

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **SPROWSTON HIGH SCHOOL**

Sprowston, Norwich

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121162

Headteacher: Mr G Best

Reporting inspector: Mrs S D Morgan  
1355

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> March 2003

Inspection number: 251204

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	12-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cannerby Lane Sprowston Norwich
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Bethell
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

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1355	Mrs S D Morgan	Registered inspector	Educational inclusion	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further?
9053	Mrs V Phillips	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32312	Mr P Johnson	Team inspector	English	
1503	Mr T Browne	Team inspector	Mathematics	
3242	Mr M Newman	Team inspector	Science	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
32231	Mr A Lyons	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Business education – 6 <sup>th</sup> form	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? – 6 <sup>th</sup> form
24142	Mrs S Argyle	Team inspector	Art and design	
32590	Mr R Fenwick	Team inspector	Design and technology	
12336	Mr M Overend	Team inspector	Geography	
10761	Dr P Willan	Team inspector	History History – 6 <sup>th</sup> form	
15075	Mr B Stephens	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language	How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
20767	Mr J Royle	Team inspector	Music	How well does the school care for its pupils?
30800	Mrs B Colley	Team inspector	Physical education Sociology – 6 <sup>th</sup> form	
14633	Mrs J Bannister	Team inspector	Religious education	
14871	Mrs B Buteux	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
18663	Mr P Birchell	Team inspector	Citizenship	

27717	Mr P Metcalf	Team inspector	Mathematics – 6 <sup>th</sup> form	The school's results and pupils' achievements  The school's results and pupils' achievements. – 6 <sup>th</sup> form  How well are pupils taught? – 6 <sup>th</sup> form
9537	Mrs C Marden	Lay inspector		Students' attitudes, values and personal development – 6 <sup>th</sup> form  Students' views – 6 <sup>th</sup> form
32267	Mr S Smith	Team inspector	Biology – 6 <sup>th</sup> form	
25073	Mr S Jordan	Team inspector	Geography – 6 <sup>th</sup> form	
32208	Mr D Aitken	Team inspector	German – 6 <sup>th</sup> form	
2501	Ms R Allison-Smith	Team inspector	Art and design – 6 <sup>th</sup> form	How well is the school led and managed? – 6 <sup>th</sup> form  How well does the school care for its pupils? – 6 <sup>th</sup> form
28199	Mr P Lawley	Team inspector	English – 6 <sup>th</sup> form	
29742	Ms P Fyans	Team inspector	Chemistry – 6 <sup>th</sup> form	
2495	Mr B Munden	Team inspector	Design and technology – 6 <sup>th</sup> form	
15208	Mr A Briggs	Team inspector	Performing arts – 6 <sup>th</sup> form	
2496	Dr A O'Sullivan	Team inspector	French – 6 <sup>th</sup> form	
30072	Mr J Skivington	Team inspector	Psychology – 6 <sup>th</sup> form	
3726	Mrs M Bean	Team inspector	Physical education – 6 <sup>th</sup> form	
3525	Mr P McGregor	Team inspector		
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Sprowston is a large comprehensive school with 1210 pupils in Years 8 to 11. The school, working in partnership with two other schools, has created the Kett sixth form with 325 students on roll. There are a similar number of boys and girls in Years 8 to 11, although the proportion varies between year groups, with significantly more boys in Year 8 and more girls in Year 10. The school is popular with parents and is oversubscribed. Overall, pupils' attainment on entry is below the national average. The catchment area for the school is large and suffers some social deprivation. The percentage of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, at just below twelve per cent, is broadly average. Just under fourteen per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, a below average proportion. These pupils have a range of needs, with most having learning and/or emotional and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is below average. Almost all pupils are white British, with small numbers from a range of other ethnic groups. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is low, and no pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Sprowston is taking part in various youth and community projects. It has Investors in People status.

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

This is a good school. The school successfully meets the needs of its pupils by providing a range of vocational courses in addition to GCSE subjects. In relation to pupils' attainment on entry GCSE results in Year 11 represented good achievement. Pupils make satisfactory or better progress in almost all subjects. Teaching is good throughout the school and the sixth form. This is reflected in improving standards. The headteacher and senior managers are providing good leadership and have a clear vision of how to enable the school to improve further. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve well due to consistently good teaching.
- A very strong emphasis on high standards of behaviour and constructive relationships, has resulted in pupils' good conduct and attitudes to learning.
- The wide range of courses meets the needs of all pupils well.
- The school is well led by the headteacher and senior managers with a focus on improving standards in a caring and supportive environment.
- An excellent vision for the sixth form is shown by the headteachers of Sprowston, Blyth-Jex and Heartsease schools supported by the energy and determination of key staff to make it successful.

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

- Statutory requirements are not fully met for information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology in Years 8 to 11, and for religious education in Years 10 and 11.
- The quality of accommodation, despite the school's best efforts, does not provide a suitable learning environment for some subjects.

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



## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. Since that time good improvement has been made, not least in the establishment of the joint sixth form. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and this is having a positive impact on standards, particularly in Year 11 where standards are higher than five years ago. Most of the key issues from the last inspection have been dealt with, for example, improving the achievement of boys and the standard of pupils' work and behaviour in Years 10 and 11. However, as at the time of the previous inspection, the school does not meet statutory requirements for ICT or for the provision of religious education in Years 10 and 11. The school continues to seek further improvement. Staff morale is high and the school is well placed to improve further.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	C	C	D	E
A-levels/AS-levels	As the joint Kett sixth form is a new provision, there will be no A-level results until 2003.			

**Key**

well above average      A

above average            B

average                    C

below average            D

well below average      E

Whereas the table above is based on average point scores the school has done better in relation to other statistical measures. In 2002, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE A\*-C passes showed considerable improvement and was in line with the national average and the results of similar schools (that is, schools with a similar proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals). The proportions of pupils gaining five or more A\*-G passes and one or more A\*-G grades showed some decline and were below the national average, and well below the results of similar schools. The school exceeded the targets agreed with the local education authority for five or more A\*-C grades at GCSE but did not reach the targets for one or more A\*-G grades or the average point score. This was partly due to a number of pupils being offered a more appropriate work related curriculum and missing some lessons in GCSE examination subjects, which had a negative impact on results. The trend of improvement in GCSE results is below the national rate. However, on the basis of pupils' prior performance in the national tests in Year 9, their achievement overall was good. The performance of girls and boys was broadly similar. The 2002 results show an improvement in English, science, art and design, geography, ICT and physical education. Relative to their performance in other subjects, pupils did significantly better in business studies and economics but not as well in English language, English literature, geography, German, mathematics and physical education.

Overall, the school's results in the national assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were average. The 2002 results in English and mathematics were above average and average in science compared with all schools and similar schools nationally. In English, girls' results were better than boys' although the difference was less than that found nationally. Boys' and girls' results are broadly similar in mathematics. In science, boys' underachievement, noted in the previous inspection, has been overcome and their results are above average whilst those of girls are below. The overall results indicate that standards are improving.

When pupils enter the school, their levels of attainment are below average. The most recent national results indicate that pupils' achievements are good overall. Current standards in Years 9 and 11 reflect these results. Standards in almost all subjects, as observed in lessons and through recorded work, are average or above and pupils' achievements are good. In Year 11 pupils achieve well in most subjects, including English and science and very well in history. Achievement is satisfactory in mathematics. In German and physical education

achievement is satisfactory though standards are below expectation. However, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in religious education, as there is insufficient curriculum time for full coverage of the course in Years 10 and 11. In design and technology not all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered and this limits pupils' achievements. Similarly in ICT, standards are below expectations because pupils are not provided with consistent planned opportunities to cover all aspects of the National Curriculum.

Current standards of students' work in the sixth form are at the expected level for the courses they are following and they are achieving well.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are happy to come to school and to do the work asked of them. Motivation is higher when they can take an active part in lessons. It is weaker when pupils are asked to listen too much and do too little.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well most of the time. Standards of behaviour are higher in lessons where teaching catches and holds pupils' interest. In crowded areas, behaviour is not always as good as it is in most lessons because of lack of space to take time or care to move in an orderly way. The exclusion rate is low.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Relationships are generally good. Pupils show reasonable respect for others and for familiar ideas and traditions but are not so comfortable with information and beliefs from well beyond their direct experience. They are less independent and confident about thinking for themselves than many pupils of their age.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance levels and rates of unauthorised absence are similar to those found nationally. A few individuals who have unusually high absence rates make less progress than other pupils.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall and this is a significant improvement on the last inspection. A particular strength is the satisfactory or better teaching in all subjects across the school. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning and their achievement. Teachers' management of pupils is good; they have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance. Their enthusiasm and good subject knowledge are clearly communicated to pupils. In lessons, pupils respond well to lively teaching, have positive attitudes and their behaviour is good. These factors have a positive impact on their learning. The teaching of English and science is good. In mathematics teaching is good in Years 8 and 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall throughout the school. Most teachers place an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' reading and writing skills in a number of practical ways. A whole-school approach to the teaching of literacy is in place to help pupils develop their literacy skills. Numeracy skills are taught and teachers provide opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in a number of subjects although there is currently no practical guidance for staff. Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their ICT skills across the curriculum. Problems of accessing computers together with a lack of curriculum time in Years 10 and 11 result in pupils not learning as much as they should. In most subjects, teachers mark pupils' written work conscientiously which helps them to improve. However, there is too little marking in ICT and in subjects such as science and design and technology, marking is either inconsistent or does not give pupils a clear idea of how to improve. Good teacher-pupil relationships have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Work is well planned, enabling pupils to build on their previous learning systematically, and meets pupils' needs well. Where teaching had weakness or was unsatisfactory, the lessons lacked pace, teachers frequently talked too much, and pupils were not sufficiently involved in doing things for themselves.

In the sixth form, strengths of the teaching were teachers' very good subject knowledge combined with their awareness of examination requirements. Weaker aspects of teaching and learning lie in the limited range of styles used and insufficient systematic development of the key skills that promote students' independent learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Vocational provision and work experience are very strong features. Satisfactory provision is made for the teaching of personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. Extra-curricular opportunities are good. The ICT curriculum is unsatisfactory and weaknesses in design and technology and religious education mean that not all statutory requirements are covered. Good in the sixth form. A very good range of subjects is offered which meets the needs of the students.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall. Very good management of a team of specialists and support staff ensures that targets set match pupils' needs. Pupils make good progress, particularly when they receive specialist support, for example in English, mathematics and science. However, limited specialist support is available in other areas of the curriculum.

Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Very good links with middle schools and support services which ensure the smooth transfer of pupils and good individual support. Good use of ICT is made to improve reading skills.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Promotion of moral and social development is good because of a strong emphasis on positive relationships and high standards of behaviour. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. This is a caring school which provides good support for pupils through tutors and year heads. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory overall with good practice in some subjects. The teachers provide good guidance and support to individual pupils and use assessment information effectively to monitor their progress.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Satisfactorily. The school makes good efforts to work with parents in a positive way though some parents are less involved with their children's learning than the school would wish.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Leadership by the headteacher is good. There is a clear vision and commitment to improvement and staff morale is high. The leadership team and staff with management responsibilities make an effective team. Good structures are in place to ensure collaboration between pastoral and academic staff. The leadership and management of departments are satisfactory or better except in ICT, where they are poor.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily. Governors generally carry out their responsibilities well but they fail to ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties with respect to a daily act of collective worship and subjects such as ICT and religious education. They have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are involved in monitoring and support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Very good performance management and faculty appraisal has led to the identification of weaknesses and subsequently to improved teaching. Good systems are in place for monitoring school improvement plans which involve the whole staff.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning and control are good. Staffing and learning resources are satisfactory. Despite the best efforts of the school, accommodation is unsatisfactory. The school applies best value principles 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 make good progress.</li><li>• The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The amount of homework.</li><li>• Information about how their children are getting on.</li><li>• The closeness with which the school works with parents.</li></ul>

Parents' views were generally positive in questionnaires returned and at the meeting before the inspection, though attendance at this was low. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. However, the inspection team found that the school sets an appropriate amount of homework, in general, although pupils in top sets could cope with more challenging work to do at home. The school gives parents more information about their children's progress than many secondary schools provide, but it is not always in a form that is easy for all parents to understand. The school tries very hard to involve parents in what it does and to work closely with them, continuing to look for ways of encouraging some to be more involved with their children's learning.

## **ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM**

## **THE KETT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM**

The Kett is a sixth form partnership, organised across the sites of three schools, with 325 students on roll. It was established eighteen months ago. Year 12 has roughly twice the number of students as Year 13. Numbers of male and female students are similar. Currently over forty courses are offered. A mix of one- and two-year vocational courses, as well as A/S and A-level GCE courses, run alongside work-related learning and courses run in conjunction with a local college of further education. These courses cater for the needs of students with a wide range of aptitudes and aspirations, including some high attaining students and some with identified special needs, of whom a small number have statements of special educational need. A few students speak English as an additional language, with a very small number at an early stage of learning the language. The Kett sixth form is open to 16-year-olds from other schools. Entry is dependent on course requirements, students' prior attainment and their attitudes to study. Overall, the attainment of students at the start of Year 12 is below average.

The partnership was established partly in response to the new funding arrangements for post-16 education that put the future of the sixth forms in the two smaller schools in jeopardy. The aims are to capitalise on the established experiences and expertise in each school whilst, at the same time, widening the range of post-16 opportunities for all. Students, although on the roll of one of the three schools, are able to take courses on any or all of the sites. Regular transport is provided for them to travel between sites. The director of The Kett works to the three headteachers and a management committee of governors from all three schools takes overall responsibility for the sixth form.

The first group of students taking two-year courses will complete their studies in the summer of 2003. Therefore, no cumulative results from previous years are available with which to compare current standards. Challenging targets have been set, aiming to improve student recruitment and retention, raise point scores and increase the numbers of students applying to higher education year on year.

### **HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS**

This is an effective sixth form. Current standards are broadly average and students achieve well in relation to their widely differing starting points. The quality of teaching is good. Leadership and management are sound overall, with particular strengths in the way The Kett has been promoted across the three schools. The sharing of resources across the three sites results in a very good range of courses being offered. This has improved the access students have to courses they want to follow and which equip them for work, or for continuing their studies. The sixth form is generally cost effective. However, the management of its resources, in particular the planning for future spending on the sixth form, is weak and lacks the detail that governors and headteachers need to monitor the impact of spending decisions.

### Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good across the three centres, particularly teachers' subject knowledge and expertise that results in students' good achievement.
- Students have positive attitudes to learning and a desire to do well.
- The curriculum has very good breadth and relevance, matching students' different learning needs and linking with other local providers.
- An excellent vision for the sixth form is shown by the headteachers of Sprowston, Blyth-Jex and Heartsease schools, supported by the energy and determination of key staff to make it successful.

### What could be improved

- Inconsistencies across The Kett, at this early stage in its development, in communication, the management of resources and the administration systems, result in inefficiencies.

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

## THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

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

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Standards are in line with national averages and students achieve well. Teachers' very good subject knowledge and positive relationships between students and teachers result in good teaching and learning overall. Teachers sometimes dominate by talking too much so students are not sufficiently involved in learning. Collaboration between sites is just beginning.
Biology	<b>Good.</b> Standards are above average. Teaching is good and lessons build well on students' knowledge and understanding. Students achieve well. The two heads of department are working closely together to develop the benefits of shared expertise and resources.
Chemistry	<b>Good.</b> Very good teaching enables students to make good progress. Students are encouraged to think about chemical concepts and apply the challenge that chemistry provides. Standards are broadly average.
Design and technology	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Standards are average and teaching and learning are sound. Planning is insufficient to make best use of time where several lessons are grouped together. As a result, students' concentration sometimes lapses and the pace of learning slows.
Business education AVCE	<b>Good.</b> The very good teaching is underpinned by teachers' very good subject knowledge. Students learn very well because teachers give careful and thorough explanations on how they can improve. Students achieve very well overall but are hampered somewhat by variations over two sites, particularly in

	the access to suitable ICT. Standards are broadly average.
<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Overall judgement about provision, with comment</b>
Physical education	<b>Good.</b> The quality of teaching and learning is good. Standards of work in current groups are broadly average. Relationships are good and students' attitudes positive, contributing to their good achievement. Students receive limited written feedback on how to improve their work.
Art and design	<b>Good.</b> Teaching and learning are good and standards are above average. Students respond enthusiastically to the challenges teachers set. There is effective collaboration between staff and a shared commitment to improving standards.
Performing arts	<b>Very good.</b> Standards are above average. Teaching and learning are very good. Students enjoy the subject and achieve very well because of the outstanding specialist teaching they receive. Lack of formal links between sites, however, means that opportunities for sharing facilities are missed.
Geography	<b>Very good.</b> Standards are above average. Teaching is very strong and results in very effective learning and achievement. Teachers know their students well and the support and guidance they give are used well by students to improve their work.
History	<b>Good.</b> Standards are broadly average representing good achievement. Teaching is effective and teachers provide constructive advice to students on how to improve their work. Few enrichment activities are planned to support students' wider learning.
Psychology	<b>Good.</b> Teaching is good and students achieve well. Standards overall are average. Teachers have high expectations and students are challenged. The guidance provided has not given students a sufficiently clear idea about the course content and academic requirements.
Sociology	<b>Good.</b> Standards are average. Students have very good attitudes and are effectively supported and guided through a well-led course. Teaching is good. Marking is detailed but not always linked to examination mark schemes.
English literature	<b>Good.</b> Teaching is good, founded on good subject knowledge, and used well to brief and instruct students. Standards are above average in Year 13, showing good achievement through the course. Some groups are too small to permit a full range of teaching approaches.
French	<b>Good.</b> Standards are above average. The quality of the teaching is good. Students have positive attitudes to the subject and they achieve well. Their written work is a particular strength. Good use is made of ICT but students have access to only a limited range of media and texts.
German	<b>Just satisfactory.</b> Very small numbers choose the subject. Teaching is generally good. Achievement is at least satisfactory. Weak skills restrict the ability of some students to work independently. Provision is fragmented across sites, with no clear ethos for the subject.

Additionally, most other courses were sampled. The teaching was good in the majority of these lessons, showing a consistency across the curriculum. Teachers had very good levels of expertise. Relationships between the teachers and students were very good and productive in helping students to improve their work. Teachers worked hard to encourage all students to participate in class discussions but, in general, male students were less confident and more reluctant to take part than the female students. Standards were average and sometimes above average for the course. Examples of above average standards were seen in food technology and economics, and



below average standards in vocational art and design and physics. In general studies, and in a media studies group, the teaching was excellent and standards above average.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Well. Students receive good support from teachers who go out of their way to provide academic and personal help when it is needed. However, staff and students experience difficulties in making contact across different sites. The oral feedback students receive from their teachers is good but, in a number of subjects, students do not receive enough written information on how to improve. Some students are accepted onto courses without a sufficiently clear picture of what is expected and then leave or change courses. Assessment is satisfactory. The Kett is currently establishing a programme that includes the setting of targets for all students and monitoring their progress. Reporting arrangements are appropriate. Careers advice is satisfactory overall but uneven in quality and quantity. Many receive good guidance on future options.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Sound. The headteachers and governors, with the support of the director of the sixth form and the key staff from the partner schools have shown very good leadership. The outstanding vision, underpinned by the desire to raise students' aspirations, has led to a much broader and more fitting curriculum for the students. The management of resources and communication across the three sites is sound but some aspects need to be improved. Inconsistencies, for example, in administrative systems and ICT, frustrate and hamper the efficient and effective day-to-day management of senior and middle managers. Some students do not attend regularly and complexities of organisation make checking on this very difficult. The planning and monitoring of spending is weak. Statutory requirements with regard to the teaching of religious education are not met.

## STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They are well taught</li><li>• They are positive about their sixth form experience</li><li>• Students enjoy their courses</li><li>• Support from their teachers is very good</li><li>• Courses are appropriate for their needs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Access to teachers on sites which are not their home school</li><li>• More shared activities between the students on different sites</li><li>• Better advice on the choice of courses in the sixth form</li><li>• Better advice on their options after sixth form</li></ul>

During the inspection, students talked positively about what The Kett offered them and how they were confident that initial difficulties were gradually being sorted out. The views expressed by students in the questionnaire closely matched the findings of the inspection team. Access to teachers was sometimes difficult between different sites and further complicated by different computer systems. Inspectors felt there were indeed some missed opportunities for students to join together for certain activities, like careers presentations and assemblies. It was also noted, however, that students were sometimes reluctant to take advantage, or were unaware, of opportunities for shared activities and visits. Year 12 students were more willing to see themselves as part of The Kett, and to benefit from common activities, than Year 13 students. Students would benefit from clearer advice on sixth form courses and their options when they leave.

## COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In this report, the term “standards” refers to pupils’ attainment relative to some clear benchmark, such as National Curriculum levels at the end of Year 9 or Year 11. “Above average standards”, for example, means that a higher proportion of pupils of a particular age are succeeding at or beyond the level set than is the case in the majority of schools. “Achievement” means how well pupils are doing now in relation to their prior attainment, which is what they could do when they started Year 8 or Year 10.

2. The school has been successful in improving standards over the last five years. In particular it has been successful in overcoming the underachievement of boys, which was noted in the previous inspection. In 2002, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE A\*-C passes (47 per cent) showed considerable improvement and was in line with the national average and the results of similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more A\*-G passes and one or more A\*-G grades showed some decline and was below the national average, and well below the results of similar schools. The performance of girls and boys was broadly similar. There are no significant differences between different ethnic groups. Results over the past five years have been increasing at a slower rate than the national trend. However, on the basis of pupils' prior performance in the national tests in Year 9, their achievement overall is above expectations. The 2002 results show an improvement in English, science, art, geography, ICT and physical education. Relative to their performance in other subjects, pupils did significantly better in business studies and economics than their other subjects. Results were relatively lower in English language, English literature, geography, German, mathematics and physical education.

