

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WARBLINGTON SCHOOL**

Havant

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116475

Headteacher: Mr J Adam

Reporting inspector: Bill Stoneham  
27407

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> Nov – 15<sup>th</sup> Nov 2002

Inspection number: 251093

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: Secondary

Age range of pupils: 11 - 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: South Leigh Road  
Warblington  
Havant  
Hampshire

Postcode: PO9 2RR

Telephone number: 023 9247 5480

Fax number: 023 9248 6127

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Robert Perry

Date of previous inspection: September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
27407	Bill Stoneham	Registered inspector	Educational inclusion	The school's results and students' achievements. How well students are taught. What the school should do to improve.
9595	Susan Cash	Lay inspector		Students' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its students How well the school works in partnership with parents.
8402	Vivien Johnston	Team inspector	English Drama	
10244	Roger Freeman	Team inspector	Mathematics	
3242	Michael Newman	Team inspector	Science	
30433	Christopher Corp	Team inspector		
11746	Robin Couthard	Team inspector	Music	
25073	Stuart Jordan	Team Inspector	Geography History	
1583	Paul Morgan	Team inspector	Design and Technology	
24142	Sylvia McConville	Team inspector	Art	
30563	Jackie Pentlow	Team inspector	Physical Education	
27662	Elizabeth Schofield	Team inspector	Citizenship	Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
32267	Steven Smith	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)	
15075	Bryan Stephens	Team inspector	Modern Foreign Languages, English as an Additional Language.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students
10761	Patrick Willan	Team inspector	Religious Education, Special Educational Needs	How well the school is led and managed.

The inspection contractor was: **e-Qualitas Limited**, Langshaw, Pastens Road, Limpsfield Chart, Oxted, Surrey. RH8 0RE.

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Warblington School is a mixed comprehensive for students aged 11-16. It is situated in south-east Hampshire close to the town of Havant. The immediate catchment area is favoured in socio-economic terms, though in recent years more students have enrolled at the school from a wider area, which is less affluent and below average socio-economically. The school's roll is falling, with 928 students on roll, including 40 more girls than boys. This is average for a school of this type. About five percent of students hail from a non-British heritage. A small number of students are refugees but none are from a travellers' background. The proportion of students with English as an additional language is well below average at under two percent, with less than one percent at an early stage of language acquisition. A below average proportion, 13.5 percent, take up free school meals. Where judgements in this report refer to similar schools, this means schools where between 13 and 21 percent take free school meals. Thirty-seven percent of students are on the school's register of special educational needs. This is well above average, but the number of students with a Statement of need is below average. Their needs are wide ranging; the majority of statemented students have learning problems. The attainment of students on entry covers a wide range but is broadly average. The level of student mobility is quite high compared with the national picture but similar numbers of students arrived and left over the previous twelve months, other than at the normal times for admission and transfer. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was an acting head serving one term and, in the recent past, the school has experienced some problems in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified staff, especially in mathematics.

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

Warblington has positive features, which benefit students greatly but also some areas where improvements are needed. It provides a satisfactory quality of education. Classroom teaching during the inspection was frequently good or better. The overall standard of teaching and learning is satisfactory in all years. Generally good relationships are built up within the school and students are well cared for. Assessment data is used well. Standards throughout the school are close to average in the current year, which represents at least satisfactory achievement, given the starting point for students when they enter the school. The curriculum offered to students is good. Planned opportunities for improving students' skills in literacy and the use of ICT are not good enough, however. Students' behaviour is satisfactory but a significant minority display negative attitudes to school, which result in an unsatisfactory approach to their work. Attendance is very poor, despite the very best efforts of the school, with a significant minority of parents not supporting the school's drive to encourage improvements. The leadership of the acting headteacher is very good and the school's finances are very well managed. Overall, the school offers satisfactory value for money.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

- Teaching and learning were good or better in many lessons seen.
- Effective teaching and pastoral support, including very good annual progress reviews to parents, foster good relationships between students, and between staff and students.
- Good provision for extra-curricular activities has a beneficial impact on learning.
- Partnerships developed with the local community, including the very good work-related curriculum in Years 10 and 11, have a positive impact on attainment, attendance and behaviour.
- Good use of assessment data has led to improvements in GCSE attainment, especially for grades A\*-G.
- The leadership of the acting headteacher is very good; he is well supported by the leadership team.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The use of ICT in subjects, to support learning and encourage more independent study, is underdeveloped.
- Strategies for raising standards of literacy, especially writing skills, are not effective enough.
- The quality of homework and its marking needs to improve to make a significant contribution to the learning of all students.
- Expectations of attitudes, behaviour and the presentation of work, are inconsistent amongst both staff and students.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in September 1997, since when improvement has been satisfactory overall, but very good recently after a period of uncertainty over the leadership of the school. The key issues for improvement identified in the last report have been implemented, though further work is needed to improve the literacy skills of many students. Standards of attainment, particularly at GCSE have improved, with standards in English, mathematics and science being at least maintained. Teaching and learning have continued to improve and there is now less unsatisfactory teaching, especially in Years 7, 8 and 9. The quality of financial management, which was sound at the last inspection, has improved significantly and the school is meeting its targets. The school is now in a strong position to consolidate recent good initiatives and improve further.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
GCSE examinations	C	C	C	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

The overall trend in National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9 in English, mathematics and science for the period 1998 to 2001 has been constant with results overall being below average when compared to all schools nationally and to similar schools. Results for students at the end of Year 9 in 2002 show that standards in English and mathematics are below average, but in science standards are average. For present students in Year 9, standards in English and science are average, but in mathematics they are below average, reflecting the problems the school has encountered in recruiting and retaining appropriately qualified and experienced teachers. The achievement of students in Year 9 is satisfactory. Their standards of work now are much as expected given their levels of attainment when they entered the school in Year 7. GCSE results overall in 2001 were in line with average standards when compared to all schools nationally and similar schools. The proportion of students gaining five A\* to G grades in 2001 was above average and well above average when compared to similar schools. On this measure, recorded standards have risen significantly in recent years. GCSE results in 2002 were similar to those in 2001. Standards of work of present Year 11 students are average overall and are average in English and science. Again, attainment in mathematics is below average because of the staffing problems experienced. Students in Year 11 show at least satisfactory achievement. Realistic targets are set and met for GCSE results.



Based on an analysis of average points scored in the 2001 GCSE examinations, standards in art and design were above average, but were below average in English language, drama, geography, history and mathematics. In all other subjects standards were close to the national average. Standards recorded by boys and girls at GCSE are very similar overall, but with noticeable differences in some subjects.

### STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Unsatisfactory. A significant minority of students are reluctant learners; they are slow to organise themselves and settle to their work. Many students work hard and enjoy their school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Students mix well together, though a higher than average proportion of students need help in managing their behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Most students respond well to the good opportunities for personal development. Relationships throughout the school are good with staff working hard to establish good relationships with their students.
Attendance	Very poor. Attendance rates are well below average with a significant minority of parents failing to support the school in its quest to secure improvements.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

Teaching is satisfactory overall. It was good or better in seven out of every ten lessons and unsatisfactory in one out of ten. Teaching in English is satisfactory, but the teaching of literacy is unsatisfactory. One particular weakness is the lack of planned opportunities in many subjects of the curriculum for students to write in detail and for different audiences. The skills of essay and report writing are not developed sufficiently and this adversely affects learning and standards attained. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory despite the staffing problems that have been endured and the teaching of numeracy is also satisfactory. The teaching of science is good in all years. Students are offered opportunities to develop as independent learners and, in the better lessons, students' literacy skills are enhanced by the nature of the work that is set. Teaching meets the needs of all students including the gifted and talented and those with special educational needs. The needs of the small number of students in the early stages of English acquisition are very well catered for. Particular strengths of teaching include the use of assessment data to set targets and monitor progress and, in the most effective lessons, teachers plan well and challenge the students. The principal weakness is the use of homework. There is inconsistent practice. The setting of homework is not adequately planned and, when it is set, it does not always seek to extend knowledge and understanding.

Learning is satisfactory. In the most effective lessons, the pace of working is good and the students work with interest and enthusiasm. Weaknesses in the quality of learning are particularly associated

with the teaching of literacy and ICT. Students are not given sufficient opportunities to write in detail and this constrains the quality of their learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11 is broad, balanced and inclusive. Successful efforts have been made to widen the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 and the work-related learning option is helping the school to tackle issues of poor attendance and poor attainment.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Good. The school has embraced inclusion and most curriculum work takes place in mainstream lessons. After a period of uncertainty, management of this area is now good.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Very good. The school monitors their progress and attainment carefully and all students are well integrated socially. Provision in science, in particular, is very good.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory and it is good for moral, social and cultural development. Citizenship is not a taught part of the curriculum but is inherent in the whole approach of the school to the personal development of its students.
How well the school cares for its students	Good. The school is caring and inclusive and offers good social and academic support to its students. Assessment procedures are good.

There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that enhance learning and the provision for careers education and guidance is good. There are very good partnerships with the local community. Statutory requirements for the provision of ICT across the curriculum are not met. A daily act of collective worship does not take place, though assemblies are of a good quality. The school's partnership with its parents is satisfactory.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The leadership offered by the acting headteacher during a difficult period of transition has been very good and he has been supported well by senior staff. Leadership and management in mathematics, science, art and design, geography, physical education and religious education are very good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body has undergone much change recently, but governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There has been considerable recent improvement in the monitoring and evaluation of performance and the school has now established a good basis on which to work.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The budget is managed very well and specific grants are used appropriately. The governors and senior staff have a very good understanding of Best Value and the principles are applied with increasing rigour, such as in determining staffing requirements. Planning for the school's future is very strong.

Staffing is good and accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. Some problems have been encountered in recruiting and retaining staff, though these problems have been managed well.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children like school.</li><li>• The progress made by their children.</li><li>• The quality of teaching.</li><li>• How approachable the school is.</li><li>• Expectations that students will work hard and record good results.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The quality of behaviour.</li><li>• The amount of homework that is set.</li><li>• Information about how well their child is doing at school.</li><li>• Closer working relationships between school and home.</li></ul>

The inspection team agree with parents that the behaviour of some students could be improved to the benefit of all. The consistency with which homework is set and marked should also be improved. Tasks set should extend the learning in class. The inspection team were surprised that parents felt ill informed about their child's progress as the quality of school reports and other information is very good. Given how approachable parents find the school, the basis exists for parents to become involved in a closer working relationship with the school. The inspection team endorses the positive views of parents as far as most of the students are concerned.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. This section should be read in conjunction with the summary report where comments on, for example, trends in results are made. Standards in literacy and numeracy are described at the end of the sections on English and mathematics and each subject report includes detailed information about the standards currently being recorded by students.
2. Results in Year 9 National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science over recent years show a mixed picture but with a slow level of improvement in standards. In 2002, results were below average in English and mathematics, but were average in science when compared to all schools nationally. When these students entered the school in Year 7, their standards in the National Curriculum tests sat in their last year in primary school were average in mathematics, but below average in English and science. Thus achievement during the Years 7 to 9 has been satisfactory in English, with the students at least maintaining their levels of attainment; good in science but unsatisfactory in mathematics as levels of attainment have fallen from average to below average. This outcome is a reflection of some of the acute staffing problems that the mathematics department has endured over the last two years.
3. When the results for boys and girls are analysed, especially in terms of the attainment of the higher grades at Level 5, or above, data indicates that girls are under-performing in comparison to boys, especially in mathematics and science. In 2001 for example, the last year for which national comparative data is available, girls record higher grades than boys. In English and the gap between them is narrower than the gap nationally; in mathematics and science, the percentage of girls and boys recording Level 5 or better is very similar, whereas nationally, girls do better than boys. No simple explanation to account for these outcomes can be offered, but it is something that each department should consider in its planning for improvements. This outcome should also be considered at a whole school level to see if, for example, absence rates among female students are higher than those for boys in Years 7 to 9.
4. For present students in Year 9 standards are similar to those recorded in national tests. There is some indication that standards in mathematics are beginning to rise as the staffing situation improves, but the difficulties facing the department have not been entirely resolved. Standards in English are constrained by the limited literacy skills that students have developed in primary schools and, though the school has some good literacy strategies, not enough emphasis is given to improving writing skills, in particular, and this is reflected in the standards recorded. In science, higher attaining students make better progress than their peers. This is because science staff have placed more emphasis than many departments on developing writing skills. This has benefited standards in general, but especially those of higher attainers. Standards of work seen are at least good in some other subjects, especially art and design, drama and physical education. Overall, the achievement of present students in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory.
5. At GCSE, results for the percentage of candidates gaining 5 or more grades at A\* to C have been constant for a number of years. For this measure, results have been average when compared to all schools nationally and to similar schools based on both prior attainment and free school meals entitlement. GCSE results are also average based on an average points score. Again this judgement applies to all schools nationally and similar schools. Standards observed during the inspection in Year 11 classes were similar to those indicated in recent GCSE results and, in some subjects, they were higher. These students' achievement is at least satisfactory

over their time in the school. If an analysis of performance is based on the percentage of students gaining 5 or more GCSE grades at A\* to G, then the schools performance is above average compared to all schools national and well above average when compared to similar schools. This outcome reflects well on the work of the school, especially the use that has been made of assessment data to set each student a series of individual examination targets. The monitoring of students' performance against their targets has also been highly effective and has improved considerably since the last inspection.

