the opportunity for teachers to use a range of styles appropriate for sixth form teaching because there are no ICT resources.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The inspection focus was on English and French. German A-level, Spanish A-level and AVCE courses with a modern foreign language input were sampled. Only very small numbers of students have taken German A-level in recent years; all have passed with below average results. Teaching is good, but students achieve better in speaking work than in written work. Numbers of students taking Spanish A-level have fluctuated, but in 2001, numbers rose to eleven; students gained average results overall. A new AVCE course combines business with Spanish for beginners in Spanish and for those who have done some Spanish before. Teaching is good and students achieve satisfactorily overall.

English

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

Strengths

- Students make good progress in relation to their earlier attainment
- Very good teaching leads to very good learning
- High expectations are met by students' commitment to their work
- Teachers' very good subject knowledge supports students' growing confidence and critical awareness

Areas for improvement

- Marking does not always give sufficiently specific advice on how to improve
- In some lessons there is insufficient opportunity for students' active involvement in their learning

231. There are some 60 students following AS and A-level courses in English literature. Standards achieved in GCE AS and A-level examinations in 2001 were below national expectations. This overall picture of attainment masks a considerable gender difference however. Boys attained well below the national average in 2001. Girls were in line with it. After a recent dip in levels of performance, results in 2002 improved, and taking prior attainment into account both boys and girls achieved at least in line with expectations with the majority exceeding them. Overall standards achieved are good.

232. The work seen during the inspection confirmed that standards of achievement are good. Students, when given the opportunity, show developing confidence as speakers. They interpret texts with a secure understanding of plot, character and authors' intentions. They use critical concepts and vocabulary well in discussion and particularly effectively in their writing. They make clear progress over the two years of the courses. Nearly all students follow English through from Year 12 to Year 13, in itself an indication of their commitment to, and enjoyment of, the subject. The writing of both boys and girls develops well in scope and grasp as the courses proceed. At its best, (as with a student who concluded a very perceptive essay on *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* with the observation 'The hospital is presented as a metaphor for the oppressive

society of the late 1950s') it is assured, intelligent and original. The writing of all students is at the least well ordered and accurately presented, though there is less use of ICT than is usual. Standards of reading mirror those of writing. All students (boys and girls equally) are capable readers. Some read with considerable insight, not confined to literary texts. A notable feature of work in English is the requirement to interpret visual and critical texts to develop awareness of the context of plays, novels and poems. Students are appropriately challenged by such demands, able students particularly, and respond positively to them.

233. The teaching of English is very good and leads to corresponding very good learning. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Half were outstanding. Teachers are well informed about the texts they are teaching together with their social and critical background. Carefully planned lessons give students opportunity to benefit from teachers' knowledge and to develop their own understanding. The best lessons set students creative and intellectual challenges which promote their achievement in clear ways. For example, a lesson which introduced students to the conventions of revenge tragedy had them analysing portraits of monarchs of the time, considering other historical sources, writing their own revenge scenarios, performing and evaluating them, and reflecting at the end on what had been learned. It was teaching and learning of exceptional quality, pace and purpose. Not all lessons were as involving as this. Opportunities to show and develop readings and perceptions were sometimes limited by teaching which required too much passive listening.
234. Teachers' marking is an important element in the generally very good teaching. Students are well served by assessment which is usually detailed, supportive, and very clear about how to improve. Again, the high quality of most marking and target setting is not entirely general. Occasionally targets are expressed too vaguely to be useful because they do not directly relate to the AS/A-level assessment objectives
235. There is good support for learning through a system of academic tutors. Students' writing and general progress are regularly reviewed. Students feel themselves to be very well supported personally and academically by their English teachers. They appreciate their approachability and evident concern for them. Accommodation is satisfactory overall, though some teaching goes on (for example in laboratories) in a poor environment for English teaching.
236. The leadership and management by the head of English are very good. She provides an excellent model in her own work of student-centred and properly demanding teaching. Programmes of study are meticulously planned and the materials to support them are carefully geared to students' varying abilities and aptitudes. There is a collaborative approach to planning which ensures high standards across the board and encourages colleagues' professional development. Students' views about their learning are sought and acted on. Students' achievement is carefully tracked and analysed and this in turn affects decisions about the curriculum (as with the recent change of examination board) and teaching approaches. Sixth form English is taught by a strong and very well led team. Not surprisingly, students do well in such circumstances. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is good.

French

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

Strengths

- A-level results showed a marked improvement in quality and candidate numbers in 2001 and continued this upward trend in 2002
- Students make good progress in lessons and learn well
- Teaching is good; lessons are well planned with interesting and imaginative resources
- Relationships are very good and students are very positive about learning the language
- There are excellent opportunities for work experience abroad and extra conversation practice

Areas for improvement

- The less confident students, although well supported, are not brought into discussion enough
- Students' independent work is not logged and monitored rigorously enough
- Students are not required to do corrections and re-drafting of their work, once it is marked

237. In 2001, examination results at A-level showed a significant improvement after some weaker years with low numbers; results were above average in national terms, and students achieved well to obtain these grades. In 2002, results continue the upward trend. All students completed the course. In relation to their GCSE results students performed as expected.

238. The standards in the work and lessons in Year 13 are average overall. Students achieve good standards measured against their GCSE results. They perform appropriately in lessons as a result of effective teaching, which demands much of them and closely focuses their learning. In one lesson, students drew well on their own knowledge of current affairs and their rapidly expanding vocabulary in French concerning environmental world catastrophes, so that they could sort out correctly headlines for articles taken from a French newspaper website. In the following lesson there was an interesting introduction to the issue of immigration in France, students quickly absorbed new words to express their own ideas and opinions.

239. The students seen in Year 12 were only at the beginning of their course, but they had just been on nine days of work experience in Belgium. Teachers report that students have made considerable progress in speaking skills and developed in confidence as a result of this experience. Students make good progress and are moving on successfully from their GCSE work into new areas. Most are tackling the focus on grammar well and beginning to write more discursively and extensively on the topics they encounter. A few students do not participate quite as well as the others in offering ideas. They should be drawn more into general discussion.

240. Teaching is good overall and some is very good. The principal features of the teaching are clear objectives, carefully focused planning, brisk pace and a range of methods with interesting and often imaginative resources. For example, teachers provide students with articles from the Internet on up-to-date news and also the French view of world events. Teachers conduct lessons entirely in French to develop students' listening and speaking skills continuously. They provide students with the specialised vocabulary they need before tackling new topics, so that students can more readily feel confident in expressing views and opinions. A foreign language assistant provides students with valuable extra practice in developing speaking skills. All four lessons seen

were taught well. One lesson was particularly effective in stimulating students to take a real interest in recent news from the Internet about French health concerns. The lesson ended with a very interesting sharing of views of the relative merits of the French and British health services. Areas for improvement include bringing in the few more passive students into general discussion, ensuring that students re-draft their work after correction and logging and monitoring more carefully students' independent work in reading, listening and speaking.

241. The good teaching and learning result from work in the subject being well led and managed. There is a commitment to building on what has already been achieved and to improving standards. Teachers have worked very effectively on the new scheme of work to reflect the subject examination requirements. Target setting based on a careful analysis of students' performance is well established and students feel very well supported. Improvement since the last inspection is good.