3. In 2002, the school exceeded the targets agreed with the local education authority for five or more A\*-C grades at GCSE but did not reach the targets for one or more A\*-G grades or the average point score. This was partly due to a number of pupils being offered a more appropriate work related curriculum (covering areas such as car maintenance, animal care, hairdressing and horticulture). The programme is more tailored to pupils’ individual needs and aptitudes. However, last year’s timetable arrangements resulted in pupils missing some lessons in GCSE examination subjects and this had a negative impact on results.

4. Standards of work of pupils in Year 11, as observed in lessons during the inspection and through pupils’ work, are in generally line with national expectations. In a number of subjects, including English and art and design, standards show improvement and are above national expectations. In English, pupils consolidate their skills and develop greater fluency in their work, while in art and design, pupils’ good progress is due to the quality and range of practical work and research undertaken.

5. In history, standards are well above national expectations and pupils achieve very well. In physical education, standards are below national expectations, though pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards in German are below expectations but recent improvement in teaching, brought about by newly appointed staff is having a positive impact and pupils are now making satisfactory progress. In religious education, standards are below expectation and pupils are not able to achieve as much as they should. This is mainly due to a lack of sufficient curriculum time; statutory requirements are still not fully met. Similarly, statutory requirements in ICT are not met due to a lack of teaching time and in design and technology because all aspects of the curriculum are not fully covered and this limits pupils’

achievement.

6. In 2002, results in the national assessments at the end of Year 9 were in line with the national average and those of similar schools. The 2002 results in English and mathematics were above the national average and average in science. Compared with similar schools, results in English and mathematics were above average and average in science. In English, girls' results were better than those of boys. Boys' results were better than those of girls in science, overcoming the underachievement noted in the previous report. In mathematics boys' and girls' results were similar. Results over the past five years have remained broadly in line with the national average and increasing at a similar rate to national trends. Overall, when pupils enter the school their levels of attainment are below average so that the results indicate that pupils' achievements are good overall. The 2002 results show an improvement in a number of subjects, including English, mathematics and science, although progress in music has not been consistent due to staff shortages. In physical education standards are below national expectations, however, pupils achieve satisfactorily. In some subjects, such as music and art and design the teacher assessments were over-generous.

7. Standards of work of pupils in Year 9, as observed in lessons during the inspection and through pupils' work, are broadly in line with national expectations. On the basis of their prior attainment on entry to the school, pupils' achievements are good overall. In a number of subjects, including English and mathematics, pupils' standards are above national expectations. In English, pupils make good progress in Years 8 and 9 where the national literacy strategy is having a significant impact on standards.

8. Standards of literacy are average overall and showing improvement as staff follow the agreed whole-school approach and national guidelines. Standards in reading and writing are better than speaking and listening, which nevertheless are in line with national expectation. Standards of numeracy are broadly average with a balance of strengths, such as some graph work in science, and areas for further development, for example the inconsistency of emphasis between teachers. There is no whole school approach to numeracy but staff have received training on the national numeracy strategy and departments have been asked to identify areas where numeracy is used in their subject areas.

9. Standards in ICT are below expectation and overall pupils make unsatisfactory progress in Years 9 to 11. This is due to factors such as insufficient curriculum time in Years 10 and 11 to cover examination requirements and inadequate access to equipment for departments to cover the requirements of the National Curriculum. Whilst some improvement in the amount of curriculum time has been made this year for pupils in Years 10 and 11, standards of work seen in Year 11 remain below expectation.

10. Pupils with special education needs achieve well overall in relation to their prior attainment. In Years 8 and 9, pupils with very low levels in reading, spelling and reasoning make good progress as a result of literacy enrichment classes and individual programmes for enhanced learning. These provide well-planned activities tailored to meet pupils' needs and relevant to their interests. As a result, pupils are encouraged to persist in their efforts to improve and make good progress. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are challenged to achieve as well as they can through mainstream lessons for GCSE courses. Alternative schemes are offered, providing opportunities for pupils to achieve successfully through Certificate of Education, NVQ courses and most particularly a Local Geography and History Course, using the development of the local environment as a resource for learning. Most pupils with statements of special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive from the learning support assistants who make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. However, pupils who miss large chunks of learning through repeated absence make very limited progress.

11. The small number of pupils whose first language is not English make good progress and are supported well in the classroom and outside of the class with additional one-to one-support from students in the sixth form. Gifted and talented pupils make good progress but are not always sufficiently challenged in the classroom. The school is currently planning additional provision for gifted and talented pupils, for example, through cross-curricular programmes and widening the range of enrichment activities.

## **Sixth form**

12. In almost all of the focus subjects that were inspected, evidence from current work and lessons indicates that the standards of work of students in Year 13 are broadly in line with national averages or above. Continuation rates are sound with over 90 per cent of students continuing studies from Year 12 into Year 13. A few students have started courses but left without completing them, and a few others have changed courses.

13. In nearly half the subjects inspected, students' standards are above national averages. In English, standards in Year 13 are better than Year 12 as a result of good teaching, students' commitment and teachers' on-going assessments, which include supportive comments on how to improve. In psychology, standards overall are average but the samples of work seen during the inspection indicate rising standards due to high teacher expectation and the level of challenge. In French, standards are particularly high in written work and supported well through class discussion, which enables high levels of involvement and interaction.

14. The sixth form offers a range of opportunities for all students to continue to study beyond Year 11. On the basis of students' widely differing starting points, they achieve well overall. In several subjects where there is close co-operation of staff in the partner schools, such as in art and design, chemistry and biology, the greater consistency and shared expectations evident in the quality of teaching are positive factors in students' good progress.

15. Achievement in business education, geography and performing arts is well above what might be expected of the students concerned. In business education, the improving standards and very good achievement result from the detailed guidance students receive on the examination and course requirements, and teachers' effective use of performance data to plan their lessons. Students are challenged by very effective questioning in geography. In performing arts, the high standards are a result of the high quality and, at times, inspirational teaching. Based on their previous attainment, students are achieving satisfactorily in design and technology. Numbers are very small in German but achievement is at least satisfactory.

16. Standards in key skills are satisfactory. The courses are suitably matched to the majority of the students' needs. By successfully compiling portfolios of evidence for Level 2 accreditation, students are well placed to gain the additional points they need to satisfy entry requirements to the universities of their choice. However, for some students, Level 2 accreditation is below the standard they could be expected to achieve, given their prior attainment. Almost all students are working towards accreditation in ICT, to support their studies and future employment prospects. A small number are completing work that fulfils Level 3 in communication as part of their general studies course.

17. The promotion and standard of key skills in subjects varies. Good standards of ICT were seen in English and physical education but, in design and technology, the skills were underused. Students' ability to take in information and present it coherently was well developed in media studies and general studies. Standards of oral and written language are underdeveloped in some subjects, with female students generally making more consistent progress than the male students. Mathematics is developed

well across a number of subjects in the sixth form. Algebraic skills are used for writing equations and substituting in formulae in chemistry, while students make very good use of their work in mechanics for their physics studies. Statistical skills are developed well in economics, psychology and sociology, as well as in biology for calculations of correlation and regression.

18. The small numbers of students with special education needs are supported well and enabled to gain results that represent good overall achievement. Standards achieved by students with particular gifts and talents are satisfactory overall but are inconsistent across the three sites, because identification systems vary.

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

19. The last inspection report included key issues relating to pupils' work and behaviour and to boys' motivation, which the school has worked hard to improve. Responses in lessons are now almost always positive, unlike in the previous inspection when they were too often unsatisfactory. Overall improvement in this area of the school's work has been good.

20. Pupils' attitudes to school and to their work are good. In general, they are happy to do what is asked of them, especially when teaching is lively and they can take an active part in lessons. They enjoy being involved in activities that catch and hold their interest well, but tend to lose concentration when they have to listen too much to the teacher and do too little practical work themselves. In the best lessons, they show high levels of motivation and effort, particularly when teachers organise work into manageable and interesting tasks with clear time scales. This allows pupils of all abilities to aim for clear goals and to have a chance of success. It encourages them to have a go, rather than to lose heart because there seems to be too much to do. The way that lessons are broken down into achievable tasks has a significant impact on the motivation of pupils who find it hard to respond positively to difficult or dull work. It is a significant factor in the improvement in overall responses in lessons and in boys' motivation.

21. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes towards their learning when subject teachers offer a range of different tasks in their lessons. Inspectors commented on the good provision in English, science, geography, history, design and technology and physical education. Pupils develop social skills during sessions in the Learning Zone (an area used for the teaching of pupils with special education needs) because they have opportunities to reflect on their work and on school life. Several pupils commented that they 'feel safe' in this secure learning environment and proudly showed their project folders indicating the good progress they are making as a result of the individual and small group teaching they receive. They enjoy the word games and range of activities offered; as a result they grow in confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are taught to listen to each other and respond thoughtfully which leads to co-operative activities in class and a more organised approach to their work.

22. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good, generally. Most pupils are well behaved in and out of the classroom and are friendly and polite. Most of the time, pupils cope admirably in a school that was not built to accommodate the numbers now on roll. Occasionally, the pressure of trying to move around or fit everyone into congested areas tells and pupils' behaviour is much like that of other crowds in a confined space. Otherwise, pupils follow school codes of conduct well and try hard to behave in a reasonable way. In a few cases, pupils find it hard to fit in with the high standards of behaviour expected by the school. Individuals with particular emotional and behavioural difficulties are helped well to try to be part of the orderly school community. A few pupils with persistent behaviour difficulties are withdrawn to work with a visiting specialist developing their social skills and respect for others. In isolated instances, one or two pupils do not behave as well as everyone else does in lessons,

which sometimes affects classmates who cannot make the most of otherwise helpful learning opportunities. In a physical education lesson, for example, the teacher worked tirelessly to help the class develop good basic skills in volleyball. One or two pupils made no real effort and did not respond to good teaching designed to help and encourage them. Their truculence was demoralising for the teacher and other patient, hard-working pupils. It spoiled what should have been a very successful lesson.

23. There was one permanent exclusion in the year prior to the inspection. The school does all it can to support pupils in difficulty and to provide a curriculum tailored to their needs, in order to stem deterioration in behaviour and interest in learning. The exclusion rate is quite low for a school of this size, which has a few pupils with significant behavioural difficulties.

24. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They show reasonable respect for others' views and for familiar ideas and traditions. They are less comfortable with ideas and beliefs from well outside their direct experience. For example, in religious education lessons, groups of pupils were at ease talking about everyday images of Christianity, particularly those presented through characters on television such as Dot Cotton (Eastenders) and Ned Flanders (The Simpsons). They were less at ease trying to talk about Christianity and other world faiths in relation to debates on war and peace around the world. They are not as independent and happy to think for themselves as others of their age are and have fewer opportunities to practise these skills than might be expected. Although they benefit from opportunities to take part in a variety of extra-curricular activities, the lack of regular chances to experience and reflect on the wider world limits their understanding and respect for people different from themselves. Relationships are good. Pupils work well together when asked and relate well to staff. They profit from good opportunities to develop team spirit by representing the school in sport and taking responsibility as members of the school council.

25. Attendance is satisfactory. Attendance levels and rates of unauthorised absence are similar to those found nationally. Most pupils come to school regularly and arrive on time unless they have genuine reason to be absent or late. This supports their progress positively. A few individual pupils miss too many lessons to make reasonable progress. The school has recently tightened up its procedures to check on absence and truancy so that parents and pupils know that staff do follow up any unexplained absence. This is beginning to reduce casual absences, but it is too early to tell whether attendance for the year is likely to show a marked improvement, particularly for those individuals whose absences affect their achievement.

## **Sixth form**

26. Attitudes to learning are good. In the lessons seen during the inspection, students were very diligent and well motivated. Almost all students do their set work conscientiously, both in and out of lessons. A few individuals have found the step up to more advanced academic and vocational courses very hard. Some of them attend erratically and do not show the same commitment to work as others when they are in lessons, in spite of teachers' best efforts to support and encourage them. Where teaching is highly motivating and stimulates students to use their initiative and have a go with a piece of work, their responses are impressive. This was evident in a Year 12 dance lesson, where students were inspired to improvise solo phrases based on Christopher Bruce's 'Ghost Dances'. They showed total commitment. Students' responses to the questionnaire completed before the inspection were positive about their experience of the sixth form. The many students with whom formal and informal discussions were held during the inspection endorsed these views. Students valued the wide range of courses available to them and nearly all felt the courses met their needs.

27. Students' behaviour is good. They show respect for one another and for adults, and conduct

themselves sensibly on journeys from one site to another. Development of their personal and learning skills is satisfactory. Students are willing to co-operate and to support each other, but are not particularly avid and curious learners. For example, in a planned debate about whether war in Iraq was justified, they were happy to offer moral support and to listen to others speaking. They had very limited information on which to draw because they had not read widely enough or done any additional, personal research. Students are less skilled in arguing a case than are others of their age. This is partly because of lack of practice in gathering and using evidence earlier in their school careers. They recognise that they have fairly limited experiences of life beyond the local area to use in debate. The Kett has not yet found a way of broadening students' horizons systematically through a coherent and meaningful enrichment programme, which develops critical thinking skills and lays foundations for independent work, ready for courses of advanced study. Students are happy to be involved in a range of activities beyond lessons and outside school. For example, a few work very well with younger pupils in the Learning Zone. Others play instruments in different bands and ensembles.

28. Students are developing positive attitudes to the longer-term benefits of education. They recognise that the effort they make now can contribute positively to what they achieve in adult life. Their commitment offers a secure foundation for a continuing interest in learning. Most students value the wider range of opportunities offered by the new venture and are happy to try to make good use of them, in spite of the inevitable early teething troubles. Most of those who were ill-prepared for the demands of sixth form courses and lacked motivation to persist with their studies, left soon after the start of the first term.

29. Relationships are good. Barriers between students from different sites break down as they get used to working together. Some find it easier than others to fit in or be welcoming, but most students show enough goodwill for effective teamwork and collaboration in and out of lessons. They would welcome more shared social and other activities across the sites to foster a sense of community. Some students were happy to take on responsibility for organising a sixth form ball.

30. Overall attendance is unsatisfactory. This is partly because absence and dropout rates were high at the start of the year. Absence levels among students who are continuing with their studies are higher than they should be if the vast majority of them are to complete their courses successfully.

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

31. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The most significant factor in this improvement is the satisfactory or better teaching in all subject areas, with very few unsatisfactory lessons. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning and the standards they attain. The percentage of satisfactory or better teaching has increased from 83 to 95 per cent, and the number of lessons observed in which teaching was judged to be very good or better has increased significantly. In the last inspection, 7 per cent of lessons were very good or better and in this inspection it was 25 per cent. The number of good or better lessons at 65 per cent also indicates improvement. Overall, teaching is good throughout the school. Teaching was most effective in Years 9 and 11 and slightly weaker in Years 8 and 10. Teaching was good overall in most subjects. It was satisfactory overall in citizenship, design and technology, discrete ICT and physical education in Years 8 and 9, and in mathematics in Years 10 and 11.

32. Lessons where teaching was very good or excellent were planned very thoroughly, resulting in varied and interesting topics and activities. For example in English, in one Year 11 lesson, oral presentations by individual pupils were discussed and graded by the rest of the class in a very sensitive



and thoughtful manner. Here, as in other lessons, GCSE criteria were used very effectively to prepare pupils for the examination. Also in English some dynamic, fast-paced teaching was seen on *Macbeth* which enhanced considerably the learning of lower-attaining pupils in Year 9. They were given short, achievable tasks, both written and oral, which helped their confidence and ensured that they thoroughly enjoyed the lesson while making very good progress. In many lessons, teachers' good management contributed to the positive response of pupils. In a mathematics lesson, a brisk and lively class discussion about finding areas and volumes, with the help of practical materials, engaged the pupils and gave them confidence.

33. The teaching was often enthusiastic and imaginative. For example in a Year 9 science lesson, low-attaining pupils were fascinated by cooking eggs and pancakes which introduced them to the concept of chemical change. Praise was used to good effect in a Year 8 religious education lesson on the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca. Pupils' understanding was developed by their teacher's good use of resources to explain the activities that took place on the four days of the pilgrimage. An excellent example of independent work came in a Year 9 science lesson where pupils worked on different aspects of photosynthesis and showed very good presentational skills by reporting back to the rest of the class using a digital microscope.

34. Many lessons that were satisfactory or better also had considerable strengths. Teachers' good subject knowledge, understanding of National Curriculum criteria and GCSE examination requirements, and detailed assessment of pupils' work, were particular strengths of teaching in many subjects. These strengths enable pupils to make good progress. Teachers are committed and conscientious. Many give freely of their time outside lessons in order to give extra help or to allow pupils to continue with practical assignments or course work.

35. Other features of good or better teaching include clear explanations, brisk pace, skilful question and answer techniques, good use of resources and the ability to enthuse and motivate pupils to achieve their best. In art and design, for example, good demonstrations and lively question and answer sessions aided assessment and reinforced learning, whilst exciting displays provided an inspirational learning environment and celebrated good work. In geography, teachers make good use of well-prepared work packs and resource materials so that pupils learn for themselves. This was particularly the case in Year 8 lessons on coastal landforms and methods of erosion, and a Year 11 case study on Sao Paulo. Similarly in history, teachers successfully exploited resource material. For example, in a very good lesson for Year 8 pupils, the teacher had gathered a range of materials, accessible and appropriate for the group. By the end of the lesson, all pupils had gained some understanding of what might make a king successful in eighteenth century France. In modern foreign languages teachers' linguistic skills are very good and pupils had opportunities to practise listening, speaking, reading and writing in a logical sequence of interesting activities which allowed them to work individually, and in groups, and as a whole class. Clear explanations in music had a direct impact on the success of a Year 10 lesson. Pupils had a clear understanding of what needed to be achieved during the session, contributing positively to the development of their performances and compositions. In GCSE lessons in physical education, teaching and learning is particularly effective because teachers have a clear focus on the requirements of the examination course. In religious education, pupils express themselves freely because of good classroom management. As seen in a Year 9 lesson when a pupil, in the context of studying shrines, was able to share how a candle was a symbol of life. It was first lit, then glowed, then would be snuffed out. Many teachers assess and correct pupils' work effectively. In modern foreign languages teachers correct pupils' oral work very sympathetically which creates a positive atmosphere for learning. Homework is generally used well to consolidate class-work. Teachers generally mark written work conscientiously, which helps pupils to improve.

36. Literacy skills are satisfactorily taught. There is a whole school approach to the development of literacy across the curriculum. Some faculties have developed their own policies and others, such as science, have adopted nationally suggested guidelines. Most rooms have displays of key words and there is evidence that these are referred to by pupils and teachers. Some subjects focus on the importance of correct spelling, presentation and grammar. The development of literacy skills is not consistent, however. In mathematics, although the handbook has guidance on extended speaking no pair or group discussion took place in the lessons seen. Year 10 ICT work had not been checked for spelling and grammar and still contained many errors that could have been corrected by pupils to help improve their accuracy in writing.

37. Numeracy skills are well taught in mathematics lessons, which often include some mental mathematics. There is no whole-school policy on numeracy which is a weakness. Teachers provide satisfactory opportunities, however, for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in other subjects across the curriculum. For example, opportunities for numeracy in geography are identified in planning and include measurement in map work and interpreting statistics from surveys. Some good use is made of numeracy in science, such as imaginative work on food values. Some presentation of graphs and data is good but some is unsatisfactory, with inappropriate graphs drawn inaccurately.

38. Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their ICT skills across the curriculum, although some subjects such as science, design and technology and art and design have started successful ICT initiatives. Teachers often have the skills and inclination to include opportunities for ICT use in their planning but cannot carry out their ideas because access to computers is inadequate.

39. In most subjects, homework was set regularly and pupils' work was marked effectively, which gave pupils a clear idea of how they were performing and indicated areas for improvement. Homework makes a good contribution to pupils' progress in mathematics. Marking and setting of homework in science was inconsistent, however, and some marking in design and technology did not provide comments to help pupils improve. In ICT there was very little marking.

40. Where teaching had weaknesses or was unsatisfactory, teachers frequently talked too much and pupils were not sufficiently involved in doing things themselves. For example in English, teachers dominated some lessons and not enough time was given for pupils to explore their own responses. Another feature of weaker teaching was lack of pace. When pupil-centered activities went on for too long, the pace of the lesson sometimes dropped and a minority of pupils lost interest. Weaknesses in mathematics also included the overuse of teacher talk and the insufficient use of pupil discussion, investigation or practical activity to support their learning. Ineffective classroom management was also a feature of some unsatisfactory teaching. For example in art and design, some teaching in Years 8 and 9 was less effective because pupils did not always listen to instructions. This resulted in some misbehaviour which disrupted the work of others. In a physical education lesson, where class management was weak, pupils did not progress and some pupils interrupted the learning of others.

41. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in English. In mathematics, pupils with special educational needs achieve in line with their peers. In a very good mathematics lesson on measuring time, pupils were supported and challenged appropriately, with good use of materials planned by the teacher. Their attention was kept through the session. In science lessons, the use of ICT and thorough marking gives clear support to pupils' learning. In design and technology teachers prepare appropriate work for pupils with special educational needs, who are helped by conscientious support staff. For example, they help pupils to select ingredients for food technology. In geography, pupils with special educational needs are well provided for with tasks and materials that are appropriate to their needs. In modern foreign languages pupils with special educational needs are well supported and encouraged to achieve their

best. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils in the practical elements of most physical education lessons because teachers focus pupils well on what is required.

42. A few pupils speak English as a second language. They are given effective support and they make good progress in lessons.