6. In terms of individual subjects at GCSE, most are recording average standards based on average points scored by students. Standards in English language, drama, geography and history were below average in the 2001 GCSE examinations. This outcome is not entirely unexpected given the weaknesses in literacy skills, especially writing skills, identified in various sections of this report. Standards in mathematics were also below average, reflecting the difficulties the school has experienced in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified mathematics teachers. Standards in art and design, however, were above average, reflecting the very good teaching and leadership offered in this subject.
7. The progress made by gifted and talented students is similar to that of their peers. In some subjects, such as art and design, their work is especially strong and their progress is fostered by an after school club and by opportunities to take photography as an additional GCSE. The small number of students for whom English is an additional language, tend to make very good progress. This is because staff in some subjects, especially science, make very good efforts to include the students in their lessons and adopt some excellent and sensitive teaching strategies, which promote high standards.
8. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in the light of their starting points. The number of students gaining five A\*-G grades is higher than the national average. Students are mainly supported in subject lessons and teacher assistants are deployed in the lower attaining sets in the core subjects. There were, however, some instances where students were seen to be making less than satisfactory progress, for example in some of the lower attaining sets in mathematics and science. Explanations for this include low attendance and staffing difficulties in science in the previous term. There are some small withdrawal groups for those who are identified with low reading ages. These students make good progress in their small groups because of the assistance offered by specialist staff from the learning support centre.

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

9. While the majority of students are very enthusiastic about the work they do in lessons, for example in art, design and technology, history and music, quite a significant minority are reluctant learners, tending to be passive in lessons, often day-dreaming and rarely contributing. They are slow to organise themselves and settle to their work, preferring to chat with their friends, especially when asked to write. This slows the pace of lessons, often despite the teachers' best efforts to set time limits for tasks and encourage concentration. Students in Year 9 were most disaffected, though there were examples in every year group. For example, in a Year 9 science lesson, the teacher had to work very hard to get all the students to make progress and in a Year 10 English lesson, students' attitudes also held back their learning. Many fail to complete their homework. Enthusiastic students attend extra-curricular activities, such as the art club, building an electric go-kart, writing the Activ8 newspaper or playing in sports teams. Some Year 8 students in a music lesson were very responsive, obedient, enthusiastic and responsible. Year 9 students maintained sustained concentration in a history lesson; while in Year 8 and Year 10 art lessons, students worked with total concentration and interest.

10. Standards of behaviour are satisfactory. Around school, students mix together well with minimal supervision. The school has identified a higher proportion of students who need help in managing their behaviour than is seen in most schools. In most lessons, teachers manage students well so that the few who tend to be disruptive are contained. This can, however, limit the opportunities for independent learning. Very occasionally students disrupt lessons to such an extent that learning for all is constrained. A few teachers do not have sufficient strategies for coping with these students in lessons. While the number of exclusions has been well above the national average, these have fallen considerably over the past year as the school's support systems have improved.
11. Students report that there are occasional incidents of bullying and intimidation, but they know whom to tell and are confident that appropriate action will be swiftly taken. Students from ethnic minorities are well integrated into the school. Relationships throughout the school are good. Teachers work hard to build good relations with students, particularly those who are challenging. This was particularly evident in a Year 10 English lesson. Students are encouraged to work together in pairs and groups during some lessons and do so, on the whole, willingly and sensibly. They are welcoming to visitors and most are polite and helpful, though a few find it difficult to control their tempers.
12. There are good opportunities, for those students who wish, to take on responsibility. Older students are prefects and some have trained as peer counsellors. Year group and school councils provide a means for students to air their views and arrange charitable fund-raising events. Citizenship is promoted well. Many students are becoming increasingly aware of environmental issues. Some can be trusted to perform helpful tasks for their teachers. Many set a good example and respond positively to the good provision the school makes for their personal development. A significant minority are reluctant to demonstrate a sense of responsibility towards the school community. They leave litter lying around, drop chewing gum on the floor, both inside and outside the school, they smoke in the toilets and take little pride in their own appearance, or the presentation of their work. They seem unaware, or are uncaring, of the impact their behaviour and words have on others. Nevertheless, the majority of Warblington students are making satisfactory progress towards becoming mature and responsible young adults. These judgements are broadly similar to those made by the previous inspection team.
13. Students with special educational needs respond well to their provision overall. Some were seen to gain confidence through in-lesson support. Some of those who have found the move to secondary school challenging have benefited from the 'transition club', run by the teaching assistants, providing additional support, for example after school. The learning support base is a welcoming and supportive environment. Students seen there were confident, gaining in independence and social skills.
14. Levels of attendance at the school are well below those found in most schools nationally. Years 9, 10 and 11 all had attendance rates of less than 90 percent in the weeks of term leading up to the inspection, with Year 10 recording around 87 percent. A high proportion of current Year 11 girls have poor attendance records. The rate of unauthorised absence is high partly because the school, wisely, refuses to authorise absences such as shopping trips or staying at home to look after siblings. Increasingly, students from split families are taking two holidays a year, leading to up to four weeks of absence, only two of which are authorised. Most students arrive at school on time. Punctuality is satisfactory.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. Though no clear judgement was made on the quality of teaching and learning in the previous inspection report, it has improved, as there are now fewer unsatisfactory lessons. During the inspection 10 lessons, out of 156 seen, did not reach a satisfactory standard; whereas 39 lessons were graded as either very good or excellent. Indeed, in lessons seen, teaching was generally good, though it tended to be stronger in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Other inspection evidence, notably extensive scrutiny of students' work, highlighted some weaker aspects of teaching. These include significant inconsistencies in the setting of homework, the marking of work and the standards of presentation of work demanded of students. Many exercise books, for example, were untidy, indicating a lack of pride and care in the work undertaken. These important qualitative aspects of teaching are not applied, or enforced, with any consistent rigour. Consequently, teaching overall cannot be better than satisfactory as these inconsistencies adversely affect the quality of learning.
16. In all subjects teaching and learning are at least satisfactory and in science, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, physical education and religious education, the overall quality of teaching and learning is good. In Years 7 to 9 the standard of teaching and learning in design and technology is very good. Teaching and learning are also very good in art and design and history in Years 10 and 11.
17. Where teaching and learning are good, or better, a range of strengths can be identified. In the most effective lessons, teachers prepare well, they enthuse and challenge the students and the lessons progress with pace. In such lessons, students respond positively and their learning is enhanced by opportunities to work independently. Where teaching is particularly good, all students rapidly acquire new knowledge and skills and levels of concentration and effort are very good. For example, in an excellent Year 8 music lesson on Indian scales, the students were continually challenged by the teaching methods employed, including some excellent question and answer sessions and some challenging written exercises. The set tasks successfully reinforced prior learning as well as developing new learning. The lesson was extremely well planned and proceeded at a cracking pace. All students were involved and all responded positively and enthusiastically. The learning during the lesson was excellent. In an excellent Year 11 art and design lesson, students worked on breeze blocks to create a variety of 3D designs. The introduction to the lesson served to inspire and stimulate the students who quickly settled to their own work. All members of the class worked independently and were absorbed in their tasks. Standards of work were well above average. The lesson was challenging and inspiring. New skills were acquired and the quality of the work produced was of a very high standard. Excellent teaching motivated and challenged the students. Excellent learning resulted.
18. On the few occasions when teaching is ineffective, learning suffers because lessons are less well planned, the students' interest is not seized by the subject matter, or the way it is delivered and some restlessness results, which disturbs the learning for all students. For example, in an unsatisfactory Year 10 French lesson, the students were not well managed. The teacher did not set clear standards of conduct with the result that some students were reluctant to converse in French and some simply ignored the teacher and continued with their own conversations. The teacher's planning for the lesson was unsatisfactory. The tasks set lacked challenge and did not stimulate the students' imagination or interest and the teacher did not manage the class sufficiently well. Restlessness became a problem and led to idle chatter. Levels of concentration were poor and the learning of all students suffered.



19. The teaching offered to students with special educational needs is good. All teaching staff have access to the individual education programmes of students (IEPs). An experienced team of teachers and teacher assistants work throughout the school to support in-lesson learning. Some departments, for example mathematics, modern foreign languages and religious education make good provision in their planning for these students. Teaching throughout the school benefits from the support teachers and assistants. They provide effective assistance for students to achieve satisfactory outcomes from their lessons and match the progress made by their peers. However, in some lessons observed, teachers missed opportunities to build on the information from the IEPs and adapt materials for identified students. Teachers and teaching assistants in the learning support centre provide good learning and support experiences. For example, a small group of students seen in Year 7 was skilfully taken through a series of exercises to boost their confidence in reading and extend their vocabulary and spelling.
20. The teaching of gifted and talented students is satisfactory. In subjects such as art and design, talented and gifted students have opportunities to attend additional classes. They are entered for some GCSE examinations at an early date and they are offered extra GCSEs to study such as media studies and photography. This approach stimulates their learning. Good account is taken of their needs in some other subjects including English, mathematics and science.
21. Students who have English as an additional language also receive satisfactory teaching and their overall learning is satisfactory. In some cases, such as in science, their teaching and learning is considerably better than this because of the sensitive efforts made by staff to promote learning.
22. The school monitors teaching and learning and improvements in the standard of teaching have occurred since the last inspection. One particular area of improvement has been in the use of data. Examination and other data are used to set each student target grades for their work. Though there are some variations across departments about how well data are used, students have a clear idea of what is expected of them and they know how well they are doing in relation to the target grades set. This improved use of data is reflected in the improvements that the school has recorded in its GCSE examination results, especially the percent of students gaining five or more A\* to G grades.
23. Too little emphasis is placed on some key aspects of teaching, which directly affect the quality of learning. For example, much inspection evidence suggests that students in all years, and in most subjects of the curriculum, are not offered sufficient opportunities to develop their writing skills. Too frequently written tasks involve short answers and insufficient opportunities are offered to students to develop their subject knowledge and understanding by writing in depth. Insufficient emphasis is placed on writing essays, reports and other forms of extended writing. The teaching of literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Other inconsistencies in teaching include the use of homework and the quality of marking. Homework tends to be set regularly, but it lacks consistency; an issue identified by parents. For learning to improve further, a more consistent approach to setting quality homework tasks that are designed to extend the students' knowledge and understanding is required. Too often homework involves finishing class work as opposed to requiring the students to research and investigate, for example. A further constraint on learning is that marking is inconsistent. Some work is marked irregularly and, in other cases, marked work does not feature helpful comments that indicate to students how their work might be improved. The presentation of some work is also poor and some staff seem to accept this as little evidence was found of students being reprimanded for poor and untidy presentation, or being asked to repeat the work to a higher standard. The inspection team are of the opinion that slackness in expectations by some staff adversely affects the overall quality of both teaching and learning.

24. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory, but the use of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Opportunities are not, as a matter of course, written into schemes of work in many subjects. Students are not encouraged to use ICT on a regular basis for research, or to word process their work, for example. Such restricted use limits learning opportunities and the development of key skills.

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

25. The curriculum is broad, balanced and inclusive. All subjects of the National Curriculum are covered in Years 7 to 9. Additionally, a good programme of personal, social and health education is taught by form tutors and drama is also offered to all students. English, mathematics and science are taught in sets from the beginning of Year 7, based on data and recommendations from the primary schools. Students' progress and attainment in these subjects is monitored carefully and movement between sets is possible, but infrequent, in Year 7. A number of classes in mathematics and French are taught by more than one teacher, which has a negative impact on standards. The curriculum has improved significantly since the last inspection. It is reviewed regularly and, as a result of the last review, was modified in 2001/2 to include one period a week of ICT for all students in Years 7, 8 and 9. Additionally Spanish was reintroduced into Year 9 for higher attainers in French. For lower attainers the school has introduced programmes, which are aimed at raising standards of literacy and numeracy. In Years 10 and 11 the school is striving to increase the flexibility of the curriculum. In collaboration with a consortium of local 11 to 16 schools and a college of further education, it is providing a number of vocational courses, including NVQ part 1 sports and recreation and food preparation. Additionally, a work related curriculum has been introduced jointly with Highbury College. This initiative has had a positive impact on the attainment, attendance and behaviour of a small group of students for whom the full National Curriculum is not appropriate. Students also have the opportunity to take a vocational GCSE in art. There are also some initiatives for high attaining students, who can take GCSE art early, or prepare for AS level media studies in twilight sessions after school. The success of the vocational element can partly be measured by the high, and increasing, number of students who progress to further education colleges at the end of Year 11. The school is not meeting statutory requirements for the cross-curricular delivery of ICT. The staff have all been trained in ICT skills but access to computers for departments is limited. In English the use of ICT is limited and is inadequate in science and mathematics.
26. Curriculum planning at departmental level is satisfactory, or better, in all departments. Strengths in various aspects were seen in art, history, music and physical education. The curriculum in religious education is very good and students experience a rich, varied and enjoyable diet. The curriculum meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. In English and mathematics the recent Key Stage 3 national strategies for raising standards have been successfully introduced.
27. The range of out of school activities is good and is enhancing learning. In design and technology, students are entered for national competitions; in modern foreign languages, there is a successful, long established exchange link with a French school and an annual visit to France and in music, there are well-supported instrumental and singing groups. Extra curricular provision in art and in physical education is very good. Physical education has an impressive programme of lunchtime and after school activities, which are open to all students. These activities are well supported by staff outside the physical education department, by parents and by outside coaches. Students are also encouraged to join local sports clubs to improve their skills and talents further. There is also a very successful Christian Union. The art department runs well attended after school clubs and

students have the opportunity to visit local and national art galleries and museums and participate in national competitions.

28. The school maintains very good partnerships with the local community, which supports the learning of students. Local businesses provide volunteer mentors to work with students who lack motivation, or who need extra help to decide on the next step in their education. Others provide work experience opportunities. A number of students are invited to spend a day in a work environment and enjoy 'enlightening lunches' with the boss of the company, in order to make them aware of why they need to complete their education. One company sponsored the construction of an electric go-kart, which students built and then raced at Goodwood. Close liaison with the residents' association and good support from the community police officer contributes well to students' citizenship. A local church provides volunteer support and runs a Christian lunch-time club.