## **Sixth form**

43. Overall, teaching and learning in the sixth form are good. All lessons observed were satisfactory or better. One third of the lessons observed were very good or excellent and four-fifths were good or better. Teaching in all subjects was at least satisfactory and in most it was good. Teaching was very good in chemistry, geography, business education and performing arts, and satisfactory in design and technology.

44. The strengths of the teaching were the teachers' very good subject knowledge combined with their awareness of examination requirements. In performing arts, some outstanding teaching results in high levels of creative, intellectual effort and learning. In history, where teachers have a very good knowledge of assessment and examination criteria, their teaching was carefully tailored to meeting these requirements. In media studies and geography, teachers' expert exposition, with probing and challenging questioning, engaged students and led to very good learning.

45. A very good contribution to learning in business education was made by the targeted coaching and the rigorous and constructive marking of students' work that shows them how to improve their grades. Teaching also exploits the links between real life experiences and the students' coursework, to excellent effect. In a lesson on customer service, a student who works in a local store was able to compare personal experience with the theoretical model being discussed.

46. Students were positive about the support they received from staff and commented that teachers made their lessons interesting and gave generously of their time outside lessons. Notable examples of these good relationships were in biology, where teachers use Internet conferencing to stay in regular contact with their students and in geography, where teachers were effective in teaching the skills that enable students to study independently.

47. Teachers provide stimulating and good quality work for students with special educational needs. Work in individual subjects is well matched to their learning needs.

48. The weaker aspects of this overall positive picture of teaching and learning lie in the limited range of teaching and learning styles used and the insufficiently systematic development of the key skills that promote students' independent and autonomous learning. In some English and biology lessons, students were so intent on taking notes that there were few opportunities for them to ask questions, explore ideas and to interact with the teacher and others in the class. In mathematics, teacher talk tended to dominate the lessons and, at times, students were not fully engaged in the work.

49. Where teaching groups are small, students' learning can be restricted, because they are unable to share ideas widely and learn as part of a group. It also makes it difficult for teachers to plan a diverse and stimulating range of learning opportunities. For some students, the combination of these factors, together with the length of sessions when lessons are blocked together, causes them to lose interest and motivation.

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

50. The quality and range of the curriculum is satisfactory but has some very strong features, such as the vocational options in Years 10 and 11. The NVQ course is very good and the work experience provided helps a significant number of pupils to retain their motivation within the educational system. Extra-curricular provision is good. Most departments contribute to the wide range of experiences, particularly in sport and music, but also in trips, visitors, challenges for higher-attaining pupils and whole school experiences, such as global awareness day. Pupils value these experiences, especially day trips and lunchtime clubs, since transport difficulties limit uptake in after-school events. Drama and musical productions are well supported by all the school community, including governors.

51. Curriculum experience is good in a range of subject areas, especially the teaching of literacy within English, the range of experiences in art and music and the development of more active learning and the use of ICT in science. In most other departments, the curriculum satisfies National Curriculum and examination board requirements, but there are a number of deficiencies. There is still no coherent provision in ICT and access to computers is limited in a number of subjects, such as mathematics, design and technology and the humanities. Some subjects have developed the use of ICT through their own efforts rather than support from whole-school co-ordination. There are more minor deficiencies within design and technology, in Years 8 and 9, and in religious education with too little time at present to cover the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Together, these deficiencies mean that not all statutory requirements are met, but when balanced against the strengths, result in a satisfactory curriculum overall.

52. Provision for careers education and PSHE is satisfactory. Both are well planned, managed and taught as part of the Complementary Studies programme. However, with the introduction of citizenship as a new subject, the programme is now overcrowded, leaving some pupils feeling it does not cover what they need, and the timetable is to be changed in September to accommodate this. Strengths of the careers curriculum are that it provides a broad knowledge of relevant issues and that pupils are encouraged to think carefully about the future and to consider the consequences of their actions and choices. It is linked well to practical needs, for example, options for Years 10 and 11 are made and supported in lessons and preparation for work experience is thoroughly supported and very well structured. Library resources for careers education are just adequate, but limited access to ICT reduces opportunities for class and individual use. The PSHE programme is very well organised, includes themed assemblies and covers all necessary aspects, including sex education and drugs misuse.

53. Overall, the curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. Provision for special educational needs is good. The available specialist support is good. The transition stage is well planned because good links with feeder schools ensure that the move from middle school to secondary education gives pupils continuity in learning. Pupils identified as needing support are monitored carefully so their special needs can be met by appropriate schemes within the curriculum. Provision for literacy and numeracy is sound. There are examples of good practice but they need to be more widely disseminated. Vocational education is very good, especially the NVQ courses in a wide range of areas such as animal care, car maintenance, hairdressing and woodwork. Through them, the community plays a very positive role in education. Relationships with partner institutions are very strong in the sixth form such as the link with a local college of further education. Curriculum links could be further developed at middle school level, although this has become more difficult as the number of feeder schools has grown. Taking everything into account, equal opportunities are soundly promoted through the curriculum, with a very strong emphasis on making the curriculum relevant to the needs of all pupils, via the vocational programme.

54. The last inspection judged provision for pupils' spiritual development to be poor, so the need to give it a higher profile, provide more opportunities for reflection, improve the context in which it was offered and monitor input was a key issue. A related issue was the need to meet statutory requirements for providing religious education for older pupils and a daily act of collective worship. The school has made good efforts to deal with these issues. Although work remains to be done to meet statutory requirements and to monitor what is offered, provision for spiritual development is now satisfactory, which is good improvement from a low starting point. The school's overall provision for pupils' personal development is good. The clear commitment to developing a happy, friendly, civilised and orderly working atmosphere supports personal development well.

55. The school fosters spiritual awareness adequately. Staff working in different subject areas are encouraged to identify opportunities for promoting it and plan special moments that inspire or amaze pupils. Individual teachers do this to great effect in particular lessons. For example, in a Year 8 science lesson to explain the effects of weathering in breaking up particular rocks, pupils were fascinated by crystals formed when glass cracked after being heated and cooled rapidly. In a Year 9 science lesson, pupils could scarcely believe their eyes when the teacher put out a tripod, Bunsen burner, frying pan and cooking ingredients. He then talked them through everyday applications of chemistry such as frying an egg and making pancakes, which inspired them to make their own pancakes at home and to explore how ingredients change when blended and heated. These moments of inspiration are not catalogued and followed up to ensure that pupils build up experience of being moved, and thinking about why they feel as they do, in a coherent way. The contribution from assemblies, religious education and other lessons to a sense of awe and what it means to be human, is modest. The school has scope to do more to ensure that pupils develop a capacity to think about and gain more insight into their own and other people's lives.

56. The school fosters moral and social development well within its routines and as a result of its commitment to high standards of behaviour. Its consistent approach to encouraging pupils to respond well to staff, to do as they are asked in class and to treat others with respect, supports moral development well. This is because pupils are left in no doubt about the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and what is the right thing to do. If they choose to misbehave, they are well aware that what they are doing is wrong and of the consequences. As a result, in the vast majority of cases, teachers do not have to exhaust the sanctions available to them before a pupil co-operates with a reasonable request to behave better. Teachers set a very good example, particularly in the way they speak calmly, but firmly, rather than shouting at wrongdoers.

57. The school offers a range of good opportunities for pupils to develop social and team work skills. Year 8 pupils value enormously their residential visit to develop team-building skills and to get to know each other better. In lessons, pupils have many opportunities to work together in pairs or groups, which they use well, as in a good Year 9 netball lesson, where girls of very mixed ability supported each other very well. They took the chance to praise individuals who were showing particular aptitude for a sport of which they have had less experience than usual. Pupils have useful chances to contribute to school life because they are consulted about what the school does well or could do better.

58. The school gives satisfactory attention to pupils' cultural development. It is well aware of the challenge posed by trying to promote racial equality and awareness in an area that lacks cultural diversity. It has explored the possibility of twinning arrangements with an inner-city school, but so far, its efforts have been unsuccessful. The will to do something positive ensures that when opportunities arise to build awareness and appreciation of other cultural traditions, these are used constructively. The contribution of art to multicultural awareness is particularly good. In Year 9, pupils have studied and made some stunning masks in the style of African, Malaysian, Chinese and Venetian traditions. Displays of textile work, collage, sculpture and painting that represent traditions from Greek to Roman,

Aztec to Japanese and beyond are outstanding. Poetry from around the world is taught in a sensitive and thoughtful way, with sophisticated comments about race and culture to help pupils develop ideas about similarities and differences in experience. In the mathematics area, displays are good and help pupils to become aware of the contribution of famous mathematicians from a range of very different backgrounds. However, as with other subjects, this perspective is not taken into the classroom and developed further. Opportunities are missed to extend awareness, especially in lessons that do not deal directly with cultural references specified by the National Curriculum.

## **Sixth form**

59. The quality and range of learning opportunities in the curriculum are good. The curriculum is broad and offers students a very wide range of courses to choose from. It caters well for all their differing abilities and aspirations by offering a mix of academic courses and both intermediate and advanced vocational programmes. For a small number of students, a one-year course, taught partly in The Kett and partly in a work environment, provides a very effective bridge between formal education and employment. The curriculum is very well matched to local circumstances and students' benefit from additional opportunities provided by local colleges of further education.

60. All students attend a weekly tutorial. Some tutors use the session well, extending students' general knowledge and their awareness of world events through planned debates and presentations.

61. Additional breadth is provided through the work-shadowing programme, one of a number of initiatives aimed at raising students' aspirations and enriching the formal curriculum. For some students it has been a chance to set their studies and coursework in a wider context, whilst for others it has been a chance to 'taste' a particular profession and to confirm or rethink their career plans.

62. A good range of extra curricular provision includes team sports, such as basketball and football, visits and visitors. Students take part in field trips and there are strong links with the community through performances, exhibitions and performing arts activities. Groups have visited the House of Commons, participated in conferences and attended presentations by visiting speakers. Visits are made to local places of interest and abroad. Travelling time between sites makes it hard for some students to join together to participate in team games and other after-school activities.

63. Currently, and while the sixth form is still being established, there is a mismatch between the numbers staying on into the sixth form and the number of courses offered. This has led to the creation of some very small teaching groups, particularly in Year 13, as The Kett honours a promise to continue running advanced level courses once students have begun their studies.

64. To enable the sixth form to operate across the three schools, subjects have a fixed amount of time, arranged within two half-day sessions each week. The long periods of time are used imaginatively and productively in some subjects but there are significant disadvantages in the organisation of others. The arrangement is very effective where teachers plan and use the time well, for example by allowing for changes of activities and sometimes changes of staff. Many students value the extended time that enables them to concentrate on a particular subject and for the extended study time. However, a short absence by a student or member of staff results in the loss of a large proportion of teaching and learning time. Curriculum planning across The Kett as a whole is still at an early stage.

65. Students' communication and ICT skills are appropriately supported through key skills lessons, but provision for numeracy is problematic because timetable constraints mean only small numbers are able to access the course. The Kett has no specific policy for developing numeracy, ICT and literacy within subjects.

66. One notional half-day session provides reduced curriculum time and attempts to make-up the time elsewhere in the week are unsuccessful. This creates inequalities in subjects that affect students' attainment and progress.

67. A weakness of the curriculum is the variability of access and provision for ICT. Currently, each site has a different set of computer programs and the systems are not linked. This creates problems for students, accessing and modifying their work on different sites, and a considerable loss of time spent in reformatting it.

68. Statutory requirements with regard to the teaching of religious education are not met.

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

69. The school cares for its pupils well. Good improvement is evident in a number of areas such as procedures for managing and improving behaviour and health and safety. Pupils are well supported both in their academic progress and their personal development. The tutorial system is effective, enabling tutors and heads of year to remain with their pupils from Year 8 to Year 11. Staff know their pupils well and supervise them carefully. The school works well with outside agencies to ensure that all pupils have an equal access to learning.

70. Pupils' academic progress is monitored well by tutors, subject teachers and members of the senior management team. An academic review day is held once each year. This is an opportunity for parents to discuss their child's progress and set short and long-term targets that are clearly displayed in journals. Credit and debit awards for good work and effort are given to help motivate pupils. These are awarded during tutorial times and contribute to pupils' awareness of the Record of Achievement. Celebration certificates are presented in special assemblies twice a year. The school works hard to ensure disaffected pupils are provided with opportunities to benefit from education, for example, through work-related programmes. The quality of liaison with partner middle schools is good. Information is collected about pupils before they arrive and this information is built on as pupils progress through the school. A comprehensive induction is organised for pupils before transfer to the school with a series of visits to meet teachers and sample lessons, with extra visits for vulnerable pupils.

71. The PSHE programme makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' personal development. The teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory and the quality of teaching resources is good. However, the programme is not valued by all pupils and some feel it would benefit from being more finely tuned to their needs.

72. The procedures for child protection are good. Two designated trained teachers are in place. Procedures are published in the staff handbook and staff are aware of the named people and procedures to follow. Issues relating to child protection are covered with new teachers in their induction programme.

73. Health and safety throughout the school is good. Accident books are maintained and updated as appropriate. Safe working practices are observed in practical subjects and due attention is given to health and safety matters. Risk assessments are carried out twice a year, one in the presence of a

school governor who then reports to the main governing body. The school has a good number of suitably qualified first-aiders. The school, when built, was intended for fewer pupils than at present so that at lesson changes the stairs and corridors are very crowded. The school is aware of this, and in order to alleviate this congestion, the lesson change times are staggered to avoid overcrowding. All the issues noted at the last inspection have been dealt with.

74. The quality of care and welfare for pupils with special educational needs is good. Weekly meetings of the support staff ensure that problems concerned with pupils' development are dealt with effectively. The Code of Practice stages are reviewed regularly and pupils' progress is recorded carefully. Annual reviews meet requirements and there are good links with specialists from external agencies. Parents and outside specialists are involved during assessments and kept well informed of pupils' progress.

75. Procedures for checking on and improving attendance are satisfactory. The recent improved use of computerised absence records, including the introduction of first day absence checks, is helpful. Recording of attendance, however, is subject to error because, unusually, the system is set up to detect when pupils are present from blank spaces left after tutors mark absences and lateness. It is too easy for tutors to miss a line or make a mistake. This leads to more notes than usual from parents, or tutors themselves, telling administrative staff that a pupil was, in fact, absent or present, contrary to data printed out at the end of the month. As a result, pastoral staff lose the impetus to follow up absences systematically, with reference to individual progress.

76. Procedures for managing and improving behaviour are very good. The school has worked particularly hard to develop positive, clear and firm approaches to discipline and high standards of behaviour. The consistency of approach, with the use of a very clearly set out hierarchy of sanctions alongside praise for improved behaviour, is making a difference. Pupils are much clearer about what is expected, so the working atmosphere in school and quality of behaviour are improving all the time, as teachers learn to use these procedures more effectively. Pupils confirm that relatively few instances of bullying occur. This is because the school has very effective procedures to discourage bullying firmly and, if it occurs, it is dealt with very well.

77. Overall the arrangements for assessing pupils' academic performance are satisfactory. Procedures are particularly strong for example in English and history where pupils know about their own targets and are supported well to achieve them. Assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory in ICT and in religious education, where assessment evidence has not been used to influence course provision. A formal system has yet to be developed for citizenship. However, throughout the school the teachers know the pupils well and use this to help raise their achievement.

78. A developing strength in assessment is the current focus on the effective use of marking and feedback to improve pupils' learning. It is appropriate that the school is currently reviewing the impact of the marking policy. The inspection found that pupils themselves are happy with the current procedures but also that inconsistency in practice leaves some pupils unsure about how to improve their work. The school has established good systems for tracking the progress of individual pupils as they move through the school. The setting of targets is based on previous tests that pupils have taken. Tutors assess an individual pupil's progress and this is considered at the academic review day each year.

79. The examination targets for each subject are drawn up centrally, but teachers in some subject areas do not understand this process clearly enough or the analysis of performance data, for example by gender. Overall, however, the improvements in assessment and target setting have contributed to raising overall school performance.



## **Sixth form**

### ***Assessment***

80. Assessment and monitoring of students' academic performance is sound. Assessment is good in English, art, media studies, history and sociology and, in the AVCE business course, the targeted guidance about how to improve helps students to make very good progress. Students are encouraged and receive good levels of support and guidance from subject teachers. However, in some subjects, whilst the oral feedback is of high quality there is insufficient written information given to students explaining how they can modify and improve their work. Access to teachers outside lessons is sometimes difficult and students would appreciate more written comments to guide their independent study.

81. The Kett is currently establishing a common assessment programme across the three sites. This includes the setting of target grades, based on each student's previous attainment, and the opportunity for subject areas to use assessment data to help in evaluating courses. Regular reviews of progress suitably involve the student, tutor and parent. Reporting arrangements are appropriate, with regular written progress reports. These include a record of target grades and the agreed "next steps" needed for progress in each subject. Timely opportunities are also being incorporated for guidance on higher education and careers, although further development is needed for the efficient co-ordination of careers advice across the three sites.

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

82. Students receive effective individual support and guidance from their subject teachers and tutors, overall. The relationships between teachers and students are very good. Students value the way that teachers are prepared to help them by running additional revision classes and arranging one-to-one tutorials. They expressed the view that the good support they receive contributes to their good progress.

83. Students found the taster days and the induction arrangements very useful and instructive. The management meetings between course leaders from the different sites are helping staff to become more aware of what is offered in The Kett and enabling them to provide better quality and more reliable guidance to their students.

84. In discussion, students had mixed feelings about the two-week work-shadowing programme. Some felt it gave them little new information and distracted them from their other work, but others were very enthusiastic and valued the experience and the contacts they had made. Most students feel the appointment system to meet with careers officers is very helpful, and the links with universities and national businesses are helping them recognise the potential benefits of study and work beyond their immediate locality. Nevertheless, some students feel they were not given appropriate advice about their future options. Students from different sites miss the chance to share the presentations provided by careers officers. This is because the organisation of these events is not co-ordinated, each site having a different careers officer.

85. The partnership adopts a successful 'early warning' system to identify the students who are struggling and in need of additional help. However, despite the best efforts of the staff, a small but significant proportion of students lose motivation and drop out of courses, sometimes because they cannot keep up with the level of work or because they discover the course is not what they expected.

The Kett has begun to tackle this on a number of fronts, initially by ensuring students have the qualifications that support study at a higher level and that, early in the course, they receive realistic predictions of their likely success. An achievement project has been introduced to give support to vulnerable students or those who are finding it difficult to meet their personal goals. Learning mentors give one-to-one advice and support to these students.

86. The necessary steps have been taken to ensure students' safety to and from different sites. However, the weaknesses that stem from incompatible computer systems, also affect the extent to which attendance can be speedily and effectively monitored. The records showing which students are on site are not always accurate. The three schools have different systems for tracking absences, and for checking that absentees do not fall further behind if they are struggling. The lack of an efficient, common system to check who is away and why, results in unreliable attendance data for the sixth form, particularly as teachers do not always take a register. This makes it very difficult to follow up on occasional or repeated absence, and to take steps to support the student before it is too late to make a difference.

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

87. Parents' views of the school are generally positive, as they were at the last inspection. They are pleased with the fact that the school expects their children to work hard and with the progress their children make. They have some concerns about homework, whether they are kept well informed about how well their children are doing and how closely the school works with them. The inspection team found that homework, in general, is appropriate. However, tasks for top sets could be more challenging at times. Parents receive more information about children's progress than many secondary schools provide, though some reports are clearer than others, in terms of the individual's continuing progress. The school tries very hard to involve parents in what it does and to work closely with them, but recognises that it is not as successful as it would like in encouraging parents to share its high expectations of their children.

88. The school has a sound range of productive links with parents. It invites them to information evenings and review days, following up those who are unable to attend where there may be concerns about a child's progress. Parents have the chance to attend weekly 'school surgeries' to discuss any issues. The school tries to make regular contact through journals and the school newsletter and to deal promptly with any criticism or queries. Parent governors are valued in their role as guides about what to do when problems arise, and as well-informed members of the school community, who can often put a parent's mind at rest quickly with an explanation of a policy or school letter. Parents are not particularly active in other roles, such as members of the School Association and, as in most schools, attendance at the annual governors' meeting for parents is low. In general, they are reasonably involved in what the school does and in support of their children's learning. This has a satisfactory impact on standards achieved. However, the school continues to explore ways of raising aspirations of parents and pupils to drive up standards even further.

89. Parents receive good quality information in general to help them to understand what the school expects of them, particularly through newsletters, the brochure and everyday messages that are easy to understand. The annual, full reports on pupils' progress are not as clear as the termly, short reports. This is because they draw on computer-based sentences that describe what pupils in a particular age group usually learn, instead of focusing sharply on strengths and weaknesses in the progress made by the individual pupil. The best feature of annual progress reports is the very shrewd self-assessment given by pupils, when encouraged to write about their strengths and weaknesses constructively and at appropriate length.

90. Parents expressed positive views about the sixth form in the meeting prior to the inspection and in their responses to the questionnaire. They valued the added breadth and choice The Kett provided and showed an understanding about the teething troubles that they felt were gradually being dealt with. There were however some concerns regarding communications, in particular about students' attendance and on the reporting procedures that enabled parents to monitor the progress being made. A point was raised about the need for teachers on the three sites to share consistent expectations and to demonstrate their commitment to the underlying philosophy of The Kett.

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

91. The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher is a good leader who has made many improvements to the school since the last inspection. The school has a good reputation, the behaviour of pupils is good, staff morale is high, teaching is good and standards are broadly in line with national expectations. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school which is shared by governors, staff, pupils and parents. Staff morale is high and they share a clear commitment to further improvement.

92. There is a very cohesive leadership team whose members have detailed job descriptions and carry out their responsibilities efficiently. The headteacher and other senior managers lead by example. Most of them teach and have a good knowledge of pupils both in and out of the classroom. They have a high profile around the school at times of movement and in lessons which helps to create an orderly environment. The leadership team meets formally twice a week to deal with both organisational and strategic matters.

93. The school has a comprehensive improvement plan with criteria for success. Faculty heads and heads of year also have development plans which link into the school plan. These plans also have target dates for objectives and criteria to measure success. The responsibilities of middle management are appropriately delegated and heads of faculty and year have up-to-date job descriptions. The work of middle management is well managed by two key stage co-ordinators who ensure that heads of year and heads of faculty work closely together. To this end they regularly convene key stage meetings to discuss administrative, organisational, curricular and pastoral issues. The minutes of these meetings are sent to the leadership group. The school has very good procedures to monitor progress in achieving whole school and departmental targets. The monitoring of teaching and learning by the leadership team is carried out well. It has successfully identified some areas of weakness and has brought about improvements in teaching and learning by providing support and further monitoring.

94. Communication in the school is generally good and there are many opportunities for all staff to influence decision making and policy formulation. All staff are involved in improvement groups which focus on specific issues. One of these groups evaluates progress made by the school to achieve its aims. On occasions, however, the leadership team does not explain sufficiently why certain decisions were taken. Policy formulation is now frequently developed through working parties of appropriate staff. The whole staff has been involved in developing a new behaviour policy, which has had a significant impact on improving behaviour. Additionally, the leadership team operates an 'open door' policy to staff. Regular staff meetings also provide an opportunity to communicate. The above approaches and strategies promote a good exchange of ideas on whole school issues and lead to the staff working effectively as a team.

95. In almost all subjects, leadership and management at departmental level are at least satisfactory

and in many cases good. This is having a positive impact on standards. Leadership and management are very good in English and modern foreign languages. However, they are poor in ICT. A very good system for performance management is working well. The members of the leadership team monitor the heads of year and faculty who, in turn, monitor their staff in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise standards. There is a parallel system of performance management for non-teaching staff. The headteacher has oversight of the targets for all staff. Some areas for concern or development have been identified by this process but the issues have not always been dealt with sufficiently speedily. As a result of the last cycle of performance management, the leadership team conducted an in-service session on successful teaching and learning. Additionally, staff within departments observe each other teaching which helps to spread good practice. Staff development in the school is very effective. Teachers' training needs are identified by appraisal and performance management and included in school and department improvement plans. The induction of new staff is very good. A good programme of training sessions at lunchtime and after school enables new staff to settle in very well. There is also a 'buddy' system for those who want it. Mentors are attached to newly qualified teachers to provide support and monitor their progress. Newly qualified teachers also benefit from the county induction package. The school brochure and the recently revamped staff handbook are effective tools for communicating information on organisational and curricular matters to parents and staff.

96. The school makes good use of new technology to ensure the effective management of systems. Detailed information on all aspects of school organisation and data on pupils and staff is stored in databases and is very easily retrievable. The administrative staff are all trained to use the new technology and they recently acquired more specialist roles in order to make systems work more smoothly.

97. The governing body makes a sound contribution to the success of the school. The governors are caring and very committed. They work in committees and have clearly identified areas of responsibility. They work very closely with the school and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Each member of the governing body is attached to a department and many governors visit the school to attend functions, to talk to or to observe teachers. One of their targets this year is for all governors to visit the school. The headteacher keeps the governing body well informed of all aspects of the school, including the achievements of all faculties. The governors are involved strategically in the formulation of the school development plan and school policies. They receive draft documents at an early stage for discussion and comment. The governing body has not, however, fulfilled its statutory duties with regard to the daily act of worship, nor ensured that the teaching of religious education, ICT and design and technology fully meet statutory requirements.

98. The strategic planning of the school's finances is good. The budget is well planned and managed with spending priorities well matched to the school improvement plan. The school has effective systems for tracking and monitoring expenditure. A predicted deficit on the teaching budget, caused by several long-term absences, was minimised by mid-year cuts to other budget headings, and negotiation with the local education authority to cover deficits due to increasing pupil numbers. Financial administration is very competently handled by the director of administration and finance officer. Auditors' reports have been positive, although the most recent audit was in 1997. The governors have a sound understanding of the current issues related to the budget and monitor it regularly through the finance committee.

99. The school is able to show that it applies best value principles in arriving at decisions by consultation and benchmarking exercises, to ensure high quality services. It is rigorous in its pursuit of good value for its expenditure, notably in decisions on building maintenance, cleaning, catering and grounds maintenance. The headteacher provides a strong lead through his management and monitoring

of finance issues and, together with the governors, ensures that best value principles are applied.

100. The school has sufficient qualified staff to deliver the curriculum, though some staff teach subjects in which they lack formal qualifications. Training in ICT has improved staff skills since the last inspection. Additional support for pupils with a statement of special educational needs is very good. Support in class for other pupils with learning or behaviour difficulties is also good in English, mathematics and science, but there is limited support in other areas of the curriculum. In spite of a recent increase in technical support for ICT, there is insufficient support in design and technology and art and design. Since the last inspection, many staff changes have resulted in a good balance of young and experienced staff. This is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. A well led and hard working team of administrative staff makes a very good contribution to the efficient functioning of the school. Maintenance and caretaking staff are also successfully involved in improving the environment.

101. The accommodation provided for some subject areas is unsatisfactory. The school has tried hard to comply with the issues raised in the last report. Some upgrading and refurbishment has been done and a new ICT room has been created. A theory room for physical education provides a satisfactory base for pupils on examination courses and, where rooms are in suites and subject specific, such as in mathematics, art and design, geography, history, languages, physical education and religious education, provision is good. Arrangements in these subjects make sharing of resources and communication between teachers easier. The school utilises its accommodation fully and managers are constantly manipulating space looking for possibilities of extra accommodation, for example in design and technology, where a new area has been successfully created. Despite this innovation and constant lobbying to improve provision of suitable accommodation, some subject areas mentioned in the last report remain unsatisfactory. Most mobile classrooms remain unsuitable for the use intended. This is detrimental to pupils' learning in some subjects. For example, progress in some music lessons is affected and the problem is exacerbated by the lack of sound insulation in these temporary buildings. The restricted space in a textiles room raises health and safety issues as well as affecting standards. In a food technology room, units are in poor condition. Science laboratory teaching and planning can be disrupted by the need to interchange facilities with the sixth form. Other classes in some subject areas are not always taught in designated rooms, causing inconvenience for teachers and constant movement of equipment, for example in careers, media studies and most GNVQ subjects. English classes have unequal access to satisfactory facilities. ICT classes are taught on a rota because of the timetable and the constraint of specialist rooms available; this affects standards. The library has insufficient computers for the numbers in ICT classes which are taught in the area. Some areas such as drama need refurbishment. The school makes the best use of most of the accommodation available but significant weaknesses remain due to the increase in pupil numbers since the school was built. At lunchtime, the hall area, which is used as a canteen, becomes very crowded and it is not large enough to accommodate all pupils who wish to sit and eat their lunch. At change of lessons, stairs and corridors become congested and, although pupils are well supervised and for the most part behave sensibly in the confined spaces, it is difficult to move easily in some areas. Access for the physically impaired is being considered and discussions with the local authority are taking place.

102. Resources are overall sufficient to meet the requirements of the curriculum. They are good in physical education, music, science and English, where pupils are well supplied with texts. However, there are a number of areas in which resources are lacking. For example, geography has insufficient equipment to support fieldwork. Although the number of computers available within the school has increased substantially and is sufficient for the school roll, access to them is unsatisfactory. This affects the ability of many subjects to fulfil their contribution to pupils' entitlement to ICT experience.

103. Library provision is satisfactory overall. The reading room is well resourced, and the main library

meets the requirements of many subjects well, for example English and music. There is a need to continue the review and improvement of library resources for some other subjects, for example design and technology, media studies, history and science.

## **Sixth form**

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

104. Overall leadership and management of the sixth form are sound with some significant strengths and also areas for improvement.

105. The headteachers and governors, with the support of the director of the sixth form and the key staff from partner schools, have shown very good leadership. Opening The Kett has been an ambitious and visionary project, led by the three headteachers. Their outstanding vision is underpinned by the desire to raise students' aspirations and actively to encourage an enthusiasm for learning that will last beyond formal education. The Kett is shortly to complete a second academic year in which a lot has been achieved over a relatively short time. Whilst key staff realise there is still much to do, governors and headteachers are solidly behind the partnership and recognise the benefits to the whole student population.

106. By pooling the resources that each school generates for seventeen- and eighteen-year-old students, The Kett gives them greater choice, and access to relevant courses that would be uneconomic and unviable in separate schools. The sixth form, and the preparation for it, promotes life-long learning. Students, who had not previously seen themselves as learners beyond the age of sixteen, have enrolled on courses and are taking an active part in the life of The Kett. There have been positive gains in helping to raise students' aspirations and achievement.

107. The leadership and management of subjects and courses are good or very good in about half the subjects inspected and sound in the rest. In some subjects, for example in art and design, the sciences and psychology, staff have taken the initiative, embraced the idea of The Kett and are sharing good practice, expertise and experiences. Regular meetings have led to the formation of common documentation and joint planning in some subjects, or in others, to teachers' better understanding and awareness of what each school offers. There have been gains for teachers' professional development and for students transferring from Year 11 to Year 12. However, in a few subjects, where the questions of seniority or individual roles and responsibilities within The Kett have not been addressed squarely, changes are proving slow to happen. This accounts for some of the inconsistencies that exist, across subjects and sites, and the lost opportunities for collaboration.

108. A key weakness that hampers efficient management is in the means of communication. The computer systems that underpin so much of the organisation and management of The Kett are incompatible. This affects the speed and flow of information from one site to another and restricts the efficiency and smooth running of the routine day-to-day work of senior staff and subject leaders. The tasks of checking attendance, accessing assessment data, having regular contact with colleagues and students and processing examination entries, are time-consuming and cause enormous frustration for staff. On occasion, serious mis-communication has occurred. Improving these management systems and standardising the information and layout of key documents, like the timetable and performance data, would allow staff to concentrate their time and efforts on securing improvement and raising standards. For students, it would help improve communications with teachers across sites and allow them better access to their work on computers, and in a form that more accurately reflects the business environment that they are likely to meet outside school.

109. Monitoring of what is being offered is satisfactory overall. The strengths include the programme of monitoring led by the director of the sixth form and the professional development opportunities that spring from these activities. Senior staff are well placed to capitalise on the strengths identified and tackle areas for development in their individual schools and across the sixth form.

110. The governing body, in full support of the vision for its future, has ensured that the partnership arrangements for The Kett are protected within a legal framework. A rationale for the distribution of resources, and how they benefit students, underpins these arrangements. Governors have a sound understanding of how the aims are being implemented and the strengths and weaknesses within the curriculum. However, they have not been sufficiently probing of the links between their strategic plans and the detail of the financial arrangements.

111. Governors are aware that they are not fulfilling their statutory obligations with regard to the teaching of religious education.

112. Strategic planning is sound, based on a good plan with clear objectives and challenging targets. The plans are imaginative and have served to underpin the launch of The Kett and the partnership between the three contributing schools. The priorities for the sixth form link well with priorities for each of the partner schools. The task of monitoring the progress towards meeting the objectives is made difficult because the criteria in some areas are lacking sharply-worded, quantifiable outcomes. However, increasing recruitment and retention rates, applications to higher education and students' average point scores in advanced examinations are key objectives, and these targets are challenging and unequivocal.

113. The sixth form is cost effective and running, in general terms, within its budget. Nevertheless, the financial planning for the future is not sufficiently robust and is unsatisfactory overall. The impact of spending decisions, both on the main school and the sixth form, are not analysed in enough detail by headteachers or governors. A number of teaching groups are running with very small numbers, and at considerable cost to the main schools and the sixth form. Whilst the rationale for this arrangement is convincing in the short term and as The Kett is being established, such groups are unviable and unsustainable in the longer term.

### ***Resources***

114. Staffing, resources and accommodation are satisfactory overall.

115. Almost all teachers are subject specialists and they are qualified and experienced in the subjects they teach. Arrangements for professional development and performance management are good, and work in partnership with the school that staff refer to as their 'home school'. Teachers have a good and up-to-date knowledge of their subject and the examination requirements, and this has helped to raise students' examination performance.

116. Resources are satisfactory, though with inconsistencies between sites and subjects. History, biology and chemistry have sufficient, good quality resources. Good use is made of a digital projector and digital camera attached to a microscope, in biology and chemistry. However, deficiencies were noted, for example in the availability of up-to-date maps in leisure and tourism, and in the range of texts and other resources in French and German. The library provision across The Kett is satisfactory, housing a suitable range of study materials and other publications and periodicals. The library is good on one site and unsatisfactory on the other two.

117. The standard of accommodation varies greatly on the three sites, in terms of the sixth form social areas, the study spaces and teaching rooms. A number of courses are planned and run without making best use of the resources and accommodation across The Kett as a whole, and this limits the work of the students. Whilst much of the accommodation is well decorated, has good quality displays and is a suitable size for the groups that use them, a number of teaching rooms are unsuitable and this restricts teaching and learning styles. Accommodation is good in art and design, where students can work outside their lessons. Unsuitable accommodation includes mobile classrooms or rooms that are too small, as in physics and geography. In sociology, where the room is used for other subjects, equipment has to be moved around and this wastes teaching time. The performing arts department lacks sufficient performance space.

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

118. Building on the good improvement made since the last inspection, and to raise standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) ensure that statutory requirements for ICT, design and technology and religious education are fully met by:
  - improving the leadership and management of ICT to ensure that the co-ordination and management across the curriculum is effective;
  - ensuring that subject teachers have access to and use computers to support pupils' learning as required by the National Curriculum for each subject;
  - ensure that all elements of the design and technology National Curriculum are taught, such as structures and the use of computer aided design (CAD) and computer aided manufacturing (CAM);
  - providing sufficient time in Years 10 and 11 for pupils to achieve their potential and cover the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus in GCSE religious education.

*(5, 9, 38, 51, 95, 97, 100-2, 128, 138, 151, 161-2, 116-7, 173, 180, 182-7, 192, 195, 210, 212, 214, 216)*

- (2) Work to improve the quality of accommodation, which, despite the schools best efforts,



does not provide a suitable learning environment in some subject rooms, particularly for

:

- English, design and technology, music and in mobile classrooms.

(101, 128, 166, 198)

*(The numbers in italics show the main paragraphs in which these issues are discussed in the report)*

119. The report also identifies some other issues which governors may wish to include in the action plan to be developed following this inspection. They include:

- extending the strategies for improving pupils' skills in numeracy across the curriculum (as planned); 8, 37, 140
- increasing the availability of support for pupils with special educational needs; 100
- improving library resources for some subjects; 103, 146, 207
- ensuring that action is taken to comply with legal requirements for a daily act of collective worship; 54, 97
- increasing opportunities for pupils to extend their cultural awareness and experience and reflect on the wider world; 58
- implementing the planned opportunities for extending the learning of gifted and talented pupils; 11, 162, 166, 204
- improving curriculum links with middle schools in some subjects; 53
- improving the recording of attendance procedures, to avoid errors; 75
- increasing the clarity of some progress reports; 89
- improving assessment in ICT and religious education. 77, 126

## **The Kett Sixth form**

120. The Kett management committee of governors, the headteachers of the three schools and the director of The Kett should:

- (1) Improve communication, the management of resources and the administration systems.

This will enable

- teachers to work more closely together and share good practice
- administrative systems to work more effectively and efficiently between sites, particularly those concerning ICT systems and attendance
- financial management and strategic planning to be tighter so that governors and key staff can more easily monitor the impact of spending on students' achievements.

(63-8, 81, 84, 86, 107-8, 112-3, 117)

121. The Kett report also identifies some other issues which governors may wish to include in the action plan to be developed following this inspection. They include:

- underdeveloped use of ICT and oral and written language in some subjects; 17
- inconsistencies in the identification of gifted and talented students; 18
- insufficient opportunities for students to widen their horizons; 27
- insufficient opportunities in some lessons for students to develop independent learning skills; 48
- statutory requirements with regard to the teaching of religious education are not met; 68, 111
- in some subjects, students do not receive enough written constructive criticism of their work. 80

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	Years 8 – 11	150
	Sixth form	74*
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		49

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

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Years 8 – 11</b>							
Number	5	33	60	44	8	0	0

Percentage	3	22	40	30	5	0	0
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**Sixth form**

Number	2	22	33	15	0	0	0
Percentage	3	30	45	20	0	0	0

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

\*Two of the lessons observed were not graded for teaching

***Information about the school's pupils***

**Pupils on the school's roll**

	Y8 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1210	325
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	140	25

**Special educational needs**

	Y8 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	21	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	166	12

**English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

**Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.5
National comparative data	7.8

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
National comparative data	1.2

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	138	165	303

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	96	113	106
	Girls	136	121	109
	Total	232	234	215
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	77 (69)	77 (74)	71 (68)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	36 (32)	47 (43)	28 (21)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	73	104	78
	Girls	110	117	106
	Total	183	221	184
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	62 (74)	81 (76)	61 (66)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	23 (29)	34 (30)	13 (25)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2002	151	142	293

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	65	126	141
	Girls	74	127	135
	Total	139	253	276
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	47 (40)	86 (91)	94 (97)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	36.1 (37)
	National	39.8 (39)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	10	20
	National		n/a

***Please note there are no results for The Kett joint 6<sup>th</sup> form.***

***The first cohort of students taking A-level examinations will do so in summer 2003.***

***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

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

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1161	14	1
1	0	0
13	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
4	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
6	0	0
0	0	0
9	0	0

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

***Teachers and classes*****Qualified teachers and classes: Y8 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	85.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.4

**Education support staff: Y8 – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	31
Total aggregate hours worked per week	61

***Financial information***

Financial year	2001/2
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	£
Total income	3,913,833
Total expenditure	3,953,606

**Deployment of teachers: Y8 – Y13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.9
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**Average teaching group size: Y8– Y11**

Key Stage 3	24.7
Key Stage 4	22.4

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Expenditure per pupil	2804
Balance brought forward from previous year	7,645
Balance carried forward to next year	-32,128

***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	17.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	27.1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.5
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	1210
Number of questionnaires returned	367

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	25	59	13	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	32	60	7	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	15	57	14	2	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	11	55	23	7	4
The teaching is good.	18	64	9	1	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	49	19	6	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	34	53	8	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	47	5	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	17	56	20	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	19	57	11	2	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	22	62	8	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	46	15	2	20

\*Figures may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding.



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

### **ENGLISH**

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

#### **Strengths**

- Pupils achieve well due to good teaching from knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff.
- Relationships are very good. This enables teachers and pupils to work together productively, and is having a positive impact on standards.
- Pupil performance is monitored very effectively through the department's continuous assessment records.
- The department is led and managed very well, leading to an improvement in standards.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- In a few lessons, teachers dominate the discussions and in others, activities are not varied enough.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use ICT, through no fault of the faculty.
- Some of the accommodation is unsatisfactory and has a negative impact on pupils' learning.

122. The results of the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 show that pupils performed above the national average and above the average for similar schools. This is because of good teaching in Years 8 and 9 which helps pupils to improve. Girls performed better than boys, although the difference is less than it is nationally. This has been the case for the past three years and represents a real improvement in the results of boys. Test results in English at the end of Year 9 have risen since the last inspection. At GCSE, results in English and English literature were both close to the national average in 2002. The proportion gaining A\*-C grades was below average in both subjects, although closer to the average in English. Boys performed slightly less well than girls when comparing their results to the average, but the gap has been reduced since the last inspection. This improvement is the result of sensible steps taken by the department to improve boys' performance in reading and writing. The number of pupils entered for GCSE English and English literature has gone down over the past two years from a percentage well above the national average. This is a result of other courses taking some pupils away from part of their English curriculum.

123. Pupils join the school with knowledge, skills and understanding which are below average in English. In Year 9 current standards of attainment are above expectation. This represents good achievement. In Years 8 and 9, pupils develop a growing awareness of the need to speak Standard English when it is appropriate and they listen well to their teachers and to their classmates. Standards in speaking and listening therefore meet national expectations. Standards in reading in Years 8 and 9 are above average; a majority of pupils are able to read aloud with confidence and by the end of Year 9 many are becoming comfortable with more sophisticated ideas, seen in their writing and in their responses in class. Standards in writing are also good. Most pupils complete a substantial amount of written work of different types, including very good quality creative writing from some pupils. As they progress through to Year 9, pupils learn to organise simple and complex sentences into paragraphs. Most pupils begin to sustain and develop their ideas but the extended writing of lower-attainers lacks the clarity produced by appropriate structure and punctuation.

124. In Year 11, current standards are just above expectation. The written work scrutinised during the inspection shows that pupils achieve well, particularly when their results at the end of Year 9 are taken into consideration. This follows the pattern of 2002, when Year 11 pupils achieved well in their GCSE examinations bearing in mind their own results in Year 9. In Years 10 and 11, all pupils make good progress, including those with special needs; some make a good deal of progress very quickly. This is because teachers have high expectations and the majority of pupils respond to the challenge. The folders of work produced are substantial and contain an impressive amount of varied work which is preparing them well for their examinations in English and English literature. All pupils show that they are very aware of the effects of persuasive language, both in their analysis and in their own writing. Written work and evidence from lessons on *Charlotte O'Neill's Song* and *To His Coy Mistress* show that poetry is being taught in a thorough and analytical way. Pupils are learning well the importance of textual evidence. Higher-attaining pupils are developing characters and settings in narrative and being encouraged to play with narrative structure in a creative manner. Lower-attaining pupils are supported with suitable material which helps them to achieve well, although some of their longer pieces of writing lack organisation. Standards in reading and in writing are therefore above average in Years 10 and 11. Standards in speaking and listening are variable but meet expectations. In some lessons pupils were most responsive, less so in others.