29. Provision for careers education is good. The school has achieved Investor in Careers status. Careers modules are in place for all year groups as part of the PSHE programme. Students have good access to a well-organised careers library, which includes a range of electronic resources. This facility is well used and much appreciated. Students participate in a number of activities including preparation for job interviews, work experience and career taster days. The school has close links with two further education colleges. Some students in Years 10 and 11 attend college one day a week on the work related learning course. This is available for a range of careers, for example hairdressing, car maintenance, catering and administration. Effective monitoring is in place to ensure that students benefit from this scheme, which is proving very successful in helping a small group of disaffected students to make decent plans for their lives after school.
30. The provision for students with English as an additional language (EAL) is very good. The school has a long history of receiving students' with English as an additional language and has established very close links with the Hampshire Bilingual Support Service (BLIS). Teachers from BLIS have recently provided training for the whole staff on how to integrate successfully learners with English as an additional language. There are currently five EAL students who are at the early stages of English language acquisition. Each of these students has been assessed by BLIS for general ability as well as their knowledge of English. Two BLIS teachers spend three days in the school giving individualised tuition. Additionally two of the students have a modified curriculum, which allows them to take a special one day course in English at a local college of further education. Furthermore, the five students have support from teaching assistants in about half of their lessons. The school monitors their progress and attainment carefully. All students are well integrated socially. The school carefully chooses the most appropriate tutor group into which to place students. 'Buddies' are identified and the tutor group discusses how they will help the new students before they arrive. Inspectors observed some of the EAL students in a variety of lessons. They were very well supported by the class teacher and by teaching assistants and were made good progress.
31. Curricular opportunities for students with special educational needs are good. The school has embraced inclusion and most curriculum work takes place in mainstream lessons. Programmes for students withdrawn from class are designed to help them catch up and so manage better in their lessons. In addition, the school has designed opportunities for some students to have an amended curriculum where this is seen to be appropriate and there are opportunities to pursue a range of vocational qualifications. There remain some areas, for example in mathematics, where the curriculum for some lower attaining sets was judged to be inappropriate.
32. The school makes good provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are highlighted in lesson plans and in most departmental handbooks. As part of their induction programme staff, new to the school, attend a presentation on SMSC offered by the head of religious education.
33. The spiritual development of students is satisfactory overall; this is an improvement since the last inspection. Subjects such as art, drama and history offer good opportunities for students to develop spirituality and most religious education lessons offer very good opportunities for reflection. Opportunities to encourage students to ponder the natural wonders of the world are not sufficiently exploited in mathematics or science. Though the weekly year assemblies do not meet the statutory requirements for daily collective worship, they are, nevertheless, purposeful, of high quality and strong on moral and spiritual messages, with themes such as peace in the world and care for the environment.

34. Provision for the moral development of students is good. Teachers are generally very good role models in encouraging positive inter-personal relationships, respect for one another and distinguishing right from wrong. A code of behaviour is displayed in every tutor base. In subjects such as art, drama, geography, PSHE and religious education, students are encouraged to reflect on moral issues. In history, students are often presented with moral dilemmas especially when the decision-making of past world leaders is considered. Valuable opportunities are offered to students to take moral responsibility through schemes such as the school council, acting as 'buddies' to younger students and the prefectorial system. A few members of staff, however, do not have such high expectations of how students should take responsibility for their actions and this prevents this area from being judged very good.
35. Extra curricular activities and experiences are a strength of the school and make a valuable contribution to broadening the students' social and cultural horizons. There are numerous opportunities for social and cultural development through field trips, both in this country and abroad. The Army residential course for some Year 10 students offers invaluable opportunities for social development, as does the annual school dinner/dance held in Year 11. Opportunities for collaborative work in many subjects, but especially drama and physical education, also contribute to the students' social development.
36. The cultural development of students is good overall. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The school encourages students to appreciate their own cultural traditions as well as the diversity and richness of other cultures. The school's PSHE programme helps students prepare for life in a multi-cultural society, but this theme is less well addressed by most subjects of the curriculum. Strong contributions to cultural and multi-cultural development, however, are made by music and religious education. In the former, students study forms of music from across the world; in the latter, students study the main religions of the world including Islam and Judaism. During the inspection a good contribution to life in a multi-cultural society was evident as Islamic students were offered a prayer room to celebrate Ramadan. In one assembly a mock Muslim marriage ceremony was also conducted. Cultural development is further enhanced by visits to art galleries, museums and theatres, both locally and in London.

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

37. Warblington School is a caring school, where students are well looked after and the pastoral and academic support they receive is good. The work of many tutors and heads of year, and the co-ordinated approach they adopt, provides good support for students. The quality of tutor time each morning is variable, but some is good or very good, enabling students to ask questions or raise concerns and giving tutors time to talk to individual students. A number of new initiatives have been introduced recently and the use of tutor time has improved since the last inspection.
38. Child protection procedures are firmly in place and new members of staff have been appropriately trained. The school, unusually, employs a full-time matron who renders first aid and helps in the pastoral care of students, alongside tutors and heads of year. Health and safety and risk assessments are effectively carried out. At the time of the inspection, Year 7 students and new members of staff had yet to experience a fire drill. The PSHE course makes a good contribution to students' welfare by teaching them, for example, about healthy eating, about drugs and smoking. It also covers sex education. A community volunteer runs a life skills course for young women, which is attended by some of the older girls.
39. After some time without the support of an education welfare officer, the school now has two and is, therefore, making considerable progress in dealing with those students, and their families, for

whom education is not a priority. A few parents are being prosecuted for not ensuring that their child attends school, while others are being supported through some imaginative schemes of work related college courses, run alongside a part-time timetable in school. Attendance is monitored carefully and first day of absence telephone calls are made to students with attendance records below 90%. Letters are sent home if no explanation for absence is received. The school experienced some difficulties over this when the computerised system was introduced but has taken steps to eliminate errors. It is sensibly planning to extend the system to check on internal truancy, though there was no evidence during the inspection that this is a concern. The school has not undertaken any analysis of attendance of individuals or groups to see the extent to which absence has affected students' attainment. Certificates are awarded to students with 100 percent attendance each half term and weekly tutor group awards are made. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are now very good but have yet to make a significant impact on the level of attendance seen in lessons.

40. The school has sound procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour. Students who find it difficult to behave appropriately have individual education plans (IEPs) and receive targeted support. The school has put in place a good range of strategies for supporting these students, from report cards to anger management through the Warblington Attendance, Values and Esteem Scheme (WAVES) course. A strong emphasis on inclusion keeps these young people in school if at all possible. Most teachers manage potentially disruptive behaviour well and make expectations clear, so that students do not interfere with the learning of others. A few teachers do not have sufficient strategies for coping and lessons are sometimes rendered ineffective by poor behaviour. The behaviour policy is very clear about the procedures for dealing with more serious incidents of poor behaviour, when students can be sent to work with another teacher or with a senior member of staff. It is less helpful in suggesting strategies for promoting good behaviour in the classroom. Training has been provided, but practice is inconsistent. The school has sound policies on racial equality, equal opportunities, Internet safety and bullying which support its firm stance against oppressive behaviour. The work of mid-day supervisors in controlling adverse behaviour would be more effective if they were better supported and if they had opportunities to discuss their role with senior teachers.
41. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a detailed record of students identified as in need and on the register, as required by the new Code of Practice for students with educational needs. Information on these students with special educational needs is made available to all teachers. Confidential information is handled sensitively. Statutory reviews are carried out as required. IEPs are reviewed twice yearly and subject and other staff have an opportunity to feed information, at this point, into the learning support team.
42. The procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are good. The school has continued to build upon the strengths recorded in the previous inspection report and has successfully tackled all the weaknesses. Care is taken to check the accuracy of the baseline information that the feeder schools provide and that accompanies students new to the area, as this is used to provide targets for subject areas and for the placement of students into teaching groups. Good use is made of national and standardised test information to analyse the attainment of different year groups on entry. All subject leaders and teachers are provided with this information and, as the students progress through the school, it is supplemented with the end of Year 9 national test results and GCSE predicted grades. An improvement since the previous inspection are the annual reviews by subject leaders who are required to follow a common format when making presentations to the leadership team or governing body. Staff analyse results in terms of national data enabling them to make judgements in comparison with national

standards. The key strategy adopted since September 2002 is to 'tame the data' and it is working.

43. The use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning is satisfactory. The basis for the reviews by subject leaders and the leadership team is to identify strengths and weaknesses in order to raise levels of attainment. The outcomes, in terms of curriculum planning, in a minority of subjects are very good. For example, in mathematics, weaknesses in teaching strategies have been identified and a new scheme of work, for three tiers of ability in each year group, has been written and is improving teachers' lesson planning. In geography, the review has brought about a change in syllabus to meet the needs of the students. In other subject areas, assessment information is not yet having an impact on long-term curriculum planning although teachers adjust their teaching and learning strategies to meet short-term needs.
44. Subject areas have good procedures for monitoring and supporting students' academic progress. Students have regular end-of-module tests in most subjects, which are marked according to national standards in order to produce a National Curriculum level. This information, together with lesson objectives which are also levelled, displays on walls and corridors which also have levels, and teachers' willingness to state what is required by the student to improve attainment to a higher level, all support the students' academic progress. The science teachers have a wealth of data on tracking sheets for their groups, which is used effectively to ensure that each student shows gains in their level of attainment. The physical education staff are pioneering the use of sheets that can be read by the school's data management system. The sheets contain all the learning objectives and the students' performances are recorded against them. The information is analysed at the end of the year, shared with students and then passed to the next teacher ensuring continuity of the students' development. The tracking sheets in all subjects are used effectively at parents' meetings and to aid report writing, to inform parents of their child's strengths and weaknesses. In Year 11, approximately 30 students have been identified and are being supported by the year tutor team in order to raise their GCSE grades. The teaching of middle attaining students in single sex groups proved successful last year in science but not in mathematics.

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

45. The school works hard to encourage parents to take an interest in their children's education and to support the school. It keeps parents well informed about progress through very detailed and good quality end of year reports and at least one meeting each year. Years 7 and 10 have two meetings, so that teachers can report how students have settled into school, or how they are coping with GCSE work. Curriculum evenings are held to explain what is taught in different subjects and how; for example, mathematics, creative arts, reading and learning styles have all been recent topics. There are also informal opportunities to meet at concerts, performances and open days. Parents' views are canvassed informally on these occasions. Regular, interesting and informative newsletters include a contribution from each faculty and comments from students about their work and the activities. Letters are sent home if students have gained a merit certificate. Parents are also contacted if the school has a concern about a student. Teachers make themselves available to talk to parents at the earliest opportunity, when requested.
46. The Parent Teacher Association has recently renamed itself 'Wavelengths'. A small group of parents, with support from others at events such as car boot sales, raises useful sums of money and have paid for furnishings for the 'Blue Room', and other equipment for the school. Parents also repainted two classrooms. Some parents are very supportive of the school and make sure that their children attend regularly and do their homework. Other parents do not see the education of their children as a high priority and are not so supportive.

47. Only a small number of parents attended the meeting or returned questionnaires. A significant number of those had children in Year 7 and so had little first hand experience of the school to date. Parents are happy that they can approach the school easily and they feel that the school does encourage students to work hard, so their children make good progress. The inspection confirms that the school is approachable. Those students who are willing to work are encouraged and make good progress, but overall, inspectors judged that students make satisfactory progress. Parents express concern about behaviour and homework. The inspectors agree that these are aspects of its work, which the school could improve. A significant minority of parents feel that they are not well informed about their children's progress and that the school does not work closely with them. The inspectors disagree on these points. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and the school tries hard to work with parents and involve them in the life of the school. The special educational needs team depends on parental involvement for its successful outcomes. Communication with parents is a regular and an essential feature of its work, for example during the statutory annual reviews.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

48. The acting headteacher is a very good leader who has made significant improvements to the school since his temporary appointment at the beginning of term. The morale of the senior management team and staff in general is higher than might be expected in the circumstances of three headteachers in three years. There is a clear sense of purpose and a strong desire to establish a successful and well-managed school for the new headteacher to inherit in January 2003. The headteacher has tackled the responsibilities of his temporary leadership with sensitivity, diplomacy, clarity of focus and with significant vigour. Consequently, management at this stage of transition is good. The headteacher has a clear set of priorities for his time in post. These have been drawn up in consultation with the next headteacher, his senior management team and the governing body. He has established effective management structures to implement the main priorities and much success has been achieved in a short time. The headteacher is visible round the school, especially before and after school, and during breaks. This fosters a very orderly environment in which students behave well. The experienced members of the management team have modified areas of responsibility, which match their strengths and preferences. These new responsibilities have had a motivating impact on the team. The headteacher is valued and respected by governors and staff.
49. The senior management team meets regularly, both formally and informally, and has developed a clear set of targets for the term, as well as a medium and long term development plan. Management at head of department and pastoral staff level is satisfactory overall, but some, such as mathematics, science, art and design, geography, physical education and religious education, offer very good management. All departments have development plans, which have target dates for meeting objectives and criteria to measure success. The good management structure includes effective procedures to monitor whole school and departmental targets. The school makes good use of new technology, for example to monitor financial expenditure and to provide a wealth of data to assist teachers in their monitoring and review of student progress. There is a need, however, to ensure that the data analysis systems are extended to track all significant groups in the school, including, for example, students from ethnic minorities. The reorganisation of senior management has resulted in clearly defined job descriptions and line management responsibilities. The heads of year and heads of department regularly hold meetings to deal with administrative, organisational, curricular and pastoral issues. Middle managers also have opportunities to meet with the senior management team. Each department has a line manager from the senior management team. There is now a very good policy for the monitoring of teaching and learning by heads of department as a means of improving its quality and raising



attainment. The senior management team manages this well. Performance management has successfully been introduced with the support of teachers.