125. Teaching and learning are good in all years. All the teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory or better, and much was good. Teachers develop very good relationships with pupils, which enables a good working atmosphere to be created. In one Year 11 lesson, oral presentations by individual pupils were discussed and graded by the rest of the class in a very sensitive and thoughtful manner. Here, as in other lessons, GCSE criteria were used very effectively to prepare pupils for the examination. Teachers plan well for individual lessons and sequences of lessons and ensure that pupils are clear about what they will be learning. The content usually challenges pupils suitably, even when there is a wide range of ability in the class. In one Year 9 lesson, in which pupils were using ICT, good planning ensured that progress was made by all pupils. In the most effective lessons teachers make very good use of open questions, framing them suitably for pupils of different abilities; all are thereby given confidence while they make good individual progress. Some teachers give more extended opportunities for discussion, where pupils can test their ideas against those of others. The development of pupils' reading has been made a particular focus, and the department reading room is an excellent and well-used resource. It complements the main library, which has a useful section of critical texts and is stocked and organised satisfactorily. Conversations with pupils show that they understand their personal targets and what is required to improve in the subject. They are also aware of the individual continuous assessment sheet, which the department uses very well to record the progress of pupils throughout the school. These are extremely useful in ensuring that pupils are tracked effectively, making staff aware if pupils are underachieving.

126. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in English. Some dynamic, fast-paced teaching was seen on *Macbeth* in Year 9, which enhanced their learning considerably. They were given short, achievable tasks, both written and oral, which helped their confidence and ensured that they thoroughly enjoyed the lesson while making very good progress. Teachers have high expectations of higher-attaining pupils at GCSE, who in one lesson were offered confident, academic explanations of the writer's craft in straightforward terms. This revealed not only very good subject knowledge on the part of the teacher, but also the ability to express complex ideas simply, which helped pupils to understand and apply those ideas to their own writing. The few pupils whose first language is not English are well supported by teachers and make good progress.

127. Although teaching is certainly good overall, there are a few areas where it could be improved. Teachers dominate some lessons and so not enough time is given for pupils to explore their own responses. Conversely, when activities go on for too long the pace of the lesson sometimes drops. It is

noticeable in both these situations that a minority of pupils become disengaged. As a consequence of this, while standards in reading and in writing are good in both key stages, standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory. Generally, pupils behave very well but they do not always enjoy being challenged intellectually and lessons where the teacher allows this to influence expectations can lack rigour.

128. The department's improvement since the last inspection has been good. This has been made possible by very good leadership and management. The standard of teaching has improved and attainment at the end of Year 9 is now above the national average. During the last inspection a significant minority of lessons were unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning are now monitored regularly and planning generally is a strength of the department. The attitudes and attainment of boys have improved since the last inspection and teachers have worked hard to improve their approach to reading. Some opportunities are still missed, however, for encouraging more pupil contributions in lessons where teachers dominate. Although teachers in English are keen to work more with pupils using ICT, there are difficulties at present which prevent suitable access to equipment. This is not the fault of the department. Accommodation is also an issue within English. Many teachers and pupils do enjoy good and improved facilities and resources, but some still have to work in mobile classrooms which are of an unacceptable standard, and affect the quality of how pupils learn.

## **Literacy**

129. Overall, the provision for literacy in the school is satisfactory. There has been a whole school approach for many years and attempts have been made to make the teaching of literacy important in all areas. Some faculties have developed their own policies and others, such as science, have adopted nationally suggested guidelines. These are to be found in faculty handbooks, where a variety of approaches are usually outlined. Nearly all departments are conscious of the importance of key vocabulary; most rooms have displays of key words and there is evidence that these are referred to by pupils and teachers. Writing frames are also used extensively to support pupils. In art, a writing frame for evaluating artists' work is used by all year groups, which helps pupils build up to more extended writing in Years 10 and 11. Other worksheets and grids are used in several subjects, such as in religious education, and sometimes these are used to set differentiated work for groups within the class. In some subjects, the attention of pupils is drawn to structure, spelling, presentation and grammatical accuracy. This helps them to improve their writing, especially when they are being encouraged to produce longer pieces of work.

130. A lack of consistency is apparent in some areas, however, where policies are not always followed. In mathematics, a good section in the handbook focuses on extended speaking but no evidence was seen during lessons of pair or group discussion. Year 10 ICT work showed no sign of being checked for spelling and grammar and contained many avoidable errors.

## **DRAMA**

131. Drama is taught for one lesson a week in Years 8 and 9, and as a GCSE option. Results in 2002 were broadly in line with schools nationally. Lessons were observed in Years 9 and 11, some pupils' written work was sampled, departmental information reviewed, rehearsals for the school play and for GCSE performances were attended briefly. This evidence suggests that pupils' achievements in drama are good, overall. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 develop their drama skills through practical experience using a variety of forms and strategies. They are taught how to create, perform and respond to drama. For example, pupils in Year 9 learn how to develop contrasting characters through their study of scenes from the musical *Blood Brothers*. Teaching and learning were good in the lessons seen. Pupils in

Year 11 are taught to create characters and situations, reviewing their development throughout the drama process by recording their practical experiences in a working notebook. As a result, pupils develop skills in critical thinking which can be re-applied in other subject areas. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and are committed to creating the best possible performances for the GCSE examination. Pupils in Year 11 were observed directing their own rehearsals during the lunch breaks. A broad and balanced curriculum is provided. Pupils study many different aspects of drama, as well as acting, through participation in practical lessons. For example, one pupil has opted for lighting design as the skill he is offering for his GCSE drama examination. A strength of the department is the enthusiasm generated by lively leadership which encourages all pupils to take part in the school productions, currently *The Daughters of Venice*, written for performance by a Youth Theatre. Pupils respond well to this approach and enjoy many drama activities. Consequently, drama makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths

- Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 are good in relation to pupils' prior attainment.
- Pupils have positive attitudes and good relationships in lessons.
- The use of homework to support pupils' learning is developing well.
- Teaching and results have improved since the last inspection.

### Areas for improvement

- Not enough emphasis is placed on exploring and problem solving in the learning of mathematics.
- The use of ICT to enhance the learning of mathematics is not well enough planned or resourced.
- The department's approach is inconsistent in areas such as assessment, numeracy and the effectiveness of teaching methods.

132. The 2002 results at the end of Year 9 were above average compared with all schools nationally, and with similar schools. The results have risen over the last five years, and have been slightly better than the results in English and science. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment, given that they join the school with overall standards that are below average. GCSE results have improved considerably since the last inspection, and in 2002 the results were close to the average compared with all schools nationally. Inspection evidence suggests that pupils in Years 10 and 11 are achieving satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. Overall there is not a major difference in the performance of boys compared with girls.

133. The work seen during the inspection reflected the examination and test results. Overall standards in Years 8 and 9 are above, and in Years 10 and 11 in line with those expected. Standards in upper ability sets are around and above national expectations, with the highest ability pupils producing very accurate work in algebra and trigonometry for example. The majority of pupils, including those in middle and lower sets, take care in presenting neat work. Recorded work and lessons suggest that pupils generally are strongest in applying routine methods they have been taught and less used to exploring mathematical ideas or devising and communicating their own approaches to solve problems. Higher-attaining pupils can draw accurate quadratic and cubic graphs, for example, but there was less evidence of problem solving and reasoning. Some lowest-attaining pupils could follow a rule to change 0.5 into a percentage, but others needed more help in exploring the relationship between decimals,

fractions and percentages. Pupils have a sound breadth of knowledge and skills. For example, low-attaining Year 8 pupils could identify line and rotational symmetry, whereas high-attaining Year 11 pupils could process and represent different forms of statistical data. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, as the teaching is often well matched to their abilities and some effective classroom support is available.

134. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching and of learning was good overall in Years 8 and 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. All the teaching was judged satisfactory or better and this represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, especially in Years 10 and 11.

135. Some common good features to the teaching were seen. Good relationships and effective classroom management contributed to the positive response of pupils. In one very good lesson, a brisk and lively class discussion about finding areas and volumes, with the help of practical materials, engaged the pupils and gave them confidence from the start. The teachers have good subject knowledge and this enables them to give clear explanations, and to question pupils effectively so they can learn the necessary facts and skills. They share with pupils the lesson targets and key words, although targets are not worded suitably for some pupils. The majority of lessons were planned well, with some using effective oral and mental starters and many providing a brief but valuable plenary at the end to check what had been learnt. In another very good lesson on measuring time, a low ability group were attentive and involved throughout because the planning, challenge and use of materials and classroom support contributed to very good progress. The routine of homework that is being developed and supported by prepared workbooks, makes a good contribution to the progress that pupils make.

136. Relative weaknesses in the teaching seen included, in particular, too much use of teacher talk and the insufficient use of pupil discussion, investigation or practical activity to support their learning. Perceptively, the pupils themselves indicated that an aspect of mathematics they did not like was “too much listening and not enough doing.” In some lessons, the overall pace was slow or the first part was insufficiently lively and interactive. Although staff have guidance about “extended speaking” in mathematics, only rarely were pupils asked to discuss ideas with each other or explain their thinking at length.

137. Pupils’ attitudes and behaviour are good. They listen attentively and concentrate well. Pupils in both higher and lower sets try hard when given exercises to complete. The pupils’ good effort and hard work make significant contributions to their progress.

138. The use of ICT to enhance the learning of mathematics is a weakness, and it is not well enough planned or resourced. Assessment is a process undergoing development, which, along with marking and record keeping, is inconsistent. The best practice involves clear, detailed feedback to pupils about how to improve. Useful plans are being developed to provide extra support for the gifted and talented, and lowest-attaining pupils.

139. Leadership and management are satisfactory, having ensured that the quality of teaching and results have improved. However, the previously identified weaknesses such as investigative learning and numeracy need further attention, so overall improvement in mathematics since the last inspection is satisfactory. Inconsistencies remain in areas such as assessment and the effectiveness of teaching methods. However, mathematics is well-staffed with specialists and the accommodation is good. Mathematics benefits from a stimulating area with some very good displays of work and posters that can contribute to pupils’ learning.

## **Numeracy**

140. Numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory overall. Some subjects contribute to pupils' skills and make use of these. For example, opportunities for numeracy in geography are identified in planning and seen in displays of fieldwork and project work. This includes measurement skills in work on maps and use of statistical analysis from surveys. The use of numeracy in science is highly variable. Some presentation of graphs and data is good but some is unsatisfactory, with inappropriate graphs drawn inaccurately. However, some imaginative numerical work was seen on food values. A sound start has been made to develop numeracy across the school through whole-staff and subject training sessions, but there is a recognised need now for a written policy and practical guidance.

## SCIENCE

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

### Strengths

- Achievement is good, with a gradual rise in test and examination results, especially for boys.
- Learning and pupil attitudes are good as a result of the good teaching by a strong core of enthusiastic and imaginative teachers.
- Very good relationships and strong support help the learning of pupils with special educational needs.
- Good leadership and management have brought about strong teamwork and improvements in such areas as curriculum, assessment, staffing and accommodation.
- Very good use of ICT contributes to pupil interest, motivation and learning.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards of presentation in pupils' work.
- Standards of literacy, numeracy and marking through the full implementation of policies and dissemination of good practice between staff.

141. Results at GCSE are in line with the national average in the proportion gaining A\*-C grades and in the overall point score, though below average in the higher grades. Results in the Year 9 tests have risen over the past four years and now meet national expectations, and are average compared with similar schools. More pupils attain the expected level 5 than do nationally but a lower proportion gain the higher level 6. Compared with their own prior attainment, pupils are above average at level 5 and equal to it at level 6. There are differences between boys and girls. Boys have overcome the underachievement noted in the previous report and are now above average in Year 9 and in GCSE results as well as scoring the national average percentage of the higher A\*-B grades. They do as well in science as in their other subjects. Girls do not do as well in science as they do in their other subjects and remain below average although, because more are entered for double award science than is the case nationally, the average point score gained per pupil is above average. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment is below average, with fewer higher-attaining pupils than is usual. Therefore these results indicate that pupils achieve well.

142. Standards observed in lessons and in work samples meet national expectations. Work sampled in Year 11 was of average standard but represented good progress. Some pupils produced very good work on graphs and mathematical relationships and showed very good understanding, for example in work on forces, ecology and ionic equations. They gained experience in independent literacy skills, such as in information research on transition metals. Work seen in Year 10 was more variable. Standards varied from well above to below what might be expected. Good work was seen on genetics and good numeracy in the electricity module. Some pupils, however, had low standards of work

completion, affected by low literacy skills or motivation.

143. Work sampled in Year 9 was stronger. Standards met expectations and pupils achieved well. They were able to investigate and draw conclusions on topics such as photosynthesis and pulse rate, to deal with word equations and to research information and explain it clearly, for example in work on hydraulics, food and metals. There was good work on human variation with the development of statistical skills. Quality was very high in the top set work, including imaginative work on plant structure and function. In some of the middle sets, some teachers were less effective in ensuring completion of assignments. Standards varied more widely in Year 8. Some work of the higher-attaining pupils was unsatisfactory. Graphs were roughed out in exercise books rather than graph paper and low standards of presentation and tabulation were accepted. There was insufficient evidence of skills development and independent or extended work. Work seen in the lessons was of a higher standard when teachers set an appropriate level of challenge for pupils. In spite of inconsistencies, taking prior attainment into account, pupils' achievements are good.

144. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and the department is characterised by a majority of very enthusiastic and imaginative teachers. Their teaching extends across all the age groups and all the sets, in most year groups. Examples observed included cooking of eggs and pancakes in Year 9, which fascinated a lower set class and introduced them to the concept of chemical change. Personal interests were harnessed, such as posing on mountain and road bikes to introduce aerodynamic design and its economics and relate these to everyday life, leading to good learning and motivation in a Year 9 class. Story telling and humour was used in Year 10 to enliven the introduction of refraction, which bolstered very strong relationships to the benefit of later learning in the module. An excellent example of independent work, again in Year 9, saw pupils working on different aspects of photosynthesis and showing very good presentational skills in reporting back to the rest of the class, including the use of a digital microscope to show very well-prepared slides of leaf surface. The best teaching promoted literacy skills including independent research and speaking and listening. Very good use was made of ICT both to illustrate concepts and to motivate pupils. For example, graphical results were displayed in a plenary session showing the cooling curve of solidifying salol so that all pupils had access to the numeracy challenge. Pupils enjoy the use of science websites and the posting (anonymously and with parental permission) of digital photographs and information about the achievement which led to the award of gold credits. The above examples come mostly from Years 8 and 9, because Years 10 and 11 were engaged in module examinations. Strong support is provided to help the learning of pupils who have special educational needs. Even in routine activities, such as revision, there was evidence of very good relationships and the use of ICT leading to good learning in lower-attaining classes.

145. Some teaching had relative weaknesses. There were examples where pupils did not express the full level of their skills in written work and the policy on literacy teaching, which is very good, is not fully embedded in practice. A few teachers accepted work of too low a standard. This included persistent lack of homework and low standards in tabulation, graphing and numeracy in general, particularly in Year 8 top set work. No teaching was unsatisfactory, but some was unimaginative, such as Year 8 work on magnets and on yeast respiration and some Year 11 work on heart dissection, which did not offer sufficient challenge for higher-attaining pupils. Marking was thorough, and in the best cases gave clear support to learning, especially that of lower-attaining pupils. In some cases, however, targets did not lead to improvement, for example on homework completion in some sets. The use of the marking system was sometimes impressionistic and gave no real indication of whether the pupil was achieving targets based on National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades or guidance on how to improve. In most cases pupil attitudes were good, reflecting teacher enthusiasm and relationships, but this was not always the case. If challenge was low or, in some cases, if experimental technique was insufficiently thought out, pupil attitudes verged on the unsatisfactory, although they did not cross the line. In pupil discussions, their attitudes to the subject reflected the variation in teaching, being

sometimes very positive and sometimes less so. Where teaching was strong, the science department made a strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions of education.

146. The science department is a large one and has made enormous strides since the last inspection in 1997. The high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and attitudes has been eliminated. The teaching team is much stronger than it was then. Staffing has been improved. Three new laboratories have added to the accommodation and a rolling programme of refurbishment is improving the older laboratories, although those for the sixth form are still unsatisfactory. Support for new members of staff is good as is the development plan and the associated professional development, in areas such as the curriculum, assessment and in particular the use of ICT for administration and to promote learning. Policies and schemes of work are good although there is room for development of the teaching materials to increase their impact on the standard of the written work. Resources are good, and well managed by a strengthened team of technicians. Library resources are still weak and need to be brought up to date. The recent acquisition of new computers put the science department in the forefront of school development in this area. Lack of spare rooms nevertheless causes difficulties to both teachers and technicians. Health and safety is effectively dealt with. Overall leadership and management are good and a strong team is being built up in the school. Since the last inspection, the science department is much stronger in many respects and improvement overall is good.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- Pupils achieve well due to good teaching.
- Pupils make very good reference in their own work to artists past and present.
- Teachers give generously of their time and share their enthusiasm for the subject with the pupils.
- The art studios provide very good accommodation and visually stimulating displays.
- The department is very well led with energy and flair.

### Areas for improvement

- The lack of technical support means teachers spend too much time preparing materials and resources.
- The development of CAD and Internet research is limited by restricted access to equipment.

147. Pupils enter the school with below average attainment in art and design. At the end of Year 9 in 2002, teachers' assessments placed pupils' attainment as above the national average, with more than one third at the higher levels. They accept that this was over generous. In 2002, GCSE results at the end of Year 11 were below the national average, particularly at the higher grades, although all pupils passed. Since the last inspection, results have declined slightly each year, mainly because of the underachievement of boys. More girls than boys take art and design GCSE and their results are higher than boys', with a greater difference than is found nationally.

148. Standards seen during the inspection were good overall. They are average in Year 9 and just above average in Year 11 where work seen was better than the GCSE results of 2002 suggest. Achievement is good from Year 8 to Year 11 as pupils build on skills learned and become more confident at handling different materials. The standard of boys' work has improved as teaching styles and careful planning have taken into account their motivation and interests. By Years 10 and 11, many



higher attaining pupils are producing outstanding work as a result of very good guidance and encouragement from the teachers. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs do well because each pupil is valued and given appropriate tasks and achievable targets. As a result of the expertise of the teachers, pupils learn the correct techniques involved in working with a range of materials. The practice of developing an idea in different media and scale is one that is refined as pupils move through the school. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' sketch books have many examples of an idea meticulously taken through different stages of drawing, colour, paint, print, collage, photography and often sculpture. Pupils know about and make reference to a number of artists and art movements from different times and cultures. They learn well by investigating and exploring different artists' work and different art media. Year 8 pupils looked at pictures of hands drawn by Leonardo da Vinci, Escher and Ernst before attempting to draw their own. Year 9 pupils, making careful drawings of plants and shells to create a large painting of a make-believe animal, were stimulated by seeing the fantastic heads composed of plants and vegetables by the 16<sup>th</sup> century Milanese painter, Arcimboldi. Work in the GCSE classes showed reference to Picasso, Hockney, Lichtenstein, Matisse, Cezanne and many others as well as styles and cultures from all over the world. Year 10 pupils were researching methods and decoration of ceramic pots from many different countries and historical periods. Consequently, their own coil and slab pots were of an impressively high standard.

149. Pupils' attitudes are good overall. The subject is growing in popularity with over half the year opting for art and design in Years 10 and 11. In spite of the disruptive behaviour of some boys in Year 9, attitudes to work of the majority are satisfactory and very good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are generally well motivated. They show enjoyment in the subject and many return to the studios at lunchtime and after school to continue with their work. They respect each other's ideas, beliefs and values and treat work and equipment with care. They acknowledge the expertise of their teachers and appreciate their availability when seeking extra help. This underpins the good relationships between teachers and pupils.

150. Teaching is good overall with some very good and excellent teaching in Years 10 and 11. Teachers communicate their subject knowledge with enthusiasm. They have high expectations and set lively and challenging tasks which promote an individual response from the pupils. Aims and objectives are clearly stated. Good demonstrations and lively question and answer sessions aid assessment and reinforce learning. Exciting displays provide an inspirational learning environment and celebrate good work. The regular use of sketch books in each year promotes very good work habits and is contributing to higher standards in Years 10 and 11. Teachers emphasise the importance of wide reading and accurate writing and progress is evident in pupils' annotation, description and evaluation of work. Higher-attaining pupils develop a good art vocabulary which they use with ease. All pupils are encouraged to reflect on their work before talking and writing about it. Teaching and learning styles have improved since the last inspection. However, some teaching in Years 8 and 9 that is otherwise satisfactory, displays weaknesses in classroom management. Pupils do not always listen to instructions and this results in misbehaviour which disrupts the work of others.

151. Although planning was a strength at the last inspection, the detail and quality has improved further. Teachers give pupils an outline of each topic, deadlines for completion and guidance on what is being assessed. This is helpful to all pupils and proving particularly successful in keeping the boys on task. Very good procedures for marking work, instant feedback in lessons and personal tutorials for GCSE classes helps pupils to know their strengths, their standards and what they should do to improve. As a result of recently introduced standardisation meetings, teachers are becoming increasingly skilful at assessing work on National Curriculum levels in Years 8 and 9 so that these are now more accurate. Although the art teachers are enthusiastic and play a full part in training colleagues in the use of ICT and CAD, the use of computers to support the curriculum is currently unsatisfactory because of limited access to equipment and software. Accommodation for art and design is a strength, with

studios used for displays of work which stimulate learning. High quality visits each year to galleries in Amsterdam, Barcelona or Paris offer older pupils good enrichment during the holidays, but opportunities for term time visits to local galleries and studios are restricted by staffing. There is no technical support for art and design so teachers spend much of their time on preparation of materials and equipment.