50. The new governing body is caring and well informed. Governors work in committees and have clearly designated responsibilities. They work very closely with the school and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Regular written briefings and oral presentations are made by staff to the full governing body on the achievements of specific departments. The governors are well briefed by the headteacher and involved at a strategic level in the formation of policy and financial planning. Some governors regularly visit the school to talk to senior staff and middle managers, or to see lessons. The governing body have ensured that an Internet safety policy has been developed and they monitor the school's policy on promoting racial equality. They do not, however, fulfil their statutory duties with regard to a daily act of collective worship and the cross-curricular teaching of ICT. The governing body fully shares the acting head teacher's priorities and plans.
51. The strategic use of resources is very well planned and managed. For example, the school has taken a decision to enhance the 'Laptops for Teachers' allocation to ensure that all curriculum leaders will benefit from high specification technology, thus extending their area's use of technology to support teaching and learning. The management team ensure detailed records of financial transactions are readily available for scrutiny. The principles of best value are very well applied. The governors and the head teacher together ensure rigorous monitoring of expenditure through comparison with the full range of available performance indicators and within the overall context of Hampshire's education development plan. The headteacher and the governors have devised several projected financial plans for the near future so that expenditure is appropriately balanced across the range of needs within the school. As a result, for example, expenditure on accommodation and on resources per student, will continue to rise closer to the county averages. The governors and headteacher have a clear vision of how their educational priorities, clearly established in the school's strategic development plan 2002-5, will be directly served through their prudent financial planning.
52. Staffing is currently good, with the vast majority of teaching delivered by specialist teachers. The appointment in September, of a chartered librarian is linked to the need to develop further the literacy requirements of the National Strategy for Key Stage 3. There is a full complement of support staff, who contribute widely to the success of the school. Where there are perceived weaknesses these are substantially because of the difficulty faced in recruiting suitable full time teachers, for example to the shortage areas of mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. Many staff have ensured a high level of knowledge and understanding of the examination requirements of their subjects through taking on additional responsibilities as subject examiners and a team leader for other examiners. A good programme of continuing professional development supports staff. This is very well managed by a member of the senior management team, alongside the very good arrangements made to support newly qualified teachers, students on Initial Teacher Training courses and teachers on the Graduate Teacher Programme.
53. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. Recent developments include reorganisation of classrooms to allow subjects to be housed in suites. This has had a positive impact on the quality of provision, for example in the efficient storage and deployment of resources. Many classrooms continue to be in need of some refurbishment. The planned building programme will upgrade the design and technology accommodation. Timetable blocking arrangements result in some classes taking place outside of specialist accommodation. For example, some science teaching takes place in humanities rooms, not in a laboratory. There is a need for additional covered areas for students in wet weather.

54. Resources are satisfactory overall. Departments have adequate resources for their daily teaching requirements. The new librarian has been active in promoting and using the Hampshire central schools library resources. Areas where a need for some development has been identified through the inspection, include library resources, such as for ICT and modern foreign languages, and consumable resources in science. The ratio of computers per student is significantly below recommended levels, which is having an impact on the amount they can be used in other subjects.
55. The learning support team is well managed. Following two terms during which the work of the team was co-ordinated by the senior teaching assistant, the current SENCO was appointed in September. She has properly judged the need to comply with the new Code of Practice as a priority. Teacher assistants are deployed following consultations with the senior management team and subject leaders. Moves are underway to ensure that each subject area has links with one teacher assistant to facilitate communication and continuity. IEPs are available for all teachers. The experienced team have a strong record of professional development and qualifications to inform their work. The SENCO has established an effective base on which to build. The need to refine the assessment of students on the register in order to track their progress better and review their provision is understood. She also understands the benefits to be gained from using the experience of the team to feed into the professional development of subject areas, for example working with teachers on appropriate ways in which the curriculum and curriculum resources can be adapted and re-shaped to be more responsive to the needs of individual students. There is a strong base here on which to build.
56. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection and the overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory, offering satisfactory value for money. The trend of improvement has not been consistent and, in recent years, the school has faced a number of challenges, including considerable staff turnover. Recent progress has been rapid, reflecting the very good leadership offered by the acting headteacher and the school now has a solid foundation for its future development.

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

- a. Increase the use students make of ICT skills in all their subjects to aid learning and encourage further study. Opportunities for using ICT should be addressed in all departmental schemes of work and computers should be more easily accessed for use in lessons.  
*(Paragraphs: 24, 25, 50, 54, 64, 80, 90, 105, 108, 109, 115, 123, 125, 127, 128, 131, 132, 135 and 141).*
- b. Raise standards of literacy, especially writing skills in most subjects to improve further the standards attained by all students. All departments and teachers should focus more on literacy development in their planning and emphasis particularly tasks that involve writing in depth.  
*(Paragraphs: 4, 6, 23, 60, 61, 63, 64, 65, 69, 74, 86, 88, 95, 105, 112, 118, 120, 127, 129, 130, 140, 144 and 145).*
- c. Improve the quality of homework and its marking, making sure it is used to consolidate what has been learnt in class and extend students' understanding, and that it is marked regularly and consistently.  
*(Paragraphs: 9, 15, 23, 63, 127, 132 and 140).*
- d. Encourage consistency of expectations amongst both staff and students, of attitudes, quality of behaviour in lessons and the quality of presentation of work.

*(Paragraphs: 9, 10, 12, 18, 40, 61, 63, 74, 75, 77, 88, 89, 127, 130, 131, 134, and 144).*

In addition to the main issues for improvement above, the governors and the school should consider addressing the following minor issues in their development plan:

- Encourage the support of parents in raising the levels of recorded attendance and reducing the levels of unauthorised absence.  
*(Paragraphs: 3, 8, 14, 39 and 46).*
- Provide a daily act of collective worship.  
*(Paragraphs: 33 and 50).*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	156
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	83

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	34	68	39	9	0	1
Percentage	3.2	21.8	43.6	25	5.8	0	0.6

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]*

### *Information about the school's students*

<b>Students on the school's roll</b>	Y7 – Y11
Number of students on the school's roll	928
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	125

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y 7 – Y 11
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	252

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	14

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	42
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	48

### *Attendance*

**Authorised absence**

**Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	8.5
National comparative data	8.1

	%
School data	3.0
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	92	107	199

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	37	51	55
	Girls	64	61	69
	Total	101	112	124
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	51 [73]	56 [60]	63 [50]
	National	64 [63]	66 [65]	66 [59]
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	18 [23]	30 [30]	28 [18]
	National	31 [28]	43 [42]	34 [30]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	46	49	52
	Girls	75	65	72
	Total	121	114	124
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	61 [65]	58 [63]	63 [57]
	National	65 [64]	68 [66]	64 [62]
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	15 [20]	35 [33]	23 [26]
	National	31 [31]	42 [39]	33 [29]

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

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

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	102	97	199

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	42	94	98
	Girls	43	93	95
	Total	85	187	193
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	43 [42]	94 [89]	97 [98]
	National	48 [47]	91 [91]	96 [96]

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

GCSE results	GCSE point score
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Average point score per pupil	School	36.9 [39]
	National	39.0 [38.4]

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those students who achieved all those they studied	School	0	n/a
	National		n/a

### *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
876	93	5
0	0	0
4	1	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
6	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	1	0
1	0	0
7	0	0
0	0	0
32	0	0

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

### *Teachers and classes*

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	54
Number of students per qualified teacher	17.2

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	356

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11**

### *Financial information*

Financial year	2001 -2002
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	£
Total income	2.97m
Total expenditure	2.97m
Expenditure per pupil	2917

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.1
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**Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	22.04
Key Stage 4	21.45

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Balance brought forward from previous year	24048
Balance carried forward to next year	38042

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	19
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	21

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
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

962

Number of questionnaires returned

132

#### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	28	64	6	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	36	55	2	3	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	14	48	23	3	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	53	17	5	2
The teaching is good.	16	65	6	1	11
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	12	47	28	5	8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	38	55	5	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	51	7	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	17	44	25	6	8
The school is well led and managed.	11	52	11	5	20
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	22	62	7	3	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	52	10	5	11

### ***Other issues raised by parents***



A small minority of parents expressed concern about the lack of lockers for students and the amount of books and other equipment that their children had to carry to and from school. The lack of lockers also means that heavy loads have often to be carried as students move between lessons. Some adverse comments were also made about the unsatisfactory condition of the students' toilets.

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **ENGLISH**

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

#### **Strengths**

- The successful implementation of the Key Stage 3 Strategy has helped to raise standards in Years 7 to 9.
- Much teaching is good, with purposeful oral activities that interest the students.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge that they share with their classes.
- Students in some classes work hard and are interested in their learning.
- Many students do well in drama.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Students' skills in sustained, independent writing and the presentation of their written work.
- The use of the library and ICT in teaching and learning within English.
- Girls' results in national tests and examinations.

57. Overall results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 were close to the national average in 2002, having risen in the last few years. However, in 2002 the percentage gaining the expected level 5 or higher was below the national average, as was the percentage gaining level 6 or higher. In 2001, the overall results were below average. Although the girls' results were higher than the boys', the gap between them was narrower than nationally in 2001 and previous years.
58. In GCSE, results have also risen. In 2002, the results were below the national average in English (48% gained grade C or higher, compared to 60% nationally), with the boys' results being similar to those for boys nationally whereas the girls' results were below the national average. In English literature, the results at grade C or higher were broadly average, with the boys' results being the same as the national picture but the girls' results being considerably lower than for girls nationally. In both subjects, the results at A\* to G were similar to those nationally.
59. Standards of attainment in the lessons and work seen during the inspection are similar to the results. Standards are average at the end of Year 9 and broadly average in GCSE work in Year 11. As in the GCSE results, the standard of work of boys and girls is similar, whereas nationally girls do better than boys. Students' attainment on entry to Year 7 was average for those students now in Years 7 to 9, but below average in Years 10 and 11. In relation to this starting point, students' achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 to 11.
60. Students do best in speaking and listening. They listen attentively to teachers' discussion of issues of interest to them. For example, students in a Year 7 class were fascinated by their teacher's story from his childhood and were keen to contribute their own stories. In whole-class discussion led by the teacher, students sometimes showed good understanding of texts they are studying. For example, Year 10 students showed good insight when analysing the opening of a film, particularly when the teacher directed questions to particular students. Some students enjoy reading widely, but the majority are not confident independent readers. Recognising this weakness, the department recently introduced the use of booklets in which students record their independent reading, and are encouraged to tackle a wider range of texts. The initiative is a good one, but it has not been implemented long enough to raise standards in reading, which are below average.

61. Students do least well in the area of writing, which are below average. The sample of work provided by the school showed that students have not been expected to do enough writing at length, although they have done quite a lot of short tasks. Standards of accuracy and presentation in writing are too low. A minority present their written coursework neatly and carefully, with correct use of formal Standard English, but many students write colloquially. By Year 9, some higher-attaining students have learned to organise essays into coherent paragraphs and to integrate quotations and other evidence from a text into their answer. In GCSE work, the higher-attaining students write at length in their coursework essays, having been carefully prepared for this work through a sequence of lessons. However, the work of lower-attaining and special educational needs students is often very brief, with weak spelling, punctuation and grammar.
62. In the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching and learning were good. Strengths included the good relationships between teachers and students, firm and effective management of lesson activities, and plenty of praise which rewarded right answers and encouraged students to contribute to lessons. The lessons were quiet and orderly. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they enjoyed sharing with their classes. Sometimes, the teachers' enthusiasm led to students gaining a deep understanding of a text, as when a Year 10 class explored the character of Portia from 'The Merchant of Venice'. The teacher anticipated the students' difficulties with the vocabulary of the text, and gave very good guidance that prepared the students well for writing a coursework essay on the topic.
63. Other evidence, including the sample of written work, showed that teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers have not done enough to promote higher standards in written work. Some marking is detailed and guides students on what to do next, but much is too brief and uninformative. Challenging homework is not set regularly enough, including for written work. In some lessons observed, the teacher talked too much and gave the students too few opportunities for active learning. For example, the teacher accepted brief responses to questions and did not challenge students to explain their reasons for the answer. This led to many in the class listening passively and not doing enough thinking and independent work. Additionally, in some lessons, students were unenthusiastic about learning, particularly when the work involved writing; their lack of motivation slowed the pace of the lesson despite the teacher's best efforts to engage their interest and effort.
64. The head of department has been successful in building a team of English teachers who work well together. He managed the introduction of the Key Stage 3 Strategy well, and has brought about a rise in results through improving the consistency and effectiveness of teaching. Gifted and talented students are given good opportunities to take an extra course in English, taught after school. The department has a good range of assessment information, which is used to help raise standards by identifying students who are under-performing so that they can have extra attention. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met, though with insufficient attention to the areas of writing, the use of the library to extend independent research and literacy skills and the use of ICT within English. The department's improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are better in Years 7 to 9 than at the time of the last inspection, whereas students' overall attainment and progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing are similar to those reported in 1997.

### **Literacy**

65. Literacy difficulties affect students' learning and the standards they attain in English and in many other subjects. Some students are confident and articulate orally, and have a wide vocabulary that enables them to express themselves clearly, confidently and well. However, in most classes over half the group has a limited vocabulary that affects their ability to express themselves well

in formal written tasks, and at times makes it difficult for them to read independently with understanding. Students' interest and participation are usually higher in oral activities than when the work involves writing, and few take care over the presentation of their written work. Teachers do too little teaching of the skills involved in writing effectively, which has contributed to the students in all subjects not doing well enough in written work. The promotion of literacy skills is unsatisfactory.

### **Drama**

66. Drama is taught once a week in Years 7 to 9, and as a GCSE option in Years 10 and 11. Take-up at GCSE has varied depending on which other subjects students can choose instead, but is generally higher than nationally and the subject is increasingly popular. Although GCSE results in drama have been below the national average, this represents good achievement in relation to students' attainment at the start of the course. In particular, many students' difficulties with the written element of the course have lowered the standard they attain by the end of Year 11.
67. The lessons observed during the inspection were well planned and taught, with a good variety of activities that focused on developing particular drama skills and techniques. The students were managed firmly. Occasional silly behaviour was dealt with successfully and the teacher worked hard to overcome some students' lack of confidence and motivation. For example, a Year 10 class who were initially reluctant to take seriously an activity that introduced them to ideas of status and relationships between characters were enabled to apply this to a script reading from 'The Crucible'. The work was challenging, especially for those who have difficulty in reading, but the teacher gave much good advice that the class appreciated. When students were more co-operative, the learning proceeded at a faster rate, as when a Year 9 class worked on creating a series of still images that told the story of Sweeney Todd. Although initially disappointed to be focusing on this rather than acting a scene, by the end of the lesson the groups had made very good gains in their skills and appreciated the atmosphere created by the introduction of lighting.
68. The drama scheme of work is very carefully planned to build students' knowledge and skills systematically from year to year; this contributes to the success of the department. Drama makes a very good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the lesson content, performances and theatre visits, the way co-operative work is promoted in lessons and the respect shown to individuals' work. The subject is well led and managed.

### **Key Stage 3 Strategy**

69. The introduction of the Key Stage 3 Strategy has been managed well. The curriculum for students in Years 7 to 9 is carefully focused on covering all the objectives in the Strategy planning and is supported by a good range of resources developed by the department. The consistency of teaching in Years 7 to 9 has improved as a result of this work. Teachers generally follow the three-part structure recommended by the Strategy, with an introductory activity followed by a main task and a final review of the work. The students feel that the approach builds appropriately on their work in Year 6 and that the work is suitably challenging, though some feel that they could be encouraged to do more work in the time available in lessons. A suitably wide range of topics is covered, using texts that are of interest to most of the students. However, the emphasis on teaching specific skills and doing very short pieces of writing has meant that students have been given too few opportunities for sustained, independent writing in which they apply what they have been taught and develop their skills in extended writing. This shortcoming is adversely affecting standards of work in many subjects. Currently the effectiveness of the strategy is satisfactory.

70. The students who are taught 'catch-up' sessions are selected carefully, based on an analysis of their results at the end of Year 6 and ensuring that students are not withdrawn for both English and mathematics sessions. The students have found the extra support helpful and departmental records show that they have made good gains in their knowledge and skills.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths

- The management of the department is very good.
- New schemes of work meet the requirements of the Key Stage 3 National Mathematics Strategy; they provide a good framework for staff to improve standards of teaching and learning.
- Assessment information, which is carefully analysed to support students' learning.

### Areas for improvement

- Improve the amount and quality of written work.
- Make more use of the school's ICT facilities to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.
- Provide more opportunities where girls can feel comfortable participating in discussions.

71. On entry to the school attainment is in line with national standards. The standards attained in the 2002 National Curriculum tests by Year 9 students are below both national averages and those of similar schools. The proportions of students attaining level 5 and level 6 have not risen significantly since the previous inspection. The difference between the school's average points score and the national average has worsened since 1998, more for girls than for boys. This is unsatisfactory achievement over time.
72. At GCSE in 2002, standards were generally below the national average. The average points score was below the national figure. Students did less well in mathematics than in many of the other subjects they took. Boys' attainment for the last two years, in terms of those gaining A\*-C grades is much closer to the national average than that of the girls'. Nevertheless, this is satisfactory achievement given that their attainment at the end of Year 9 in National Curriculum tests was below average. The proportion of all students gaining A\*-G grades since the previous inspection has been consistently above national average.
73. Work seen during the inspection confirms that standards are below average in both Year 9 and Year 11. A contributory factor of this overall unsatisfactory achievement is the lack of continuity of teaching caused by the unfortunate inability to attract mathematics teachers despite all the school's efforts. Inspection evidence shows that achievement in higher attaining groups is at least satisfactory.
74. Although, at present, standards in Year 9 are below average, most students are making sufficient progress in lessons to allow for satisfactory achievement over time, given a sustained effort and an improvement in the quality of their written work. The department's set-by-set analysis identifies underachievement by girls and investigations are underway to find the reasons why and then to rectify the situation. Higher attaining students were able to tabulate data and calculate the mean of the grouped data. However, they showed weaknesses in the quality of the presentation and their spelling. The middle ability students demonstrated similar shortcomings whilst learning about algebraic inequalities; spelt 'inner quality'. Lower attaining students, all with special educational needs, needed constant help from the two teachers and the teaching assistant when calculating the perimeter and area of a floor of a bedroom that they had designed earlier. Their

- social skills are poor and the staff work very hard to keep them on task. The achievement of these particular Year 9 students is satisfactory.
75. Current achievement by students in Year 11 is variable. Whilst the higher attaining classes are making good progress towards good GCSE grades, some students in lower ability classes are disenchanted. The higher attainers showed skill and enthusiasm with their algebraic tasks when trying a variety of strategies to find the solutions to quadratic equations. Middle attaining students faced additional problems when trying to solve linear equations as their numeracy skills were unsatisfactory. More than half of the small group of low attaining students is able to estimate accurately the bearings of a ship from a lighthouse. However, a small minority shows little inclination to apply themselves to the task. Their attempts to disrupt the observed lesson were minimised by the actions taken by their experienced teacher. The GCSE course they are following does not meet their needs and, hence, achievement at the end of Year 11 of students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Achievement by students for whom English is an additional language is very good. For example the few students in top set Year 11, who have only been in the country for a short time, made good progress in trigonometry. Their attainment is above average.
76. Attitudes overall are good. Higher attaining students are keen to share and develop their knowledge. A boy in Year 8 said 'I challenge that answer' and then proceeded to give a detailed mathematical argument to support his case when discussing positive/negative correlation for sets of data. Girls are less inclined to participate than boys but usually do so under teachers' guidance. Middle and lower attaining girls will gossip if allowed to do so. Relationships are generally good and students are appreciative of the teachers' efforts to improve their learning, typified by an appreciative class who ended the lesson with the accurate, but not grammatical, comment: 'Well done miss! You done well'.
77. Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory, with a good proportion of good or very good teaching and learning. A small amount of unsatisfactory teaching and an instance of very poor teaching were seen. In general, teachers have a good knowledge of the subject. In the best lessons, there is high level planning and lessons are delivered with drive and enthusiasm ensuring that all students are challenged and motivated, thus building their own enthusiasm and confidence. All students use the correct mathematical terminology during oral work, which often gives the impression that students are more capable than their written work would indicate. The standard of presentation in the majority of books seen is unsatisfactory, yet could be improved. Teachers do not stress the importance of the communication of written solutions. Insufficient emphasis is given to students structuring their solutions, especially as they are quite content to write just answers and some give up too easily when the problem involves more than one calculation. Teachers rarely comment on the quality of presentation when marking the twice-weekly homeworks. The outcome is that students do not take a pride in their work, develop good practice, and are not building up learning resources for themselves.
78. Overall, the leadership of the department is very good. The subject leader, new since the last inspection, is dedicated and successful in giving the department a clear sense of direction, through her own actions, to provide opportunities for all the students to improve their learning. A very detailed analysis of examination data, together with the monitoring of colleague's work, mean that strengths and weaknesses are identified and remedial action is taken. Much of this analysis is being used to produce new very good schemes of work, which have fully incorporated the Key Stage 3 National Mathematics Strategy. The department has come together as a team partly as a result of the training and group planning sessions, which have benefited from the advice and support of the LEA mathematics advisor and the numeracy co-ordinator. The sharing of ideas and good practice has also been incorporated within the schemes of work. The staff

handbook is another indication of how the sharing of strategies and policies is important to the consistency of approach within the department. Colleagues are benefiting from the opportunities afforded by paired observations as well as the observations by the subject leader. Assessment information is being refined through experience, enabling both students and their teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses.

79. Unfortunately, because of a lack of finance, the 2002 summer school was cancelled. The summer school in 2001, part of the student 'catch-up' programme, was highly successful, building students' confidence and developing skills in different environments. This enabled 20 students to begin the new academic year looking forward to their mathematics lessons in their new school. It also proved to be an inspirational event for the member of staff responsible, giving an opportunity to discover his organisational skills.
80. Time to complete the Year 7 syllabus has proved to be inadequate. Students have missed valuable opportunities to enhance their learning of mathematics through the use of computers. The department has a valuable ICT resource, which is underused, partly because of the lack of appropriate software. Graphic calculators are used effectively and the over-reliance on calculators seen at the previous inspection is not evident. However, the department has insufficient whiteboards and calculators to enhance teaching and learning.
81. Staffing reflects the national situation, which, as in many parts of the country, is unsatisfactory. The school is doing its very best to solve this issue in order to appoint appropriately qualified teachers. The department is benefiting from its participation in the Initial Teacher Training scheme with local universities. It has gained a newly qualified teacher from the scheme who continues to be impressed by the level of support provided by the subject leader and her colleagues. The effect of teacher absences on the students' learning has been significantly reduced by the subject leader re-writing timetables, preparing lessons and by departmental staff teaching additional classes.
82. The improvement since the previous inspection is good. Teaching and learning has been enhanced through improved planning, the adoption of the three-phase lesson and regular end of module assessment which identifies strengths and weaknesses, each of which are addressed by teachers and students. Teachers' observations and participation in feeder schools' lessons has improved students' transition to the school. Regular professional development has enabled teachers to widen their expertise and understanding, for example to become more confident in using graphic calculators and computers to enhance their teaching. Students have benefited from the booster classes during Year 9, participating in the Mathematics Challenge competitions and opportunities to extend the gifted and talented in each year. For example, Year 11 prepare for GCSE statistics alongside their GCSE mathematics.

### **Numeracy**

83. The standard of numeracy is satisfactory and sufficient to meet the standards required in most subjects. All staff identified strategies to enhance numeracy within their subjects, following their participation in a carousel of numerical experiences during a whole day's training in April 2002. A draft policy has been written but, as yet, has to be fully implemented and evaluated. As students in Years 7 to 9 are much more used to responding to teachers' questions of 'how' or 'why' as part of the implementation of the Key Stage 3 National Mathematics Strategy, their numeracy skills are usually better than those of older students. The science teachers are reliant on the mathematics department to develop students' numerical skills. However, lower attaining Year 9 students were good at handling data on smoking, heart disease, lung cancer and accidents during a health-related study in science. Students preparing for GCSE are meeting the required

standards as their graphs are plotted well and they understand lines of best fit. Similarly, in geography, students possess the necessary skills to collect and analyse data and then represent it accurately in a variety of appropriate ways as part of their GCSE coursework. During a fitness test in physical education, a student calculated very quickly, without being asked, the number of laps required to run a mile when the teacher said that a lap was 270 yards.

### **Key Stage 3 National Mathematics Strategy**

84. The introduction of this Strategy has been managed well. Staff are enthusiastic and their training and experience in implementing aspects of the new strategy is having a good effect throughout the school. All lessons have a clear structure and the learning objectives are shared with each set of students. This enables students to know what they are expected to do and the level at which they are working. The head of department ensures that the Key Stage 3 National Mathematics Strategy action plan is monitored closely. The Year 7 'catch up' lessons are very good as they enable students to gain in confidence, enthusiasm and attainment through the sharing of ideas with each other, the teacher and teaching assistant. Students benefit from and enjoy the opportunities to enhance their numerical skills by using carefully chosen interactive mathematical games on the computer. The Strategy is insufficiently funded to provide students with up-to-date textbooks, in order for them to take a book home to complete their homework.

## **SCIENCE**

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

### **Strengths**

- Good achievement, especially by the more able and by boys.
- Some very good teaching and literacy development.
- Very good processes for assessing and monitoring learning.
- Very good leadership of the department.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Disseminate to all teachers the very good behaviour management and literacy teaching at the core of the department.
- Improve resources and their deployment, particularly in ICT.

85. Results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were at the national average for the target level 5+ and above. Results have improved over the past three years. Boys did better than girls and were well above the national average. GCSE results in 2001 were at the national average. All students studied double science. Results in 2002 dipped slightly; the boys were above average but the overall figure was slightly below. Boys' and girls' results are in line with all other subjects they take, which is a better picture than the other core subjects. The trend in results since the last inspection has risen to meet national expectations.
86. Standards of work seen in lessons and work samples meet expectations in Years 7, 8 and 9. By Year 9, students have developed investigation skills such as very good graphical and analytic work in the above average sample. There is sound knowledge and understanding across the topics covered. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory, particularly in graphical work. Standards of literacy are below average overall, but there are examples of more detailed writing in the higher sets. In Years 10 and 11 standards also meet expectations. In Year 11 there is evidence of independent writing, by above average students, for example on respiration and ecology. The coursework of more able students is above average, for example on the analysis and evaluation of phototropism experiments. Average and below average students make more use of short answers and matching exercises but the detailed marking holds up the standards of students with special educational needs so that they make satisfactory progress in spite of their lack of literacy skills.