152. The department is very well led with vision, energy and flair. Targets for improvement are agreed and, the hard working and committed team of teachers share the determination to succeed. Management is good but, in a faculty comprising a number of arts subjects, responsibilities within art and design could be better shared. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Strengths found in the last inspection have been maintained and developed and teaching has improved. The department is now in a good position to raise standards further. It contributes strongly to the wider aims of the school and continues to make a significant contribution to its creative and cultural life.

## **CITIZENSHIP**

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

### **Strengths**

- Planning and organisation are good and responding to identified needs.
- Pupils actively participate in the school's democratic systems and the school council is already established as a valued institution.
- Community involvement is encouraged and some activities have made a noticeable impact on pupils' development.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Systems for monitoring teaching and learning and assessing pupils' achievement are underdeveloped.

153. Citizenship is currently taught as clearly defined modules within Complementary Studies, which includes PSHE and careers provision. It is also taught in some specific subjects, for example geography, history, religious education, English and science. The programme is clearly planned and results from detailed auditing of overall provision. It does not yet include as wide a programme of topics as possible. For example, there is insufficient emphasis on considering the diversity of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom. The timetable allocation will be increased from September to allow this to be improved.

154. While aims and objectives for citizenship are clear to teachers, under present arrangements they do not always make these fully explicit to pupils, so many pupils do not yet see its distinctive contribution to their learning and personal development. At this early stage, there is insufficient evidence to comment fully on standards and achievements in citizenship, although available evidence shows that they are variable and largely reflect teachers' commitment to this new subject in the curriculum.

155. Few lessons specifically on citizenship were seen. However, the quality of teaching and learning in Complementary Studies, and in other subject lessons where it was a feature, was satisfactory overall. Some effective lessons included a Year 8 citizenship session on 'ecological footprints', where pupils considered the impact of their actions on the planet's resources, and two Year 10 careers lessons on letters of application for jobs. Key features of these successful lessons were that teachers understood and adapted the good materials provided for them, using imagination and skill to make the

work relevant and to promote pupils' thinking and discussion. Although teachers encouraged participation by all, in some lessons boys dominated discussion.

156. Some pupils in both key stages participate actively in the school and key stage councils, which are a growing strength of the school. Pupils feel they have a real voice and have already taken, and implemented, useful decisions, for example the provision of seating in pupils' social areas. All pupils are trained to participate in school elections, in which all are required to vote. School council representatives are trained for their responsibilities and they have a say in setting the agenda. A pupil in Year 8 currently chairs the council. Other pupils can opt into work on an externally run environmental project or other activities as part of the school's summer Activity Week.

157. As yet no formal systems have been set up for assessing and recording pupils' attainment. As a result, teachers and pupils have inadequate understanding of how much progress is being made. While some aspects of the curriculum have caught pupils' imagination, they have yet to appreciate the value and relevance of citizenship as a curriculum subject, and many are quite insular in their views about the United Kingdom and the wider world.

158. The senior manager responsible has led the introduction of citizenship well and was aware of most of the areas for development. However, current timetable restrictions have hindered necessary changes. The timetable and teaching arrangements will be changed in September 2003. The newly introduced progress files have the capacity to support well pupils' recording of their achievements in citizenship.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Pupils make good progress in Years 8 and 9.
- Overall results are above the national average for GCSE, and particularly good for girls.
- Good quality products are made by pupils for GCSE coursework in electronics, food, resistant materials and textiles.
- A committed team of staff have good relationships with pupils.

### Areas for improvement

- Not all elements of the design and technology National Curriculum are taught.
- The use of ICT, including the use of CAD and CAM, is underdeveloped.
- Some accommodation is unsatisfactory, as is the location of some of the older machinery.

159. Pupils join the school with a mixture of previous design and technology experiences. Good progress is made in bringing pupils in line with national standards by the end of Year 9. The proportion of Year 9 pupils gaining a level 5 and above is close to the national average and has shown slight improvement over the last three years.

160. A strength of the faculty is the proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades at GCSE compared to the national average. In 2002, the girls' results were very good and one third better than those of the boys. Over the last two years, results in the food and textiles aspects of the subject have been very good. A slightly lower proportion of pupils than the national average gained A\*-G grades in 2002. Good results in GCSE graphics products have been maintained, with around half of the pupils gaining A\*-C grades. A drop in the A\*-C results in electronic products last year, after two good years, and

inconsistency in the resistant materials results, can be partly explained by staffing difficulties. These are areas which are followed traditionally by boys in the school, and this has had a negative impact on their results.

161. The standard attained by pupils currently at the end of Year 9 is in line with expectation overall. Pupils gain experiences in using a wide range of design and technology materials. All make progress, including those with special educational needs, because of the supportive teaching and the good relationships between pupils and teachers. For example, a well-planned homework sheet for Year 8 pupils used structured writing. Pupils in Year 9 are assessed in resistant materials, food and textiles. The end of key stage work seen in folders and in lessons showed that, in most aspects of the subject, pupils had made satisfactory or good progress. Pupils were able to use a range of hand and machine tools to make quality products, for example a good quality storage box in resistant materials. Pupils were making good progress with their knowledge and understanding of systems and control. Weaknesses however, were also seen in folder-work. Pupils had not made adequate progress in applying the design processes throughout the course. In the work seen, pupils showed a lack of spontaneity and creativity and of experience in evaluating their designs as they developed. This omission is having an impact on later achievements. Pupils' work also showed a lack of the use of ICT to support the designing and making of products. This results in too much concentration on meticulous hand-drawn and colouring methods. The achievement of pupils therefore, by the end of Year 9, is satisfactory.

162. The standard attained by older pupils is also in line with that expected, taken across all design and technology subjects. Despite the good teaching and learning at this stage, the standards attained by pupils are being constrained by the lack of ICT, particularly in the use of computer-aided design, linked to computer-aided manufacturing, which is part of the statutory requirements for the subject. These facilities would enable all pupils to produce GCSE coursework of higher quality. As with younger pupils, this means that pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory over Years 10 and 11. Current work seen in these years highlights the problems of the school not having the appropriate facilities to teach pupils to the new GCSE subject requirements. This is preventing the gifted and higher-attaining pupils from gaining the highest grades. Lower-attaining pupils are also lacking the support that ICT systems could offer in the production of coursework. Further weaknesses were seen in Year 11 graphic product course-work, where the quality and style of graphics work was limited. This was again due to the lack of ICT, CAD/CAM facilities, and a limited range of graphic materials. Pupils were achieving very highly, however, in practical work in textiles, food, and resistant materials. Work seen in electronic product design ranged from good to satisfactory. Good work was characterised by a wider range of materials and a good final finish.

163. Pupils have good, and sometimes very good attitudes towards the subject. They clearly value their work and take pride in completing their products to a good standard. Older pupils in very good lessons co-operated very well with each other, sharing resources and equipment. Pupils were happy to provide the correct food ingredients and materials for food and textiles lessons. In all years, pupils were able to speak confidently about their work using the correct technical terms. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils, who in return respond in an appropriate, polite and courteous manner.

164. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with strengths in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have good subject knowledge. This ensures that pupils have a good understanding of the skills involved in practical work in a range of design and technology materials. Behaviour management is good due to a calm and friendly approach. Teachers have satisfactory plans of their individual lessons in which they share clear objectives with their pupils. This results in tasks being completed in lessons. However, the pace of some lessons is slow, and others lack sufficient challenge. The comprehensive monitoring and assessment system is a strength of the faculty. Marked work, however,

did not have useful suggestions on what pupils needed to do to improve their work. The quality of the teaching and learning for pupils following GCSE courses is good, but with variation amongst the different subjects. Very good teaching was seen in food technology and textiles, with good teaching in resistant materials. Good and satisfactory teaching was seen in electronics product design lessons. However, some weaknesses in the teaching of graphic product design were evident, due to the lack of appropriate equipment.

165. Teachers, through the use of supportive worksheets and good questioning techniques, reinforce literacy skills. Unfamiliar technical language is highlighted to extend the pupils' vocabulary. This results in pupils being able to speak confidently about their work using the correct technical terms. The teaching of numeracy is less developed, though examples were seen of pupils being taught sequencing, geometrical pattern making and estimation and measurement skills. Teachers prepare appropriate work for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are also supported well by conscientious support staff. For example, they help pupils to select appropriate ingredients for food technology, and assist in practical lessons to enable the manufacturing of successful final products.

166. The leadership and management of the faculty are satisfactory. The head of faculty has high standards, aims and aspirations for the pupils. Monitoring and support systems are in place to improve teaching. The faculty deals effectively with behaviour issues. There has been some consideration of the 14 –19 curriculum and the impact of these changes. Government funding has been effectively used to provide a cluster of computers for control technology teaching. However, faculty planning needs to be developed to provide clear routes of challenge for all pupils. At present, two areas of the National Curriculum are not being taught and therefore the school is not meeting its statutory obligations in terms of teaching structures and the use of CAD and CAM. Overall, accommodation is unsatisfactory. For example, some textiles work has to be taught outside in a mobile classroom, which is unsatisfactory because of the lack of space and inadequate equipment. In one of the food technology rooms, the work units are in a poor condition. The department follows health and safety guidelines. However, the unsatisfactory location of preparation equipment, such as a circular saw in a teaching area, and workshops equipped with a broad mixture of resistant material machines, does not contribute to an effective teaching environment and has a negative impact on standards. Resources contained in the library for design and technology are unsatisfactory, as they are out of date and poorly organised.

167. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The strengths in the last inspection have been retained, but some of the weaknesses such as the provision for CAM still need to be dealt with.

## GEOGRAPHY

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

### Strengths

- Good teaching is leading to improving levels of attainment.
- Good leadership and management that knows what needs to be developed and how to do it.
- Effective departmental administration, assessment and monitoring provide a platform for rising standards.

### Areas for improvement

- The accessibility of ICT to pupils to enable greater use to be made of this rich resource in teaching and learning.
- More use of the local area to teach the skills of geographical enquiry.

168. Levels of attainment across the school when measured by national tests and examinations are below average overall and have been so for the past three years. Attainment in teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 was close to the national average but results in GCSE examinations have been well below the national average. Over the same period, however, the proportion of candidates attaining grades A\*-C has risen from 23 per cent in 2000 to 54 per cent in 2002, the latter figure being close to the national average and better than the target figure set for pupils entered for the examination. Attainment in geography is not as good as some other subjects in the school. The performance of girls and boys was similar in each year. These levels of attainment are a reflection of the considerable staffing difficulties experienced by the department since the previous inspection.

169. With a new, well-qualified staffing complement in the department, levels of attainment seen in lessons and in the work of pupils during the inspection are much improved. Attainment now matches that expected nationally and for many pupils, especially those with higher levels of prior attainment, is above average. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 have a good understanding of the factors which determine the site of settlements, they know why and how settlements grow and are able to apply their knowledge in simulation exercises to locate settlements in the landscape. Knowledge and understanding of plate tectonics and the effects of volcanic activity on human beings and the physical landscape are sound and pupils' application of mapwork skills is growing. In Years 10 and 11, pupils understand well the effects of demographic change, they have a detailed knowledge of the main features of drainage basins and the work of rivers and the causes and effects of flooding. In all years the use of specific examples to illustrate geographical phenomena enhances levels of attainment and provides an extra dimension to their studies. Pupils with special educational needs often reach levels equal to that of other pupils in the group, through the individual attention they receive.

170. Achievement is much improved. Pupils are now making good progress in their studies, enlarging their knowledge of places and processes and developing their geographical skills. This is particularly seen in coursework studies for GCSE examinations in which detailed data collection and analysis from field studies at Southwold are used to describe and explain the features of longshore drift and pebble movement along a beach. Throughout their course, pupils are encouraged to develop geographical skills of map and atlas work, of photographic interpretation and of research from the Internet. They have a good understanding of geographical vocabulary and their achievements are regularly reinforced by reference to examination grades, requirements and techniques.

171. Pupils are well behaved and concentrate well during lessons. They participate willingly, asking and responding to questions intelligently. They are often fully involved in learning, as was seen in lessons on Kenya in Year 9 and studies of shantytowns in Brazil in Years 10 and 11. They co-operate well when working in pairs and groups and support each other when required to discuss and draw conclusions. Good classroom management by teachers and pupils' good attitudes to their work contributes significantly to the standards currently being achieved in geography.

172. The quality of teaching is good and lessons often have very good features. Subject specialists now teach all lessons, which is an improvement on the previous position. Teachers are well qualified, have good subject knowledge and are devoted to their work. Planning is very good. Lessons are very well structured. They have a variety of tasks and incorporate much pupil-centred activity. Teachers make good use of well-prepared work packs and resource materials so that pupils learn for themselves. This was particularly the case in Year 8 lessons on coastal landforms and methods of erosion, and a Year 11 case study on Sao Paulo. The pace of lessons is often brisk, keeping pupils on task. Videotape extracts, as seen in a Year 9 lesson on Chinese population controls, are used effectively. Homework extends learning and is well used as a stepping stone to new work. Only very occasionally, when teachers play too large a part in the lesson, does concentration by some pupils lapse. Pupils with

special educational needs are well provided for with tasks and materials that are appropriate to their needs and extension work is often available to challenge pupils with higher levels of attainment. In all lessons relationships are good, aims are clear and pupils know what is expected of them and what they should have learned by the end.

173. The newly appointed head of department has done much to raise standards. A new handbook, an appropriate development plan and detailed schemes of work provide good guides to teaching and assessment and ways to enhance pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, particularly for the newly qualified teachers. As a result, pupils' work incorporates a variety of writing, geographical vocabulary is a feature of classroom displays and writing frames are used to encourage accurate responses to questions. Numerical work includes the use of co-ordinates, scales, making calculations from statistical evidence, effective analysis and evaluation and the use of helpful graphical presentations, especially in relation to fieldwork projects. The head of department provides good support to staff and has begun the process of monitoring the work of pupils and teachers. As yet, not enough use is made of this information to help teachers improve the planning of their work. The head of department is aware of the need to improve the availability of ICT, and to extend fieldwork to all year groups. As yet, little use is made of the local area for practical activities.

174. Resources are adequate, though the supply of atlases and local maps needs extending and the department lacks in-house computer technology or adequate access to whole school facilities. Some fieldwork equipment is in short supply. Satisfactory accommodation is enhanced by good quality displays of geographical material, including contributions from pupils that stimulate interest. Of concern, however, are proposals to reduce the time available to the subject in Years 8 and 9, which will make coverage of the National Curriculum difficult without closer curriculum links with middle schools. Above all, rising attainment is the result of a dedicated team of staff, enthusiastically moving the department forward.

175. The department has made good progress since the last inspection, particularly in the last twelve months. Attainment is at least average, assessment is much improved, teaching is now good, schemes of work are comprehensive and specialist staff are in place. This good department is well on the way to improving further.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- Achievement has improved and GCSE results are very good.
- Teachers have very good subject and syllabus knowledge.
- Relationships with pupils are good.
- Teaching is good throughout the department.

### Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT to support pupils' learning is underdeveloped.
- Few opportunities are provided to enrich the curriculum by visits, visitors or clubs
- Department schemes of work and handbook do not incorporate fully whole-school cross curricular expectations.

176. The GCSE results in 2002 were well above national and school averages. Girls achieve better

than boys. Public examination results have improved considerably in recent years. Teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicated that their attainment was in line with national expectations. In the light of their prior attainment, pupils make good or very good progress in history.

177. Work observed during the inspection shows that standards in Year 11 remain well above average compared with national expectations. For example, pupils in Year 11, in their study of medicine and science, were able to identify weaknesses in medical provision in the nineteenth century from sources from the time, suggesting reasons why society was slow to accept changes we today consider essential. Higher-attaining pupils offered complex accounts of the important factors that combined to produce the commonplace use of penicillin. All of the pupils showed a sound grasp of medical changes at this time and the impact of their use. Pupils achieve very well in Years 10 and 11.

178. Standards of work by the end of Year 9 are in line with national expectations, and pupils achieve well. For example, most pupils seen in a Year 9 class were able to build on prior learning and new information about the peace treaty at the end of World War One. They suggested a range of motives that lay behind the winning powers' demands, and identified probable feelings in Germany about this treatment. Higher attaining pupils were able to make suggestions about the future stability of Europe. All pupils showed a grasp of the treaty details.

179. The teaching and learning observed was always good and often very good. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subject and examination requirements. For example, in a very good lesson with a group of Year 8 pupils studying France on the eve of the revolution, the teacher had gathered a range of materials, accessible and appropriate for the group. By the end of the lesson, all of the pupils could express some understanding about the qualities that a king in eighteenth century France would need to be successful. Higher-attaining pupils were able to explain why some apparent advantages might also be thought of as a disadvantage. In a Year 11 class, very good awareness was shown by the teacher of how the pupils might reach higher levels of response. The teacher clearly reinforced previous teaching. This resulted in pupils being able to shape their responses to include informed evaluation, as well as displaying very good knowledge and understanding of major changes in medical hygiene and treatment. Some teaching, which was nonetheless characterised by a clear focus on expected learning outcomes for the pupils, would have benefited from engaging them more in their learning. For example, with a Year 9 group considering the nature and purpose of wartime propaganda sources provided by the teacher, pupils were in a position midway through the lesson to explain their findings to the rest of the class and react to their observations, contributing to their oral competence. Pupils' learning is clearly supported by a very good range of assessment strategies. Work is marked with clear comments on how to improve. Learning outcomes are made clear in lessons and, in discussion with pupils, teachers provide effective support in moving them forward to meet these. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Pupils with special educational needs, and those from ethnic minority backgrounds, make good progress along with their peers. There are opportunities in class for higher-attaining pupils to make further progress.

180. Since the last inspection, significant improvement has been made in the quality of teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' attitudes were seen to be very good in Years 10 and 11, and good overall. However, throughout Years 8 to 11, teachers provide few opportunities for pupils to learn through visits, visiting speakers, and clubs to pursue their particular areas of interest. Also, throughout the inspection, little use of ICT was seen to support pupils' learning.

181. The department is well led and managed. Textbooks are available to resource the pupils' learning throughout the course, although the library provision should be reviewed to ensure it can be easily used by pupils to support their studies. Accommodation in specialist rooms is good. The department



handbook and schemes of work make reference to some cross-curricular requirements, such as literacy, numeracy and citizenship. These should now be fully incorporated in schemes of work, to make clear to all teachers of history just how these contributions to whole school expectations are to be achieved.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Some teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Some departments have taken initiatives in the use of ICT, for example, in science.

### Areas for improvement

- A significant proportion of teaching has weaknesses in planning, marking, and the use of demonstration equipment.
- A structure has not been developed to ensure the full delivery of the ICT National Curriculum across all year groups. This was an area for improvement at the time of the last inspection.
- Access for subjects to a suitable range of ICT equipment is inadequate.
- Programs are not currently used which would enable staff and pupils to share work between home and school.

182. Pupils begin Year 8 with a wide range of ICT experiences but overall standards are below national expectations. Teacher assessments suggest that by the end of Year 9, the attainment of the majority of pupils is in line with national expectations and that pupils' results are average. However, a lack of systematic training and monitoring for these assessments, which are collected from across subjects, limits their validity. There are no significant variations in the standards attained by boys and girls. In Year 8, ICT is taught as a discrete subject to all pupils and again in Years 10 and 11. Last year's Year 11 pupils only received a very limited amount of teaching time in Year 11 and none in Year 10. This led to results in the short course GCSE which were well below the national average.

The increased amount of curriculum time available for Years 10 and 11 should lead to improved results. However, standards of work seen in Year 11 are below expectations currently.

183. In Year 9, ICT is delivered through subjects and across the curriculum. Inspectors report that the standards seen in Year 9 are below expectations. Recognising that pupils start from a low base of ICT skill on entry to the school, pupils need more support than currently exists. Pupils do make satisfactory progress in Year 8 but this is not maintained in Year 9 and so achievement in Years 9 to 11 is unsatisfactory.

184. In Year 8, examples were seen of both good and unsatisfactory teaching resulting in teaching overall being satisfactory. Where teaching was effective, pupils made good progress through the teacher's good subject knowledge and clear demonstrations. Teachers circulated around the room helping and advising pupils. Planning was appropriate for the level. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the learning and the pace of the lesson was slow. A lack of equipment made demonstration impossible and pupils were left unsure of what they were supposed to do. The marking of pupils' work is a significant weakness contributed to by the rotation system of classes.

185. In Years 10 and 11, there was a range of teaching from unsatisfactory to good, resulting in a satisfactory picture overall. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the teacher had no backup plan for when equipment failed and talked to the class for a whole hour. The objectives of the lesson were never set out and pupils were not involved or given anything to do. Learning was minimal. Where teaching was good, the teacher used limited resources effectively and gave focused advice on examination requirements leading to pupils making good progress. Some teachers need more support in developing teaching and learning approaches appropriate to the age group. Teachers have good subject knowledge but there were examples of excessive teacher talk, poor planning, a lack of marking and a slow pace of learning. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils when taking the subject are good. Pupils behave well and work hard.

186. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. The unsuccessful attempts by departments across the school to deliver the ICT requirement of the National Curriculum is a source of major frustration for staff. Some subjects, such as science, have set up their own systems with imaginative websites that make a positive impact on pupils' learning while the technology department has used National Grid for Learning money to set up its own computer area. Other departments have downloaded resources onto the school's Intranet. The head of art has taken a very good initiative to provide staff training which is popular in the school and available to staff from other schools. There has been some attempt to provide pupils with more discrete ICT lessons with classes now occurring in Years 10 and 11. However the amount of curriculum time allocated is insufficient for pupils to build up skills to achieve their potential in Year 11, and the lack of discrete ICT lessons in Year 9 is a particular weakness when pupils do not arrive at the school until Year 8. In Year 9, mathematics is supposed to contribute significantly to the delivery and assessment of the National Curriculum. However, there is no recorded planning even for time allocation or content. Across the school, all teaching staff have received government mandated training in the use of ICT for their own teaching and administration, since when they have become more willing to use ICT in their teaching. However, while the number of computers is around the national average, problems of accessing computers have led to disappointment and a disincentive to plan for its use, and teachers do not have enough ICT-based equipment such as data projectors to use to implement their plans. Staff and pupils are frustrated by the school's use of a computer program for word processing that differs from the standard package used in the vast majority of home and business computers. Whilst there exists a theoretical model as to how the ICT National Curriculum is being delivered and assessed, it is clear that the impact on pupils' learning cannot be guaranteed and systems have not been put in place to monitor adequately ICT provision and effectiveness.