87. On entry, the cohort that took Year 9 tests in 2002 was below average. By the end of Year 9, most groups show added value, with good progress made by more able students, by boys, by students in single sex sets (boys and girls) and in sets taught by the strongest teachers. Progress of girls and students taught by temporary teachers was less strong. Overall students came in below the national average but met it by the end of Year 9. This good achievement is maintained in Years 10 and 11. The cohort, which was below average at Year 9 (particularly the girls) broadly met national expectations at GCSE. Achievement overall is, therefore, good.
88. Teaching and learning overall are good. There are many very good points. Two thirds of lessons seen were good or very good. Teacher knowledge and understanding are good. The teaching methods of the best teachers promoted active learning and this led to very good personal development and independent work by students. The pace of lessons was in general good and in some cases very good, such as work on respiration in a Year 9 lower set. Learning was very well promoted by the literacy emphasis (such as the quality of independent note taking on microbes in Year 11) and extended writing was observed in displays and top set work samples. Laboratory skills were well taught and led to very good cooperation, for example in well-contextualised work on food and energy in Year 8 and chemical reactions in Year 11. The small number of minority ethnic students are well integrated. Students with special educational needs made good progress in lessons, for example a lower attaining set working on data related to smoking and health. However, their learning and their eventual results are impaired by the very high absentee rates; some students not even turning up for their examinations in 2002. In a small number of cases, learning was impeded by some weaknesses in curbing the immature behaviour of a minority of students on the part of a few teachers. In these cases planning was less good, instructions less clear and approaches to literacy less developed. The planned approaches to literacy teaching taken by the best teachers need to be extended across the department and incorporated in the schemes of work.
89. Attitudes and behaviour overall are satisfactory. In the majority of cases, behaviour management by the teachers is good or very good. In most classes, the pace of work was good. In addition, good behaviour is fostered by the careful marking and target setting, which touches on attitudinal and behavioural issues, as well as on learning. There is a minority of students who are disruptive and cheeky. This is particularly so in the lower school, though traces persist in some Year 10 sets. A minority of teachers implement the departmental teaching strategy but are less clear and less good at spotting when it needs to be backed up by a stronger line on unacceptable behaviour. The department makes a good contribution to personal development and social and moral education because the teachers are good role models and relationships are good. Citizenship is referenced in lesson planning but is at the very early stages of development.
90. The curriculum is satisfactory in all years but is still developing, with insufficient emphasis on methods of promoting literacy. ICT needs to be thoroughly audited and embedded in the schemes of work. The provision for literacy development is very good in the hands of a core of very good teachers. They use insightful methods of teaching discussion skills, extracting meaning from text and extended writing to a range of audiences. There has also been a recent development of ICT. Emphasis on numeracy skills is sound and meets the needs of the GCSE syllabus, with a better than average emphasis on graphical work. Extra-curricular provision is good. Very good attitudes were shown in the lower school science club and upper school healthy eating group. Outside links, for example with Havant College, are fruitful.
91. Assessment is very good. The department consistently follows a model that is based on setting individual learning goals. The response to this is good, with better standards of presentation than would be expected from the students' levels of literacy. The department has detailed assessment

information, which keeps track of individuals, classes and boys and girls. Value added information is used for monitoring and prior attainment for target setting. Students have a very good knowledge of their own performance and the department makes very good use of student self-assessment as part of the extensive guidance on revision techniques. Information is used to modify the curriculum through the setting process and recent experimenting with single sex sets has had a well monitored positive impact on the learning of both girls and boys. Communication with parents is good.

92. The educational leadership of the department is very good. Management overall is good. The department as a whole is committed, hard working, broadly consistent on teaching and learning strategies, very good on monitoring and making use of information and committed to professional development. Work on improving the curriculum is in progress. Technicians work extremely hard and make creative contributions such as excellent anatomical and other models. However, a shortage of technician time and depreciation in equipment does have a negative impact on learning in some lessons. New technology is used effectively for administration, monitoring and producing teaching materials. Book resources in the library are satisfactory and are supplemented by departmental books and the School Library Service. In the previous report the department was described as having many strengths. Standards dipped subsequently, exacerbated by a staffing crisis. They are now back on course. Thus, improvement can be described as satisfactory.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

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

### **Strengths**

- Standards of practical work are high.
- Teaching is consistently good, including excellent assessment techniques.
- Leadership and management of the department is very good.
- Students have a very strong commitment and spend much of their free time on the subject.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Sketchbooks could be better used by students to plan and develop their work independently.
- Students' written evaluations of work and research could be more detailed and extensive.

93. Year 9 assessments in 2001 were above the national expectation and they improved in 2002. GCSE results in 2001 were above the national average. A quarter of all students gained grade A\* or A, which is very high. More boys than girls took art. Girls' results were better than boys reflecting the national difference. Students' results were significantly higher in art than their other subjects. Results improved further in 2002. Talented students are identified and take GCSE in one year. Some younger students entered early for GCSE gained grades A\* or A.
94. Standards seen support the good results. Standards are above average throughout the school; this represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. By the end of Year 9, students' practical work shows a good acquisition of skills. Girls generally operate at a higher level than boys with a good level of drawing derived from careful observation. Lower attaining students do well, but rely heavily on guidance from the teachers. Students learn about artists and art movements and make regular reference to them in their own work. In a Year 7 class, students were painting in swirls and broken lines in the fashion of Van Gogh and learning about the effect of vibrant colours. Year 8 students were painting their papier mache masks in styles of Picasso, Van Gogh or Lichtenstein. Year 9 students showed very good use of graphics and ICT skills in designing the lettering for shop signs; a project sponsored in part by a local company.

Achievement from Year 7 to Year 9 is good as students build on skills learned. More able students, in particular, rise to the high challenges set, but all students develop confidence.

95. By Year 11, standards are well above average. Many students produce work of a mature quality through their own hard work and encouragement from their teachers. Lower attaining students and those with special educational needs do well because each student is treated as an individual. Students work in 2D and 3D and on large and small scales. Carvings in breeze blocks by Year 11, based on Aztec and Aboriginal designs, introduced an interesting multi-cultural element into the work. However, individual response in Year 10 and 11 is limited to the higher attaining students. Other students are over-dependent on teacher direction. Students' evaluation of their work is good orally. There are regular opportunities for students to reflect on and admire the work of artists as well as work produced by the class. However, in spite of an emphasis on good literacy by teachers, students do not engage sufficiently in written planning, evaluation or annotation of work. There is an inconsistent use of sketchbooks to explore individual ideas and the possibilities of different materials. Nevertheless, achievement through Years 10 and 11 is very good, particularly in practical work.
96. Attitudes to the subject are good. Students like art. They are motivated by their teachers to succeed and spend much of their free time at their work. They are further encouraged to attend art clubs run by the teachers at lunchtime and after school. In addition, many students attend the holiday art clubs organised by the department as they approach their GCSE examinations. Behaviour is generally good. Students respect their teachers and treat their own and others' work with care. Opportunities are available for students to take responsibility in the studios and relationships are good.
97. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in Years 10 and 11. Strategies have improved since the last inspection. The range of teacher expertise is a strength, allowing students to learn to work in many different media. Activities are well balanced. This is a result of the thought that the teaching team puts into planning and the very good schemes of work, which have been thoroughly revised and improved since the last inspection. Teachers explain the lesson objectives, including important or new art vocabulary. When students write down the objectives and add their own outcomes, it helps their learning and enables them to track their own progress. In turn, this supports the excellent and well-implemented assessment procedures. Students know how well they are doing because all classwork and homework are carefully marked. Teachers manage students well; it is to their credit that they avert potential bad behaviour with good humour and a contagious enthusiasm for the subject.
98. Planned and incidental use of ICT is improving and, with the inclusion of an ICT suite in the new art area, access to computers will be easier. The school enters students' work for local and national competitions and many win prizes. Invitations are extended to local primary schools to view the very good exhibition of GCSE work. This adds community recognition to the good work and high standards achieved by the students.
99. Management and leadership are very good. Organisation and administration are excellent, evident in the high quality departmental handbook. Teaching is very well monitored and good practice shared. This enables less experienced teachers to learn effective strategies in student management. The emphasis on improving GCSE grades of an increasing number of students, including those especially gifted in the subject, is proving successful. The department's development plan is forward looking. It offers very clear direction and promotes an outstanding contribution to the creative life of the school. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

## CITIZENSHIP

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

### Strengths

- The contribution made by the Year 8 'Activ8' programme.
- The quality of planning for the development of the subject.

### Areas for improvement

- Ensure that all subjects identify how they can successfully foster citizenship in their teaching.

100. The school is at the early stages of implementing the statutory requirements for citizenship. The school's management team has a vision of citizenship as part of the school's ethos, to be taught through existing subjects and activities and involving everyone in the school. An audit of provision has been undertaken and the school is aware of where improvements in provision are required. At present, provision is uneven across the curriculum, though some subjects, such as art, geography, history, religious education and PSHE, make a strong and significant contribution to citizenship. Some very good contributions are also made through the school's extra-curricular programme; a very good example is the Year 8 'Activ8' programme, where students are producing their own newsletter.

101. The citizenship theme of participation and responsibility is well established through year and school councils, the prefect system and with students helping at parents' evenings. The contribution of the subject to students' personal development is good. All students have opportunities to help others through charity work, such as the school's harvest festival celebrations. In PSHE lessons, students are encouraged to participate in decision making processes. Students also learn that rules exist to protect individuals, especially the vulnerable, and contribute to establishing an orderly community. Honesty and trust are also promoted in PSHE lessons and opportunities to exercise individual rights and responsibilities are offered to all students. For example, in a Year 8 PSHE lesson students agreed with their teacher that confidentiality should be respected and this enabled students to discuss the issue of bullying openly and with confidence and trust. In an effective Year 9 assembly, issues about waste recycling were explored. This discussion was organised by five school council members and included presentations by students, staff and a visitor to the school. These presentations succeeded in showing how responsible attitudes and behaviour can have an impact on the quality of life for many people.

102. The introduction of citizenship is being managed well and is building on the school's strengths in care, PSHE and religious education. Appropriate resources are being developed and there is a good selection of suitable materials in the library. Planning is good, with clear priorities for development for the next few years.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- The good quality of teaching, which has improved since the last inspection.
- Good relationships between staff and students, contributing to good learning.
- The range of well attended extra-curricular activities.
- Success in national competitions.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards of analysis, evaluation and presentation by students are not high enough in Years 10 and 11.

- The curriculum needs to meet the needs of all students and ensure more use of ICT.

103. The most recent results at GCSE show an improvement in the proportion of students attaining the higher grades A\*-C over those obtained in 2001. However, results remain below the national average overall. Results in 2001 were below the national average at grades A\*-C but in line with the results for students achieving A\*-G grades. In both years, boys performed significantly less well than girls. Girls' performance, though slightly lower than other girls nationally, is significantly better in design and technology than in many other subjects in the school.
104. Standards by the end of Year 9, based on teacher assessments, are in line with national expectations and students are achieving appropriately. Students have access to a broad design and technology curriculum. They are able to carry out simple analysis of needs, can choose an idea for development using appropriate criteria and present their ideas simply and effectively. In one Year 9 class, students demonstrated their ability to think very creatively when presented with a mechanical problem to create a "Heath Robinson" device. In this class, students worked with enthusiasm in groups, to develop and present a range of innovative ideas based on well known mechanical principles. Groups of students were then able to explain their ideas to the whole class using specialist vocabulary and clearly illustrated ideas. Textile technology has been reintroduced to the curriculum this year and, though standards are currently below expectations, they are rising rapidly through enthusiastically taught lessons.
105. Work seen in class and samples of work indicate that standards for current Year 10 and 11 students are also below national expectations. Weaknesses for a significant minority of students are their inability to write critically about their design ideas and to present their work effectively. This is particularly the case for boys, whose work is generally less well considered and presented. Some design folios are of a very high quality, well illustrated with thoughtful written analysis. In many of these, students have used word processing effectively to enhance the presentation and to enable them to draft and modify written work to make analysis more effective. Most of this is carried out using home computers. Insufficient opportunities are currently provided for the planned use of ICT in school and this has a negative impact on standards, particularly for those students who do not have computers at home. In a Year 11 resistant materials class, students' learning was slowed by their poor grasp of the practical skills needed to complete their design ideas. In this class, the poor quality of the accommodation also hampered their access to equipment. The school, supported by the local education authority has well-advanced plans to improve design and technology resources and accommodation.
106. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Recent improvement is evident in students' work. Particular strengths in all lessons are teachers' good subject expertise, use of well-planned activities and high expectations for behaviour and outcomes. In the very good and excellent lessons, teachers used a range of challenging activities to maintain students' concentration and keep a brisk pace to learning using probing questions, which encouraged students to provide extended answers. In the many good and very good lessons students' concentration and learning were high and they made good progress. In the lessons where teaching was satisfactory, pace was noticeably slower, activities less challenging and the use of questions less effective. The accommodation for design and technology generally is unsatisfactory. This has been recognised and is due to be improved. Teachers work hard to overcome many of the difficulties posed by this weakness by enhancing the quality of display to provide stimulating and interesting learning environments. Teachers provide regular feedback on the quality of students' work. This gives them a clear view of what they are achieving and steps for improvement. Teachers use the examination marking criteria effectively and students are clear about how their work is

evaluated. This enables them to improve their work in line with the expectations set by the examination boards.