187. In the light of the time it has taken to bring about the improved provision called for in the last inspection report, the leadership and management of ICT is poor. A diffuse management structure leads to unclear lines of accountability and responsibility. The school needs to consider how issues still unresolved from the last inspection will be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

### Strengths

- Teachers have very good linguistic skills and very good subject knowledge.
- Good teaching and very good relationships lead to pupils' good achievement.
- Teaching of low attainers and pupils with special educational needs is very effective.
- Visits to France and Germany enrich the curriculum.
- The department is led and managed very well.

### Areas for improvement

- GCSE German results have been well below average.
- Links with the feeder middle schools, though satisfactory, could be closer and make a greater contribution to pupils' achievement.
- Use of ICT is underdeveloped as an aid to learning within lessons.
- National Curriculum criteria are not always used for assessing pupils' work.

188. The standards in French on entry to the school are very uneven. They are generally below national expectations. Most pupils take French in Year 8 but there are additional classes in Spanish and German. Pupils have no prior knowledge of these two languages. In 2002, teacher assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 show that over half of all pupils reached the expected standard. Teacher assessments over the last two years have risen steadily which indicates that attainment in

French and German increased well during Years 8 and 9 and was average. Spanish has only just been introduced into Year 8 and there is no German in Year 9 this year. No significant difference is apparent between the standards achieved by boys and girls.

189. The standards in French in Years 8 and 9 observed in lessons and from a scrutiny of pupils' written work are above the national average. The standards in the beginners' classes in Spanish and German in Year 8 are also above the national average. Pupils listening skills in all three languages are generally good and they cope well with lessons almost entirely in the foreign language. In a Year 8 Spanish class, pupils successfully identified details about the price and description of souvenirs from recorded texts. Pupils of the same age also coped well with a difficult recorded German text about times and daily routine. In one Year 9 French class, with several pupils with special educational needs, pupils' listening was good and they understood, when supported by effective mime and use of visuals, a native speaker of French speaking at normal speed. Speaking skills in all three languages are also generally high. Pupils generally asked and answered questions with good pronunciation. In a Year 8 Spanish class, pupils described presents accurately. Year 9 French pupils successfully took part in role-plays about school subjects in French, but their pronunciation was very anglicised. Year 8 German pupils made lengthy presentations about daily routine without notes in front of the class. Pupils' reading and writing skills are satisfactory in all three languages. Higher attainers in French in Year 9 write accurately on a range of topics making good use of different tenses and time markers. Middle and lower attainers copy words and phrases accurately and write longer texts with the support of templates. Written work in Spanish and German in Year 8 provides good consolidation for oral work. Achievement in modern foreign languages in Years 8 and 9 is good.

190. The school enters pupils for GCSE in either French or German. Spanish is not currently taught in Years 10 and 11. GCSE results in French in 2002 were above the national average. Over half of the pupils gained a grade C or above. Results in previous years were of a similar standard. Results in GCSE German in 2002 were well below average. Results in German over the previous two years were also low. The above results were generally in line with departmental predictions.

191. Standards seen in lessons and observed in pupils' written work are broadly average in French. They are just below average in German, and show improvement. Pupils' listening and speaking skills are generally good. In one Year 11 French class, pupils successfully identified details in a recorded text and asked and answered questions fluently about daily routine. In another, pupils' French pronunciation was very anglicised, however. In a Year 11 German class where several pupils had special educational needs, pupils successfully produced dialogues in which they invited each other to go out and do different activities. The reading and writing skills of pupils in French and German are sound. Pupils' written work consists of compositions, letters and dialogues on a range of GCSE topics. Higher and middle attainers accurately use past, present and future tenses and a variety of structures and vocabulary. Their writing is generally well presented, although a few examples in German were badly presented and with incomplete tasks. Achievement in French in Years 10 and 11 is good overall and satisfactory in German.

192. Overall the teaching and learning of all three languages are good, sometimes very good and occasionally excellent. Teachers' linguistic skills are very good and they have a very good knowledge of National Curriculum and GCSE criteria. They do not always use National Curriculum criteria for assessing pupils' work, however. Teachers have high expectations and lessons are well planned and have clear aims. Generally pupils have opportunities to practise listening, speaking, reading and writing in lessons. Homework is used well to consolidate class-work. In class, teachers correct pupils' oral work very sympathetically which creates a positive atmosphere for learning. They mark their written work conscientiously which helps pupils to improve. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and encouraged to achieve their best and high attainers are also challenged and stretched.

Pupils are often enthusiastic in lessons and work well on written and spoken tasks. They listen carefully to the teacher and to cassette recordings. On a few occasions, some pupils were not attentive for short periods of time or did not concentrate hard on oral work when working in pairs. Teachers are trained in ICT and encourage pupils to use it out of lessons. There are no computers in the department, however, and access to the computer rooms is not easy. The use of ICT needs further development.

193. The modern foreign languages department is managed very well. The teachers work together very closely and share ideas and materials. The monitoring of teaching and learning is very rigorous. In the recent past, the department has had difficulties recruiting German teachers which has affected standards. Resources, with the exception of ICT, are good. Accommodation is satisfactory. The library is currently satisfactory but languages magazines have been ordered to improve the stock. The visits and exchanges abroad are very good and help to motivate pupils improve oral work. Links with the feeder middle schools are satisfactory but could be developed further to enable the department to build on pupils' prior learning more successfully. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## MUSIC

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

### Strengths

- Teachers' good subject knowledge contributes to pupils' progress.
- Pupils are well managed.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject.
- Extra-curricular provision provides challenge for talented pupils.

### Areas for improvement

- Little use is made of ICT for pupils in Years 8 and 9 to support their creative development.
- The limited quiet areas for individual practise are not used effectively enough.
- Noise levels during some practical sessions are adversely affecting pupils' performance.

194. Teachers' assessment of pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2002 showed that nearly four-fifths of pupils achieved the expected level 5 and above. These above average results are an over estimation and not a true reflection of pupils' attainment. This is due partially to teachers' inaccurate interpretation of the levels of attainment and also to changes of staff. A relatively small number of pupils take GCSE music each year and care has to be taken when interpreting results. In 2002, almost

all pupils gained the A\*-C grades and all pupils the A\*-G grades. This was a slight decline from the A\*-C results in 2001. A\*-G results have been above average over recent years.

195. Pupils enter the school in Year 8 with overall below average attainment. However, achievement is good and, by the end of Year 9, pupil's attainment is at the expected level. Pupils' opportunities to compose music in their previous schools are varied. However, with the emphasis that the school has placed on pupils' creative development their progress is good. They make effective use of composing techniques, such as an ostinato and a ground bass, as a foundation of their work. Pupils are developing good improvisation skills. This was observed in some blues compositions, where short phrases were improvised to fit with the harmony. Pupils are making progress with their performance skills. They are able to identify the notes on the keyboard and play melodies reading from formal notation. Pupils have a clear understanding of the use of primary chords and this is contributing to their composition development. They are familiar with different styles of music and are able to recognise instruments being played. Rhythmic skills are well established. This was seen during a Year 9 composing topic, using the pentatonic scale as a basis for their work. Here pupils successfully maintained a steady beat whilst clapping a complex Scottish style rhythm. Pupils are encouraged to use the appropriate technical language and are well supported with a good display of music vocabulary. Although pupils use electronic keyboards, their use of ICT to support composition is unsatisfactory. The use of ICT is not included in the schemes of work for Years 8 and 9.

196. In Years 10 and 11 pupils' good achievement continues. Pupils' instrumental skills are contributing to their creative work and their individual improvisation skills are used effectively for original compositions. These show a clear development, with increasingly complex techniques to structure their work. For example, using their knowledge of minimalist music, they have successfully composed a piece in a similar style that has a clear structure and development. Pupils' listening skills are not as good as they should be. Although they have listened and studied different styles of music, their general understanding is vague. They find it difficult to explain the historical developments. Pupils make good use of ICT music programs, successfully supporting their creative work. Although pupils with special educational needs do not have the benefit of additional support they are fully integrated into lessons and achieve appropriate targets. Overall, attainment has improved since the previous inspection.

197. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They are very enthusiastic, enjoy the sessions and demonstrate a good level of interest. Older pupils show a good level of commitment, working independently without teacher intervention. Behaviour is generally good but in a few groups there is a small minority of pupils who demand attention from the teacher and slow the progress of the majority. Pupils are confident to discuss their work and perform.

198. The quality of teaching and learning is good and the overall quality has improved since the previous inspection. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed during the inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge, using their understanding well to demonstrate styles of music and to guide pupils to the next stage of learning. The outcome of this is that pupils make good progress and learning is good. Teachers generally manage pupils well, dealing sensitively with potentially disruptive pupils and insisting on quiet during performances. The planning of lessons is thorough with a good balance of listening, performance and creative development and with music that has appeal and interest for pupils. Learning is better when pupils are given specific targets at the beginning of the lesson. This was very evident in a Year 10 lesson. Here pupils had a clear understanding of what needed to be achieved during the session, which contributed positively to the development of their performances and compositions. Teachers circulate well during lessons, are readily on hand to help and advise pupils, keeping them well focused and adding positively to pupils' progress. There are, however, occasions when learning is slowed due to the noise level during practical sessions. There are no headphones for

keyboards and, as a consequence, pupils experience difficulty hearing what they are performing and this leads to inaccurate playing. Teachers are aware of this problem and make every effort to overcome it by moving pupils into practice rooms. The second music room, however, does not have access to any quiet areas for individual practice and is inappropriate for any practical work.

199. The management and leadership of the subject are good. Although the present co-ordinator has had responsibility for the subject for a short period, already a positive impact has been made on the profile of the subject to a point where pupils now regard it as a worthwhile subject. The vision is clear for the future development of the subject and the need to maintain and raise standards. The wide variety of extra-curricular activities available is contributing positively to pupils' musical development. Although the numbers for these groups are small they are well supported by pupils and are providing a challenge for talented pupils. The open-house access at dinner times and after school is having a positive effect on pupils' musical opportunities. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- Teachers have good knowledge of the requirements of the GCSE examination course which helps pupils' learning.
- Pupils have good attitudes and behaviour so they achieve satisfactorily.
- Good extra-curricular provision enhances learning opportunities.
- The department has good accommodation and this gives pupils access to a variety of activities.

### Areas for improvement

- Links between practical and theory elements of the course in Years 8 and 9, to enhance learning and make good preparation for the examination course.
- Targets are not always set appropriately to improve basic skills and to extend the learning of gifted and talented pupils.
- In most lessons, non-participants are not included in the learning process.

200. Pupils enter the school with skills and understanding which are below average in physical education. In 2002, teacher assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 were average compared with schools nationally. Teacher assessments indicate that pupils are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment but evidence of the inspection indicates an overestimate.

201. In 2002, GCSE results were well below average for grades A\* - C and above average for grades A\*- G when compared with national results. These results are below the results in 2001 and below the results at the time of the last inspection. More boys than girls chose to take physical education at GCSE level. Results in physical education were below average relative to the performance of other subjects in the school. Since 2000 every pupil entered for GCSE has gained a grade A\*-G.

202. The work seen during the inspection confirms that the standards on entry are below average. For example, at the beginning of Year 8 pupils have little knowledge of gymnastics. Teachers work hard to build up pupils' movement vocabulary including awareness of linking movements but pupils explore the apparatus rather than apply their knowledge to a task so work is below expected levels. In a Year 8 swimming survival lesson, high-attaining pupils could tread water and maintain their position in the water. Low-attaining pupils had weak sculling skills and did not use the flat of the foot to push down so they had to work hard to maintain their position in the water and tired quickly. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 9 are at the same below-average level when compared with national expectations. This judgement is lower than teachers' assessment results and teachers have been generous in their monitoring. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in comparison with their standard on entry into the school. They gradually acquire the skills and understanding to improve their performance so that, by the end of Year 9, pupils work close to national standards. For example, in a Year 9 trampolining lesson, high-attaining pupils quickly grasped the essentials of the swivel hips turn and were able to use their arms and height to execute this. Low-attaining pupils managed the skills involved in a basic turn in the air but did not use height and arms as effectively.

203. The standards attained by pupils in the lessons seen at the end of Year 11 in the GCSE course are below average. The majority of pupils achieve satisfactorily when compared with their results at the end of Year 9. For example, in a Year 11 GCSE rounders lesson, pupils watched the ball carefully to retrieve and catch effectively, passes were well-directed and high-attaining pupils fielded balls well, managing to collect and throw accurately in one action. Low-attaining pupils were frequently badly positioned to collect the ball and tried to retrieve the ball with their favoured hand all the time, not having the same flexibility as high-attaining pupils. In core curriculum physical education, pupils' achievement is satisfactory with pupils working to below expected standards. For example, in a Year 10 volleyball lesson pupils were in the initial stages of setting and digging. High-attaining pupils apply the importance of balance, body position and pushing up to flight the ball. Low-attaining pupils are not sufficiently committed to learning to be effective in their actions but did begin to develop skills of co-operation and self-discipline because of the teacher's persistence.

204. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils in the practical elements of most lessons because teachers focus pupils well on what is required. Teachers are always clear in their explanations, give good examples and individual attention to pupils for good understanding; but more opportunities should exist to challenge gifted and talented pupils.

205. Teaching and learning are good in GCSE physical education and satisfactory overall in the rest of the curriculum. In GCSE lessons teaching and learning is particularly effective because teachers have a clear focus on the requirements of the GCSE course. For example, in a Year 10 GCSE rounders lesson pupils responded well, and had great satisfaction from their achievement, when challenging objectives and progressive, very good teaching inspired them to improve their proficiency. In a similar lesson in Year 11 GCSE pupils learned how good co-ordination assisted in fielding a hard rounders ball



as opposed to a soft tennis ball in well organised continuous practices which embedded learning. Gifted and talented pupils assist with some extra-curricular practices and most are encouraged to join clubs and the Norwich Academy. Pupils are frequently given demonstrations of good examples and strengths are praised during evaluation at the end of a lesson. Teachers are effective in including all pupils in questioning. Teachers usually review previous learning well to check understanding and consolidate before further progress is made. Teaching and learning is not as good when pupils are progressed before effective learning is in place and before basic skills are properly embedded to ensure safe progression. In some lessons, pupils were given too many targets for effective focused learning. In others too few teaching points are given for pupils fully to understand how the proper action is undertaken. In a lesson where class management was weak pupils did not progress and some pupils interrupted the learning of others. When pupils are not fully aware of their assessment scores, areas for improvement are not properly identified and work is not marked against national criteria, learning is affected. Literacy and numeracy, although a part of some lessons, are not emphasised enough so pupils may not recognise this as part of a learning strategy. In one lesson, teamwork was emphasised effectively and pupils worked well together; this lesson would contribute well to citizenship. There is little opportunity for pupils to access computer facilities apart from ICT in GCSE lessons.

206. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour overall are good. In most lessons, teachers insist on good behaviour. Opportunities for learning are enhanced by the good provision of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are offered a wide range of activities including team matches; some pupils achieve county and national places. Pupils are usually considerate of one another; a few boys exhibit immature behaviour: this is always a potential hazard in practical lessons and especially where apparatus and large equipment is being used. In good lessons non-participants are engaged in helping the progress of the lesson and learn from this involvement. In most lessons non-participants are not sufficiently engaged; some talk and achieve little.

207. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. Teachers provide good role models and there is strong teamwork. Most teachers share expertise and when they work to their strengths they can be very effective. Satisfactory organisation, planning and procedures are in place although some better matching of teachers to activities would enhance learning possibilities. Attention to relating the size of the group to an activity where pupils have ample opportunities to exercise and achieve would enhance the curriculum. Provision of resources is satisfactory. Books for independent learning are available for examination courses in the library but some of these are outdated and do not include enough to cover the physiology aspect; the department has additional up to date books which complement the course. Accommodation is good and includes shared use of a sports hall, use of a gymnasium, hall and swimming pool, courts and extensive playing fields. Changing areas accommodate the numbers of pupils changing at any one time but some are in need of refurbishment. Teachers make the best use of the facilities available.

208. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Extra-curricular activities remain good. Good systems are in place for checking pupils' progress although this is not always shared with pupils. Staffing has been changed to meet the needs of the curriculum but especially to improve examination performance which is below the results exemplified in the previous report. Examination results generally have influenced change and the department is taking effective action to support GCSE pupils. A development plan links with the school improvement plan and most teachers use behaviour management strategies effectively. There is still a need for consistency in the use of basic skills and further links between practical and theoretical elements would enhance examination prospects and full understanding of the subject. The physical education department is well placed for improvement.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- Good classroom management supports pupils' ability to express beliefs and listen to others.
- Strengths in the management of the subject include inducting non-specialist teachers and sharing good quality resources, partly through the school religious education website.
- The good Year 8 curriculum which supports achievement for all, including literacy skills, as well as knowledge of the main religions of the United Kingdom.

### Areas for improvement

- Insufficient time is allowed in Years 10 and 11 to fully cover the Locally Agreed Syllabus and for pupils to achieve their potential at GCSE.
- Assessment and recording of individual progress is not carried out effectively or used to help pupils attain their potential.

209. Standards of work seen in Years 8 and 9 are in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus overall, but Year 8 work is better than Year 9. For example in Year 8, creation myths allowed pupils to ponder the issues of story and scientific explanation, inspiring many to put enormous efforts into original ideas and personal achievement. Work seen on multi-cultural issues in Year 9 was not as detailed. Pupils' writing about attitudes towards minorities, was not sufficiently related to ethnic or religious groups, or to current concerns about inter-faith issues, in the United Kingdom or in India, despite Hinduism being the major religion studied alongside Christianity.

210. Currently, insufficient curriculum time is allocated for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to cover the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and the school is not fully meeting this statutory requirement. GCSE short course results vary but remain below national averages in each of the last three years. The lack of sufficient curriculum time to fully cover the entire course in sufficient depth has a negative impact on results.

211. Standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 are below expectation, but many pupils show interest in the topics and produce good coursework. Pupils are given good guidance for coursework and some use ICT effectively to produce their assignments. They have access to the school religious education website to assist them with information and illustrations from the major world religions and to provide points of view from different religions on issues such as euthanasia or racism. They are encouraged to recognise the media use of 'soaps' to highlight problems within families and the value of social cohesion.

212. Achievement is good overall in Years 8 and 9, but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Progress is best in Year 8 when pupils develop their understanding of abstract concepts, and religious symbolism. The lack of curriculum time in Years 10 and 11 depresses pupils' achievements.

213. Teaching and learning are good in Years 8 and 9, with pace and motivation leading to all pupils participating actively. Pupils express themselves freely because of good classroom management. In a Year 9 lesson on shrines, one pupil expressed the importance of a lighted candle to him as a symbol of human life - lit, glowing and finally snuffed out. In a Year 8 class on special journeys, pupils watched a video of the Haj pilgrimage to Mecca. They were helped by their teacher's good use of resources to complete a spidergram as they followed the different activities on each of the four days of the

pilgrimage. The teacher stopped the video at key moments for note taking, giving praise for concentration. Pupils responded well and boys and girls made similar progress. Lower-attainers in particular made learning gains, with time and encouragement.

214. In Years 10 and 11 the teaching observed was good but learning is unsatisfactory over time, resulting from lack of time and the way the subject is timetabled. This hampers the capacity of teachers to cover material in sufficient depth. Some new non-specialist staff have to be recruited each year to teach the GCSE short course. Some pupils commented that they were not challenged by the cursory coverage of important issues, such as the sanctity of life. Not all pupils have an overview of what they are to study over the two years. The way the timetable is planned further disrupts pupils' experiences, as the groups only study religious education for half of each school year for one period per week. Access to video resources is insufficient as half a year group has to be scheduled at the same time.

215. Attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and good in Years 8 and 9. Girls prefer to write about their own feelings while boys more often discuss them openly. Pupils expressed disappointment with the religious education curriculum in Years 10 and 11.

216. The subject is satisfactorily managed overall. Staff induction and the development of new resources are particular strengths and the quality of teaching has improved. However, assessment is not managed effectively. The department does not use national guidance for targeting pupils' strengths and weaknesses so they know what they should concentrate on to improve by the end of Year 9. The vast majority of Year 11 pupils take GCSE religious education short course but do not know their starting point in terms of achievement at the end of Year 9, and some lose heart because of the problems created by a lack of curriculum time. Some pupils perceive the course as having only marginal value, yet some achieve grades A\*-C despite the disadvantages, aided by the revision course in the summer term of Year 11. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The short course in Years 10 and 11 has improved provision and raised pupil expectations. Behaviour in Years 8 and 9 and attitudes to the subject in Year 8 are now good and pupils are now achieving well. A variety of different approaches to learning are encouraged, including the provision of a religious education website to encourage independent learning throughout the school. The department has the capacity for further improvement, particularly if sufficient curriculum time is allocated to the subject in Years 10 and 11.