107. Relationships between teachers and students are good and support students in approaching their work with confidence and enthusiasm. For example, in food technology, deficiencies in accommodation make the learning extremely difficult to manage successfully but the teacher's high expectations and students' willingness to co-operate ensure a safe and efficient learning environment and standards are not compromised. In many lessons, students were encouraged to work together in groups. Where this happened students worked co-operatively, discussions were lively and well focused on the learning. In all classes students took responsibility for clearing their work areas at the end of lessons with little prompting from teachers. Opportunities for collaborative work helped students to develop their social skills and their willingness to take on responsibility. This indicates they are developing responsible attitudes.
108. The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. Good opportunities are provided for students to participate in after school clubs and in national competitions, with successful results at times. Opportunities are provided for students to use ICT in their work, but this is insufficient to make a real impact on standards for all students. Too little use is made of the Internet for research purposes, word processing is not used enough to enhance the quality of writing, and the use of computers to make and design products is mainly demonstrated by teachers. Some teaching is challenging enough to help the most gifted and talented students to achieve in line with their potential but there is not a departmental approach to this to ensure all teachers take their needs into account in their planning. The department does not have agreed procedures in place to help those who find writing difficult. The provision of books for design and technology in the library is satisfactory overall, though more information books on interior design would enhance one of the units of work in the GCSE course.
109. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed and there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection and have recently risen, whilst the quality of writing and the evaluation of ideas still remains a weakness. The department has started to analyse data effectively to identify areas for improvement. At the time of the last inspection the most able were reported to be under-challenged; this has shown some improvement but is not consistently planned for in all classes. Teaching was satisfactory and is now good overall. The curriculum and the marking of students' work are now more consistent. The school provides good extra curricular activities but opportunities for the use of ICT are not well developed.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

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

### **Strengths**

- Teaching and learning is good in all years.
- The good behaviour and positive attitudes of students.
- The thorough and regular assessment of students' work and monitoring of their progress.
- The very good leadership and management of the department.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The results in Years 9 and 11.
- The matching of work and resources to the needs of some students.
- The frequency of opportunities for students to practice their ICT skills.
- The standards of presentation of students' work, especially in Years 7 and 8.

110. In 2002, the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 showed students' attainment to be below national expectations with half reaching the required standard. The proportion of students attaining the higher levels was very low. The attainment of boys and girls was very similar. The work of students seen and the evidence of lessons showed teacher assessments to be accurate and reliable; this was identified as a weakness in the last report. GCSE results have not improved since the time of the last inspection. In 2002, the average points score was significantly below the national average, as was the proportion of students achieving the higher grades A\* - C. There was little difference between the attainment of boys and girls. However, the proportion of students achieving grades in the range A\*-G was in line with the national figure, with all girls achieving at least a pass grade. Students did less well in geography than in most subjects.
111. The standard attained by present students in Year 9, based on lesson observation and work seen, suggest that standards are in line with national expectations. Their completed work shows the many opportunities they have to improve subject skills in their study of places and themes; this enables them to achieve well. In lessons, students were able to recall factual knowledge in response to questioning. In a Year 8 lesson where students were studying the Polar lands, they worked very well in pairs to develop their learning skills as they identified why and how animals had adapted to the extreme cold.
112. In Years 10 and 11 present students who have chosen to study geography are recording satisfactory achievement. The work in students' books shows them able to identify features of the landscape and to have a sound understanding of the processes involved in, for example, coastal erosion and deposition. In a lesson on rising sea levels they were able to apply this knowledge and, together with a good appreciation of global warming, to gauge the impact of resultant flooding on the local area. The previously completed work shows that students have opportunities to work independently, for example in using data collected through fieldwork to complete their coursework assignments. The students' under-developed literacy skills mean that though many work hard, their levels of achievement are constrained.
113. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teaching observed was never less than satisfactory and almost all lessons were good or better. Teachers' very good subject knowledge and awareness of the requirements of the courses result in clear, focused and interesting explanations that foster understanding. So, students are aware that physical and human processes result in change and that each may impact on the other, for example in the enquiry Year 10 students carry out into the attractions of the tropical grasslands of Kenya to tourists and the impact of tourism on this ecosystem. In such enquiries students are encouraged to sequence their investigations, posing key questions and responding to these. Teachers prepare their lessons to a very high standard and in great detail. In this they are supported by the excellent schemes of work. Teachers achieve a good balance between the contribution they make and student activities. They provide a range of resources and experiences to stimulate and extend students' learning. For example, in an excellent Year 7 lesson students used photographs and maps, drew and annotated sketches and made reference to their text books as they identified features of a river and its valley. In every lesson it was clear that teachers hold high expectations for their students. Skilful questioning at the beginning and end of sessions ensures that prior learning is checked and built upon. As a result of the good teaching students were able to sustain their concentration and complete a considerable amount of work during the lessons. Students responded with interest to the enthusiasm of the teachers.
114. The marking of work is thorough and regular and the school's assessment policy is implemented fully. There is a greater sharing of information with students than at the time of the last

inspection. Students know what they should do to improve. The monitoring of students' work is good and the use of data to establish base-line assessments and set targets is being extended.

115. In all lessons teachers demonstrated very good classroom and pupil management skills. Relationships are very positive, many students enjoy their geography lessons and behaviour in all lessons was good or very good. Students are invariably courteous. They feel supported by the teachers and are, therefore, willing to offer their opinions and solutions. The contribution made to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is a further strength as students view the world from a geographical perspective and gain understanding of world concerns, for example, through the 'Interdependence' module in Year 9 and the study of 'Multi-Cultural Britain' in Year 8. Homework supports the learning that takes place in the classroom and is set regularly. Progress has been made to provide opportunities for students to make use of their ICT skills, for example when Year 8 students use web sites to research the impact of change in the Arctic. However, such opportunities are too infrequent.
116. Students with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers receive very good information and are able to give effective support. However, the previously completed work of students in Years 7 and 8 showed that the tasks and resources are not always matched to their needs. As a result, progress can be constrained and such students not fully included in the learning experiences. Learning assistants would foster development but very few are deployed in this subject. Similarly, higher attaining students are not always sufficiently challenged by the work.
117. The subject leader provides very good leadership and manages the department most effectively. She is very well supported by the energetic and able head of faculty. The resources provided are adequate, being supplemented by the subject leader's involvement in teacher training. Access to computers is restricted and there are no machines in the department; this is a significant weakness. The accommodation is good and enhanced by attractive displays of students' work, assessment information and additional resources. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The department has the commitment and capacity necessary to achieve further improvement.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- Very good teaching in Years 10 and 11.
- The management of the subject.
- The good behaviour and attitudes of the students.
- The contribution made to citizenship and the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### Areas for improvement

- Results in Years 9 and 11.
- The frequency of opportunities for students to practise their ICT skills.
- Opportunities for students to produce detailed written answers.
- Opportunities for students to develop the skills necessary for independent learning.

118. Students' attainment when they join the school is below average in terms of their knowledge, skills and understanding in history. Further, the literacy skills of a significant proportion are below the expected level. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were below national expectations. Half the students attained the required standard, with far fewer recording the higher levels than reported nationally. GCSE results for 2002 were below the level reported



nationally in terms of average points scored. The proportion of students achieving grades A\* - C and grades A\*-G were also below the national averages. There has been no significant improvement since the last inspection. Boys did better than girls whereas nationally girls outperformed boys. Though the majority attained their target grades, students did less well in history than in all other subjects.

119. Students currently in Year 9 are working at below the level expected. They have sound factual knowledge and understanding of different periods and the relative importance of events and individuals. This is evident in the work completed on the Industrial Revolution by average and higher attaining students. Lower attaining Year 9 students studying The Middle Passage were able to use pictorial sources effectively in developing their understanding of the economic and financial attractions of the trade. A weakness in students' learning is that many are unable to express their opinions in structured paragraphs. When standards on entry to the school are taken into account, the achievement of students at the end of Year 9 is satisfactory.
120. In Years 10 and 11, the students who have chosen to study history record satisfactory achievement. Year 10 students studying the 'Great War' showed a good factual knowledge of the causes, alliances, events and those involved. They develop further their respect for evidence and recognise that events and actions may be interpreted in different ways, as seen in a very good lesson on 'Rationing and the U – Boat War'. However, though higher attaining students demonstrated very good recall of prior learning, they did not have the opportunity to use this in the short answers required by the worksheet. Draft essays on The Battle of Britain were returned to students with many written comments on how to improve, an indication of the high quality of marking and assessment. Opportunities for students to develop the skills necessary for independent learning were seen. However, evidence from previously completed work is that such practice should be extended. Students are offered too few opportunities to write in depth.
121. The teaching and learning of history in lessons are good overall, but very good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding of National Curriculum and GCSE requirements, together with their enthusiasm for the subject and the use of a good range of resources, ensures that students are interested, attentive and capable of sustained concentration during their history lessons. This was clear as low attaining Year 7 students investigated the death of Beckett. They were encouraged to interrogate resources, to check detail and to make judgements regarding the reliability of the accounts. The writing frame provided was particularly useful to students with special educational needs, but helped all students to organise their findings. Teachers provide rich descriptions, relating one period, or event, to another and providing interesting details about important figures, as seen when Year 8 students prepared a letter to advise James 1<sup>st</sup> on how he might learn from the success of his predecessor, Elizabeth. They have high expectations of students in terms of their work and behaviour, and make these very clear. Good behaviour is ensured by very good student and classroom management skills, supported by school and faculty policies. Expert and challenging questioning encourages students to show their knowledge and understanding and contribute to the learning of others. The methods used and the work set usually meets the needs of all students, but in the previously completed work of Year 7 and 8 students there are instances where the higher attaining students were not sufficiently challenged, while the work was too difficult for lowest attaining students. The good planning of learning opportunities and detailed preparation of lessons ensures that students develop their skills as they move through the school. In a Year 11 class, studying the question "Is it necessary for governments to control peoples' lives in wartime?" students showed very good skills as they interrogated and evaluated a range of contemporary sources.
122. Teachers deal sensitively and objectively with controversial issues such as the slave trade. Such work makes a very good contribution to students' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. Very good progress has been made in integrating the teaching and learning of citizenship. Students' work is marked regularly and to a high standard. They are aware of their levels of attainment and are able to check this against information around the classroom. They

know what they should do to improve. Homework is set regularly and well before the end of lessons, so that all students understand what is required of them.

123. The subject leader, who has been in post for a long time, provides good leadership and manages the department effectively. He has been afforded considerable support by the more recently appointed head of faculty. Much has been achieved recently to develop a curriculum that is now very good. Overall, the resources provided are adequate, though there is an urgent need to replace the worn and outdated books used in Year 7 and there are no readily accessible computers. The accommodation provided is good with stimulating displays of students' work, other resources and assessment information. The library is used to good effect and supplies boxes of resources on request. Students are encouraged to make use of their ICT skills, especially in researching topics. The department has produced some very good software packages for use in the lessons and opportunities are written into the schemes of work, but much more needs to be done. Improvement since the previous report has been uneven but satisfactory.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Students' responses to ICT are positive.
- Good relationships between students and between students and teachers.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment at the end of Years 9 and 11
- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11.
- The co-ordination of a whole school approach to cross-curricular ICT.
- The range of teaching strategies to meet the learning needs of all students.
- Focus on opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy through ICT.

124. In 2002, the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were below average compared to schools nationally. Girls did better than boys, which is in line with schools nationally. The standard attained by present students in Year 9 is below average overall. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and teachers make good use of whiteboards and projectors to present information clearly. In ICT lessons students have opportunities to word process and use presentation software to evaluate, for example, their designs for an amusement park ride. Every student does the same work. All but the high attaining students, who record good progress, make satisfactory progress, including those with special needs.
125. Students respond well in ICT lessons and good relationships between students and between students and staff exist. Students' achievement in Year 7 and 8 ICT lessons is satisfactory. In Year 7, they have opportunities to develop their research skills, for example obtaining information on the holocaust from the Imperial War Museum web site. This work is planned in co-operation with the history and religious education departments. In Year 8, students are able to use a spreadsheet to change and present weather data and refine its presentation to make it easier for the user to understand. Despite the links that exist to other subjects of the curriculum, overall students have too few opportunities to use their ICT skills in other subjects.
126. In 2002, the GCSE short course and key skills results for ICT were below average, with the performance of boys and girls being similar. Over half the students entered for key skills Level 1 were unable to reach the standard required. Some students in Years 10 and 11 are not motivated by the ICT courses the school offers as they do not meet their needs. Overall, achievement is unsatisfactory.

127. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but progress in lessons is better in Years 7, 8 and 9 than in Years 10 and 11. In Year 10, GCSE students had the opportunity to carry out modelling in a spreadsheet. Ineffective planning resulted in slow progress being made. In Year 11, key skills students attempted an examination revision exercise but some copies had questions missing. This prevented some students from completing the work. Extension work is not available for high attaining and gifted and talented students and this limits their learning. Expectations of what high attaining students can achieve are too low. Students' practical ICT skills are better than their evaluation and written skills. Some students support each other's learning and share their skills. Teachers work hard to provide support for individual, or small groups of, students working at computers, but the pace of learning slows when students have to wait for help. Teachers need a range of teaching strategies to meet the learning needs of all students. Homework, when set, is not used effectively to support learning and develop writing skills. The development of literacy skills through ICT is unsatisfactory. Opportunities to develop numeracy skills are poor in ICT lessons. The range of books in the library is poor for ICT and is unsuitable for supporting students' learning.
128. The leadership and management of ICT as a taught subject are satisfactory and improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Data and the school's monitoring, evaluation and review processes are not fully used to inform planning. The use of ICT across the curriculum, in all years, is unsatisfactory, as it is not managed with a whole-school perspective. ICT is not, as a matter of course, written into schemes of work in many subjects. This prevents the school from meeting the National Curriculum requirements for ICT.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

### Strengths

- Teachers are committed, hardworking and work well as a team.
- Relationships in lessons are generally good.
- The programme of visits and the exchange link with a French school are good.
- The French assistant is well deployed to raise speaking and listening skills.

### Areas for improvement

- Raise attainment in French, especially for girls.
- Increase the amount of French spoken by students in lessons.
- The presentation and quality of students' written work.
- The use of ICT as an aid to teaching and learning in lessons.

129. When students arrive in Year 7 a few have done some French at primary school but attainment is uneven and so all classes start from the beginning. In 2002, the results in the teacher assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 were just below average compared to schools nationally. Attainment in French observed in lessons was in line with national expectations in top sets, but well below in the others. Most students' written work was also below the national average. Students' poor general literacy skills impede progress in written French. Achievement for most students is satisfactory from Year 7 to Year 9. The progress of students with special educational needs is in line with other students. In a Year 7 top set, students could say what sports they liked or disliked. In a Year 8 top set, students could describe the weather in different seasons. In a Year 9 class with students of average ability, speaking and listening skills were poor. Generally students in Years 7 to 9 are not sufficiently aware of basic grammatical patterns and the amount and range of vocabulary that they know off by heart is very limited. Students taking Spanish in Year 9 are all beginners. The standards reached so far are in line with national

expectations. Students' pronunciation is good and some have good listening skills. Achievement in Spanish in one lesson a week is good.

130. Over recent years, results in GCSE French have been just below average and boys have generally performed much better than girls; their results have been in line with the national average. When compared to their performance in other subjects, students have achieved satisfactorily in French. In 2002, however, attainment in French fell to well below the national average and students performed much worse than in their other subjects. There was considerable underachievement in French in 2002. Generally standards observed in lessons and seen in students' books during the inspection are below the national average. In a Year 10 top set, pronunciation was poor and students had difficulty describing daily routines in the present tense. In a Year 11 top set, students found it hard to do simple transactional role plays such as booking into a hotel. Generally students are underachieving in French in Years 10 and 11. Some students do not take sufficient pride in their work; for many their literacy skills are unsatisfactory and in some cases restless behaviour disturbs learning. Results in Spanish, following a similar pattern to the French, in 2001 were broadly in line with national averages, but fell to below average in 2002. There was some underachievement when compared to results in other subjects. There is currently no Spanish taught in Year 11, but the attainment of students in the Year 10 Spanish beginners' class is very wide. About two thirds of students are working in line with national expectations. Their pronunciation was good and they were able to construct simple sentences to describe where people live. Most students are achieving satisfactorily.
131. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning of French is satisfactory. Some teaching is good and occasionally very good and some unsatisfactory. The teaching of Spanish is good. All teachers have a good understanding of the National Curriculum and GCSE requirements and make sure that students are aware of the levels, or grades, they are working at. Their expectations of higher attainers' work are not always high enough, however, and consequently some students are not sufficiently challenged and underachieve. Teachers always state their teaching objectives at the beginning of lessons and systematically refer to them at the end, which helps students to understand why and what they are learning. Most teachers have good language skills but they do not all speak sufficiently in French in lessons with the result that some students' listening skills are not fully developed. All lessons are well prepared but the planning does not always take sufficiently into account the needs of different groups of students. Teachers do, however, monitor students well and give good support to individuals in lessons. The pace of lessons is generally brisk and teachers make good use of short deadlines to keep students focused on their work. ICT is not used sufficiently to enhance learning, but some students do word process homework. Students' attitudes and behaviour are generally satisfactory, but in one Year 8 French class and one Year 10 Spanish class, behaviour was unsatisfactory and many students achieved little in the lesson. In the Year 10 Spanish class the behaviour of some girls impeded the learning of others. Most students are keen to repeat words and phrases and participate in language games. Most students concentrate well and settle to work quickly. In some lessons motivation was low and attitudes poor. Occasionally students did not pay attention when work was being presented and did not complete practice activities.
132. The department is managed satisfactorily and the schemes of work and departmental documentation are appropriate. The department experienced staffing problems last year caused by one unfilled vacancy and one long-term illness. There is some monitoring of teaching and learning by the head of department, so that all teachers adopt a similar approach to lesson planning and homework. Students' work is marked regularly and targets are set to improve the presentation of work and raise standards. Students do not always adhere to these targets and much written work is badly presented, contains repeated errors, or is incomplete. The department regularly monitors students' progress in French by end of topic tests. The department is currently teaching some low attaining students in single gender groups and this is meeting with

some improvement in behaviour and learning. The library does not contain sufficient up-to-date materials to be a satisfactory resource and the department does not have sufficient access to computers to make regular use of ICT as an aid to learning. There is a good programme of visits and GCSE support clubs and a very good exchange with a French school, all of which raise the standards of the students who take part. The French assistant is deployed well and this helps raise listening and speaking skills. Nevertheless the extent of improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory, because standards have not been maintained, though much of this is because of problems recruiting and retaining suitable staff.

## MUSIC

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

### Strengths

- Levels of improvement over the past two years following staffing difficulties.
- The good opportunities for extra curricular singing and playing.
- The enthusiasm of teachers and their use of practical skills to support the students' learning.

### Areas for improvement

- Reduce inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- The frequency for students to practise their ICT skills in lessons, in Years 7 to 9.

133. When students enter the school, their standards in music are broadly average. At the end of Year 9, in 2002, teachers assessed students' attainment as in line with national expectation. Inspection findings confirmed these assessments as accurate. Students' achievement is satisfactory. GCSE results in 2001 were slightly below the national average. In 2002, results were similar to the previous year's average, but national comparisons are difficult as numbers involved are comparatively small. Current standards in Year 11 are in line with expectations for this point in the course and students are achieving well. Skills in composing develop well. Students use computers competently for composing and arranging music. They analyse music they hear accurately and have a good knowledge of technical terms relevant to the musical topics they study. Standards in performance vary in line with students' previous experience and interests; some students are accomplished and experienced performers, while others began their practical music only in Year 10.
134. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. In lessons teaching ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory. Teachers are keen musicians and they effectively communicate their enthusiasm to students. Relationships between teachers and students are good and have a positive impact on students' learning. Teachers use their practical skill very effectively for demonstrating and accompanying. Their subject knowledge is good and students receive a good level of individual assistance in practical tasks. Teachers plan lessons carefully and provide worksheets and information of good quality that support students' learning well. Where teaching was very good or excellent, teachers stated lesson objectives clearly, established a very good pace of working, and ensured that lesson objectives had been met by the end of the lesson. As a result, students learned very efficiently. In an excellent Year 11 lesson, where students were studying Indian music, the teacher's authoritative explanation and demonstration of scale patterns gave the students confidence to develop their improvising skills on keyboards rapidly and enabled them to gain much relevant knowledge within one lesson. Informative worksheets enabled this knowledge to be confirmed subsequently. In the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching, lesson objectives were vague, and, despite good relationships, the pace of work was too slow. Students generally displayed a good level of enthusiasm for what they were asked to do. Occasionally, a few students at all levels

displayed challenging behaviour, but teachers dealt very well with this and disruption to learning was minimal.

135. Music is managed well on a day-to-day basis, and has been strongly re-established following staffing difficulties since the time of the last inspection. However, the overall standard of management is satisfactory because the quality of teaching varies too much at present. The department's development plan contains good ideas for extending the scope of music in the school, but focuses insufficiently on raising standards of teaching and learning. The schemes of work in Years 7 to 9 and at GCSE provide students with a good variety of interesting and appropriate topics. These topics contain good opportunities for assessment, which help guide the students' learning and the teachers' subsequent planning. ICT is used well in Years 10 and 11, but regular opportunities are not yet provided in Years 7 to 9. Instrumental teaching for 90 students is well established and efficiently managed. A good range of extra-curricular singing and instrumental ensembles provides worthwhile opportunities for students to further their musical interests. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory; the department has a good capacity for developing further.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- The good achievement of the students.
- The range and availability of extra-curricular activities.
- The very good leadership and management of the department.
- Very good assessment procedures.

### Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT as an aid to teaching and learning in lessons.
- Opportunities for students to assume responsibility, such as leading warm ups and developing their roles as coaches, officials, referees and umpires.

136. Standards seen in lessons of students' work in Year 9 are average when compared with national standards. The teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 give a lower level than this due to a combination of underestimating the work of the students and the wide range of activities undertaken. Students enter the school with skills below the national expectations. By the end of Year 9 students are able to control a ball in a variety of game situations and show good ideas in gymnastics, performing a range of balances with good control. They are also aware of the safety aspects associated with physical education and are able to evaluate the work of their peers. Students use technical terminology accurately in lessons. Good achievement is made during Years 7 to 9. There is no significant difference in the standards of girls and boys, though they have different strengths and all groups of students make similar progress.
137. Standards in the core course in Year 11 vary between girls and boys. Girls are average compared to the standards expected at this level but boys' standards are above average. Boys have good physical skills and play games with a greater degree of tactical awareness, as seen in rugby and basketball lessons. The wider areas of the new National Curriculum, covering the roles of umpire, referee, coach and official, are not yet being included in all situations. Achievement in the core course in years 10 and 11 is good for boys and satisfactory for girls.
138. Standards in the GCSE course were in line with the national average in 2001 and in 2002. There is an improvement in both the number of A\* to C grades and the average point score. Boys were below the national average in 2001 but are average in 2002. Present students following the



GCSE course show a higher level of practical skill than those in the core course and most reach, or exceed, their expected target based on their Year 9 assessment scores. This represents good achievement. A number of individuals and teams have achieved success at local, county and national levels.

139. Behaviour in physical education is good and attitudes to the subject are also good. Students arrive ready to participate and bring appropriate kit for lessons. Levels of participation are high, as they are in extra-curricular activities. In all lessons the students work well, in pairs and in groups. The very good relationships between staff and students and between students themselves, encourage a positive environment in which learning can take place and in which the students feel confident in trying out new ideas.
140. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good with some lessons being very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Strengths of teaching are the management of students and the clear lesson objectives that build on the skills of all students. In the best lessons, different activities are given to students with more ability, enabling them to develop at a faster rate, and additional help is given to students with weaker skills. Staff use their good knowledge and understanding of the subject to add interest and motivate the students. Weaker aspects in teaching are the relatively few opportunities when students manage their warm-ups and the tendency of staff to fill in and develop answers given by students rather than drawing the ideas out by further questioning. In the theoretical element of the GCSE course, insufficient emphasis is placed on literacy development, such as correct spelling. The marking of assessed work does not include enough advice to students on how to improve their work. Students with special needs are supported well.
141. The curriculum provided is good. Students take part in a range of physical activities, including swimming and a health related fitness programme, though there is a bias towards games. The curriculum is further enhanced by the very good provision of extra-curricular activities which are well attended and open to students of all abilities. Parents and local coaches support the extra-curricular activities and students with special ability are encouraged to develop their skills further by joining local clubs. Students have the opportunity to participate in match situations as members of the large number of school teams. Very good quality wall displays celebrate success in the department and show an emphasis on literacy, numeracy and citizenship. ICT is rarely used and is an area for development. The library has a satisfactory selection of general sporting books but less on those directly linked to the GCSE aspects.
142. Leadership and management of the department are very good. Improvement since the last inspection is good especially in the areas of planning, student evaluation and health related understanding. Improvement in the last year has been very good with the whole ethos and profile of the department being raised. Assessment procedures have also been refined and developed and are now very good. Students are aware of their levels of attainment and what is needed to reach the next level. The department has introduced a system using optical mark readers that the school is considering using on a wider basis. Other improvements include rising participation rates and rising attainment, especially in the GCSE course. All members of the department share the vision for improvement and all act as good role models

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- The very good leadership and management of the department.

- The good quality of teaching and learning and subject knowledge of the teachers.
- Relationships between staff and students.
- Very good use of assessment to monitor and promote students' attainment.

**Areas for improvement**

- The use of ICT to support teaching and learning.
- Alternative accreditation for those students who do not sit GCSE examinations.

143. All students study religious education and, in Year 11, most are entered either for a full or short GCSE examination. Results for the small numbers entered for the GCSE full course in 2002 were well above average. Results for the large cohort in the GCSE short course were average. This represents good achievement in the light of the students' prior attainment. The results for the large numbers entered for the short course have been consistently in line with or above national expectations in recent years. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls by the end of Year 11.
144. The standard of work of students in Year 9 is below the expectation of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Higher attaining students can write extended accounts of aspects of Christianity and Islam. The work of middle attaining students does not reach expected levels as their literacy and presentation skills do not match their oral contributions in lessons. The work of Year 7 students shows considerable enthusiasm for learning. For example, higher attaining students were able to write an extended piece about the significance of the Torah in the life of Jewish people. However, middle and lower attaining students were held back in their progress by underdeveloped writing skills and had uneven experiences to bring from their previous learning. The evidence from their exercise books and work seen in lessons is that their standards are below expectation when they enter the school. Overall, therefore, students make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9.
145. The standard of work of current Year 11 students is in line with national average expectations. Higher attaining students can write sustained comparisons of Islam and Christianity. In their case studies of miracles, middle attaining students evaluated the possible likelihood and implications of God being represented through a cross section of a tomato. However, the attainment of many middle and lower attaining students is constrained as set written work does not sufficiently challenge or inspire. For standards to rise further, these students need to develop their skills of analysis and evaluation by being offered more opportunities to write in depth.
146. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teaching observed through the inspection was never less than good and was often very good. Good and very good teaching was characterised by teachers' knowledge, student enthusiasm, accessible materials, focused activities and clear objectives. For example, in a lesson with Year 8 students, the teacher's enthusiastic demonstration of the rituals of Jewish prayer engaged the students' attention through the use of artefacts and other resources and the involvement of students in a simulation. Experience within the department of GCSE examination requirements helps to ensure clear planning and appropriate student support in religious education. The department also provides very good support for new teachers.
147. Students with special educational needs, those from ethnic minority backgrounds and those with English as an additional language, make similar progress to other students. Gifted and talented students can follow their interests through the Christian Union and other enhanced study opportunities identified by their teachers.

148. Since the last inspection there have been changes in management, staffing and achievement. The department is now very well led and managed. The department's use of data analysis to track individual students' progress, set targets and evaluate the department's achievements is currently used in the school as an example of best practice. Accommodation has improved through the provision of suited classrooms. All teaching is delivered by specialist teachers. Classroom learning is enhanced by the use of outside speakers and the imaginative use of school assemblies, which, during the inspection, included a mock Islamic marriage ceremony. One area for development, however, is for the department to consider an alternative form of accreditation for the small number of Year 11 students who are not entered for a GCSE examination.