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

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

*Please note there are no results for The Kett joint 6<sup>th</sup> form.*

*The first cohort of students taking A-level examinations will do so in summer 2003.*

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

### MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

Mathematics, biology and chemistry were a focus in this inspection. The modular chemistry course was the main focus of the inspection but the Salter's chemistry course was also sampled. In the one Salter's lesson observed, very challenging teaching included a probing question and answer approach supported by the use of good resources, such as molecular model kits. This led to students acquiring a very secure understanding of the nature of intermolecular forces. Physics was sampled and in the lessons seen, teachers had good subject knowledge and expertise. Standards were below the average. Students struggled to maintain the necessary pace and concentration throughout the three-hour lesson.

#### Mathematics

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

##### Strengths

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for their work.
- The good relationships between teachers and students are productive.
- Students show positive attitudes, commitment and interest.
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##### Areas for improvement

- Too much teaching is directed, not encouraging students to get involved in their learning.
- Inconsistencies exist in mathematics across sites.
- Data is not used to best effect to set challenging targets and check progress against potential.

217. On the evidence of the students' work and the lessons observed, standards at the end of Year 13 are in line with national averages and represent good achievement. The work is developmental and hierarchical, with a good balance of practice and consolidation. Students can differentiate trigonometric expressions and integrate using a variety of methods, including integration by substitution and by parts. In mechanics, they make good use of vectors to resolve forces while in statistics, they have a good understanding of discrete and continuous random variables. Higher-attaining students are able to solve differential equations and identify equilibrium in a plane suspended from a fixed point.

218. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers enjoy positive and productive relationships with their students. They demonstrate very good subject knowledge and show enthusiasm and enjoyment for their work, as illustrated in a Year 12 lesson on functions, where the teacher's enjoyment for the topic enthused and motivated students. Lessons start promptly and lesson aims are usefully shared with students and revisited at the end of the lesson to check that they have been met. Homework is regularly set but marking is inconsistent and too much work remains unmarked and uncorrected. In too many lessons, teacher talk dominates so that students do not engage themselves fully in the work or develop the skills needed for continuing the work on their own.

219. Procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall. Teachers have a good informal awareness of students' strengths and weaknesses but this information is not always recorded in mark books. Regular assessments were seen in the GCSE resit class and the key skills class, where marking was diagnostic and tailored to individual students. Marking at A-level was inconsistent across the partnership so that some students received regular marking, with exemplar solutions, while others had little work marked or validated. All students are set targets for their examinations, but it is unclear how these are calculated and whether they are sufficiently challenging.

220. Students' attitudes to learning are good. They show commitment, interest and enthusiasm for their work. They want to do well and they work co-operatively with one another and with the teacher. They are capable of being more engaged and involved in their learning when they are given the opportunity.

221. The courses in the department include retake GCSEs and key skills (application of number) as well as A-level modules in pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics. Schemes of work exist for all of the courses but these are not used consistently across the partner schools. As a result, opportunities to timetable work, co-ordinate modules, highlight links and identify resources, including ICT, are often missed. Standards of literacy are satisfactory and students' folders demonstrate good standards of presentation. The provision for ICT is satisfactory but opportunities to develop skills, such as the use of graphical calculators or the Internet, are inconsistent and under-utilised.

222. Numeracy skills are taught well in mathematics lessons and teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for students to apply their numeracy skills in a range of subjects across the curriculum. For example, number work is developed well in economics for calculating percentages and the price elasticity of supply of goods, while algebraic skills are used for writing equations and substituting in formulae in chemistry. Data-handling skills are developed for reading graphs of inflation in economics, data analysis in psychology and calculations of correlation and regression in biology. However, The Kett does not have a policy for developing numeracy across the sixth form.

223. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Heads of department, on each site, have a good awareness of the strengths of their respective departments but monitoring is insufficient to identify and share the good practices observed during the week of the inspection. Site based departments operate as individual units, although there have been some attempts at unifying schemes of work and opportunities for further co-operation are planned. Overall, staffing is good, accommodation is satisfactory and resources appropriate, except for an inadequacy of books in the respective libraries.

## Biology

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

### Strengths

- Teaching is good and lessons build on students' knowledge and understanding well.
- Students receive good individual support and encouragement to study independently.
- The two heads of department are working collaboratively to raise standards.

#### Areas for improvement

- Assessment data is not always available early enough to set students specific targets to aim at in their course.
- Marking of set tasks does not routinely provide guidance on how to improve work.

224. The standard of work of students is above average. In Year 13, students are achieving well in relation to their predicted target minimum grades. In the lessons seen, they were doing well as a result of effective teaching, which demanded much of them. The lesson structure and activities clearly identify students' prior learning and focus on using this to support their current learning. In one lesson, some students showed their developing understanding through the detailed questions they asked about the blunt and sticky ends of chromosomes and how ligase enzymes function. In another, on household waste and recycling, the teacher used students' knowledge of landfill, recycling and re-use of materials as a basis to extend the learning of all students. Students use the range of books available in the department's library to research the topics and make detailed notes.

225. Students in Year 12 are working at or above the standard expected. In a lesson seen, they worked collaboratively, in small groups, to answer a past examination question on the mammalian heart. Extension questions were provided for the higher-attaining students. Students are successfully building on their GCSE knowledge in order to move into new areas. A wall display of digital photographs, showing students' own dissections of the heart, provided an accurate record of the above average standard of students' practical work and was used by the teacher to support their learning.

226. Teaching is good overall and students learn well as a result. The principal features of the teaching are clear objectives detailing the knowledge, understanding and skills students should acquire, effective planning and a range of methods and approaches to bring about learning. Teachers show good subject knowledge in their questioning and explanations, and in the tasks they set. For example, the lesson on the cardiac cycle in Year 12 focused on key scientific terms, and the relationship between the structure and function of the mammalian heart. The teacher used a student's experience of having an ECG, to link the electrical changes within the heart to the physical processes of the cardiac cycle.

227. Much of the written work demanded of the students takes the form of notes, essays, details of practical work and structured questions that consolidate the learning that has taken place in the lessons. When checking students' notes, teachers comment on their quality and provide advice on how to improve. Day-to-day marking is regular and gives details of the standard students have achieved, but it does not provide guidance on what they need to do to improve.

228. Students learn well. They are very attentive, work productively and respond well to the supportive teaching and different approaches that they experience. In lessons, time is used effectively. Students support and help each other, and listen to and value each other's contributions as part of their learning. They are given time to think and resolve the details of their own learning points before responding to questions. Some students are not always confident in offering ideas but the teachers encourage them to do so.

229. The independent work students undertake is very well prepared and supports the lessons well. Teachers have produced effective module booklets to help and encourage students to revise efficiently for examinations. Teachers on one school teaching base have developed websites with revision activities and notes, which students are encouraged to access. One school site uses conferencing with the teacher and e-mailing of questions, to support students' examination preparation. Year 13 students were also directed to local council websites to obtain information about recycling policies, as part of

their independent study.

230. The good teaching and learning result from work in the subject being well-led and managed across The Kett. There is a commitment to building on what has already been achieved and to improving standards, through closer co-operation between the partner schools, for example a joint field course for Year 13 students. A detailed scheme of work has been developed in one school, which effectively reflects the subject requirements and underpins good teaching. Target-setting is becoming well established but teachers need the information at an earlier stage so they can focus more quickly and sharply on specific learning goals.

## Chemistry

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

### Strengths

- Teaching is very good, by well-qualified and enthusiastic teachers.
- Teaching and technical staff work very well together.
- Students' very positive attitudes contribute to their good achievement.
- ICT is used very effectively to support students learning at their own rate.

### Areas for improvement

- The library facilities do not have a broad enough range of resources to support research and extended study
- A-level laboratory facilities are inadequate for the current group sizes.

231. The standards of work seen in Year 13 were average. In one lesson, students demonstrated their understanding of the chemistry behind voltaic cells through very good use of ICT, together with a range of related activities. The lesson was very well planned so that students could learn at their own rate. The teacher dealt with each student's difficulties sensitively, creating a very supportive learning environment. Achievement is good over time, relative to students' starting points on entry to the course. Most began the course having attained below average standards in their GCSE examinations.

232. Standards in Year 12 were also average. In the lessons seen, students were very businesslike in their approach to an assessed practical activity. They listened attentively to instructions and were focused on their work throughout the double lesson. About two-thirds of the group needed help with the calculations. About a third of the students began the course with literacy and oracy skills below the national average. Although this has some effect on the progress they can make, their very positive attitudes to their work, together with the very effective teaching, contribute to their good achievement since the beginning of the year.

233. The teaching and learning observed were very good. Teachers are well qualified and enthusiastic about the subject. They know the students and are very good at catering for their individual needs. As a result, the students learnt very well, whatever their starting point. Teachers have effectively adapted their teaching styles in response to larger class sizes and students' differing learning needs in Year 12. A very good range of CD ROMs is available to students, especially those in Year 13, to meet their individual learning needs. Teachers are available during the lessons and at other times, to give one-to-one support.

234. Students are very appreciative of the quality of teaching that they receive. Although some

students find the course particularly challenging, others really enjoy the opportunity to strive to reach their potential. The Year 13 students had clearly enjoyed a revision course in London, including the social activities they shared with staff.

235. Much of the written work students do is related to examination demands and is made up of structured questions or calculations. This type of work is well supported by the course materials and the ICT provision. However, the range of books and periodicals in library facilities is not broad enough to develop students' study and research skills as effectively as they might be.

236. Leadership and management are good. The very good teaching and learning result from the work on the course being well managed. Teachers work as a team and the technical assistants support them very well. The recent changes in teaching and assessment, in response to increased numbers in Year 12, are an example of this good management. A-level laboratory accommodation is now too small for the increased group sizes and does not provide an adequate range of facilities.

## **ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING**

The inspection focused on design and technology - design and realisation. Other aspects of design technology were sampled, including food studies and electronics.



In food studies, standards were above average. The teaching and learning were good. The lesson proceeded at a good pace and the teacher used effective strategies to promote independent work.

In electronics, teaching was good and students made good gains in their knowledge and understanding. Standards were average. A strength of the lesson was the way the teacher engaged the class and made timely interventions to help students make the link between the theory and practical activity.

### **Design and technology – design and realisation**

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

#### **Strengths**

- Teachers have good specialist knowledge.
- Students' attitudes and working relationships are positive.
- Teachers from the two sites co-operate closely.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Co-ordination across The Kett and management of resources and accommodation are not yet efficient.
- The time in extended teaching periods is not always used to best effect.
- Students do not receive written assessments and short-term targets frequently enough to focus their activity, and enable them to improve their work.

237. Current work indicates that standards are broadly average and individual students are achieving appropriately, given their prior attainment and predicted grades. Students are following the process of designing and making but the depth of research, analysis, development of ideas and application of materials knowledge is limited in most folders. Students learn about the properties of materials and, through disassembling existing products, develop their understanding of how things are made, assembled and improved over time. However, most students show limited retention of information and require considerable help in identifying areas for in-depth research and then in developing their ideas. Standards of drawing and presentation of work vary but are good for higher-attaining students. The work of lower-attaining students often contains less precise drawings, which lack detail and sufficient annotation, and this reflects their comparative lack of knowledge and understanding when trying to solve constructional details and using the properties of materials. Students use computers for their research and some aspects of presentation, but their work shows insufficient use of computers for designing and manufacturing. Higher-attaining students show more independence in thinking about, and executing their work.

238. Overall, students are positive about their work. They work steadily in practical sessions but can be passive in theory lessons. Overall, pace and productivity are relatively low and students do not make best use of time, particularly in the longer lessons. Higher-attaining students are better at organising their own work.

239. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers have very good subject knowledge but not all have sufficient experience in organising and managing advanced level courses and this has affected students' learning and the standards achieved. Some good, focused tasks are planned, for example the disassembly of vacuum cleaners but, because students are not always clear about the learning objectives and assessment criteria, the value of exercises is at times diminished. Large blocks

of time are not always managed effectively and used well, and this affects concentration and the pace of learning. Teachers are effective in using their specialist skills to support students in their learning and enabling them to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the use of materials. However, whilst students receive very good oral feedback and high quality sketches, teachers provide insufficient written guidance about how they can organise and improve their work.

240. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. There is close co-operation between teachers in the same school but insufficient co-ordination and liaison across The Kett. The lack of experience of some teachers, for example in addressing examination requirements, has already led to some under-performance. The quality of accommodation and quantity of resources vary considerably between school sites. Coupled with insufficient access to appropriate computer resources for some, this results in inequalities in what students are offered.

## **BUSINESS**

The inspection focused on the advanced vocational (AVCE) business education, but A-level business studies and economics were also sampled.

In the observed economics lesson, standards were above average, and teaching and learning were good. Good relationships and the attitudes of students had a positive impact on their learning, though they had few opportunities to contribute and tended to be passive rather than active learners.

## **Business education**

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

### **Strengths**

- Very good teaching and learning is underpinned by teachers' very good subject knowledge.
- Teachers have very good and purposeful relationships with students.
- Planning sequentially builds on students' knowledge and experiences.
- Very good guidance and feedback is given to students' on their coursework.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Variations in approach across the two sites mean that a common ethos for the course has not yet been established.
- With current ICT arrangements, students cannot access their work across The Kett.

241. Standards in AVCE business are average. Most students joined the course with GCSE point scores that were below average. This represents at least good achievement, and teachers' focus on driving students to improve their performance means that their achievement over the course is very good overall. Year 12 students understood the relevance of a business plan. They gained a good understanding of how creative flair and imagination had led to the formation of successful and productive companies that were well known to them. In Year 13, students made helpful notes and articulated their ideas well. They made meaningful links between theory and practice related to business planning, and when considering the needs of customers. Students respond well when there are opportunities to relate their own experiences, either from formal work experience or part-time work, to the theoretical models being described. This was seen in practice when a student compared the experience of working in a local supermarket to aspects of the course, and consolidated the relationship between theory and practice very effectively for himself and others in the group.

242. Students have responsible attitudes and are very well motivated. They appreciate the efforts of staff to help them.

243. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. All lessons observed had a clear structure and positive working atmosphere. Both teachers and students demonstrated very good levels of subject knowledge. There was excellent use of real-world examples, where students referred to topical items and past experiences. Work is marked regularly and rigorously, and students receive very constructive feedback both on work and in lessons. A very good feature of all lessons seen was the very focused advice on grading criteria, and targeted coaching so students could progress to higher grades. Students' work shows good application of theoretical concepts to the organisations studied. Detailed knowledge of students' work enables very good target setting. There is a very strong history of accurate final assessment, with very good feedback from the examination board. Use of performance data is well established and is used effectively in planning. This contributes to students' very good learning.

244. Although teaching is very good, different practices over the two sites leads, in some respects, to a lack of coherence in the course. Students appreciate and value the opportunities for taking responsibility for their learning and find the teaching and learning styles interesting and motivating. They are well supported by the more structured approach of some teachers. Students value the development of speaking skills, and the specific business skills that equip them well for the world of work. The one significant impediment to learning and progress is students' use and access to relevant computer software, of the sort found in a modern business environment. Systems across The Kett are incompatible. Students are unable to access their work on all sites. Accommodation and the quality of resources for business studies also vary across the sites.

245. Leadership and management are satisfactory and serve the students well in some respects. The underlying differences of view, amongst the staff, on how the subject is to run and on styles of delivery mean that a shared ethos for the subject is not yet established. These differences have not been satisfactorily tackled.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Information and communication technology runs as an advanced course but was only observed as part of the key skills courses. The teaching was very effective and standards were average for the course. Progress was good, given students differing starting points. All Kett students who would benefit are encouraged to take ICT key skills courses.

## **HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL**

Physical education was the focus in this area with leisure and tourism, and health and social care being sampled.

In GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism, standards were broadly average for the course and teaching and learning were good. A range of successful strategies was used, designed to involve students and develop their confidence in dealing with members of the public. The course meets the needs of the students well.

In health and social care, the teaching had considerable strengths and students learned well. Lesson planning was very good and strong links made with the development of key skills. Students could recognise the connections between their own observations of young children's behaviour and the studies by Skinner and this consolidated their understanding. Standards were average for the course.

## Physical education

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

### Strengths

- Good teaching is underpinned by teachers' knowledge and understanding of the course.
- Lessons proceed at a brisk, lively pace, with plenty of interaction between students.
- Students work hard and display very good attitudes and relationships.

### Areas for improvement

- Students are not given sufficient written feedback to help them know how to improve their work.

246. Standards of work seen during the inspection were broadly average. Students in Year 12 have a good knowledge and understanding of a narrow range of sports, but are still coming to terms with the need to widen their horizons to encompass sport in general. Year 13 students have good background knowledge of diet and nutrition and are able to define these two elements effectively. In the lesson concerned, they were able to build on previous knowledge, which led to good learning.

247. Scrutiny of coursework assignments and discussion with students showed that many struggle with the notion of independent research and "reading around" a subject or issue. Year 12 students, in particular, find it hard to realise that this is a theoretical course, even though it was explained to them before they started. However, achievement in both years is generally good, particularly as entry to the course is open to all levels of prior attainment. All work is neatly presented and the work of Year 13 students in particular showed good levels of competency in word processing.

248. The good achievement in lessons is partly due to the very positive attitudes of students. They are willing to listen, discuss, share thoughts and ideas, and learn from each other as well as from teachers. Students from the three partner schools are well integrated within the group. They are all very appreciative of the support they receive from teachers.

249. Good teaching contributes to the good achievement and learning of students. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the different aspects of the course and are deployed to teach to their strengths. They use a very good variety of activities within a lesson, which maintains interest and motivation. A good feature of the teaching is the brisk, lively pace of lessons with plenty of interaction between students and teachers.

250. Assessment is satisfactory and students are aware of their target grades. Verbal feedback on assignments is good but written feedback is insufficient to help students know how to improve their work.

251. Leadership and management are good. The clearly prescribed syllabus is tackled sensibly and methodically. Timetabled lessons are used exclusively for the theory sessions and the students are expected to develop their practical expertise in extra-curricular sessions and in clubs and teams. This is a good way of giving students responsibility for a part of their own learning and development and ensuring that the greatest amount of time possible is devoted to the part of the course students find more difficult.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The inspection focused on art and design and performing arts. In addition, the vocational art and design course, media studies and music were sampled.

The standards in the vocational art and design course are below average for the course, but students achieve well relative to their starting points. The good teaching enabled them to gain confidence and expertise, to explore ideas and use different materials when making their sculptures. The teacher's interventions were very effective.

The music course runs with very small numbers and this restricts the teaching activities which are possible. As a result, in the observed lesson with a single student, the teacher tended to dominate and there was little opportunity to explore and share alternative ideas. Standards were above average and good use was made of computers for composition.

The teaching in media studies had some excellent features, in particular the depth and quality of questioning that enabled all students to recognise the key characteristics used to convey ideas and meaning. They understood and were able to relate these visual qualities to theoretical frameworks. Standards were slightly above average.

### Art and design

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

#### Strengths

- Effective teaching leads to good achievement and learning.
- Teachers' subject expertise is used very effectively to set challenging work, enthuse students and promote high standards.
- The staff share a commitment to work together to raise attainment.

#### Areas for improvement

- Male students are less confident and committed to working on their own, which does affect their achievement compared with that of female students.
- Time is not always used effectively in longer sessions to vary teaching and learning styles and sustain motivation.

252. The standard of work of current students is above average. In Years 12 and 13, students are achieving well in relation to their attainment at the beginning of the course and their predicted results, based on GCSE performance.

253. In Year 13, the work is highly individual and personal; some is figurative and some abstract. The work produced in life drawing classes adds significantly to the quality and range of work in students' portfolios. Much of the work students undertake is conceptually and practically ambitious. They use well a range of materials and media such as photography, plaster and glass alongside the more traditional mixed-media, drawing and painting. In the problem-solving element of the course, students responded positively to tasks of researching and investigating the work of chosen artists, and made thoughtful references to aspects of their own work. In practical studio activities, and prompted by the

teachers' sharp questioning and timely interventions, students were able to argue confidently and convincingly the reasons they were pursuing one course of action rather than another. The lively discussions that take place enable students to test out their ideas, reflect on the range of choices open to them and make more informed decisions as a consequence. In this respect, students are prepared well for the examination requirements.

254. Some students make good use of computers to manipulate images, but computers are more generally used for research purposes. Overall, the potential for using computers more widely, for example in mixed-media work, has not been fully explored and developed.

255. Male students tend to be less confident and able to sustain the high levels of independent learning that the course demands. These factors, together with a poor record of attendance by a small but significant proportion of students, have a negative impact on the standards being achieved. However, most students attend lessons regularly and those who start courses generally complete them. A very good range of course options is available for those wanting to take art and design qualifications.

256. Teaching is good, overall, and students learn well. The strengths of the teaching lie in teachers' very good subject knowledge and their high expectations of students' performance. In lessons where learning was particularly effective, the teachers made the lesson objectives very clear, the pace was brisk and good use was made of the available time. Most students have well-developed learning skills and manage their time well. Their work journals are valued highly and the visual references and annotations reflect high levels of creativity, personal motivation and interest in the subject. A small number of students struggle to maintain the work rate demanded of them, and to meet the intellectual challenges set. One-hour lessons are used productively. However, in a two- or three-hour session, teachers missed opportunities to introduce a wider range of teaching and learning strategies, such as student-led presentations and questioning, to consolidate and reinforce the learning.

257. The subject is well led and managed. Development plans identify the areas where there is scope for improvement, notably the achievement of male students. Teachers have undertaken relevant training in school and with examination boards and so are up-to-date and aware of the arrangements for marking and assessment. Staff have begun to work closely together and there is a shared responsibility and a commitment to raising standards that is benefiting students.

## **Performing arts**

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

### **Strengths**

- Students learn very well because of the very good and, at times, inspirational teaching.
- Relationships between students, and between students and teachers, are very good.
- Students gain in confidence and learn to work together well in both group and whole-class situations.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Low numbers of students, all female, are taking the course, which restricts the variety of material that can be used.
- The cramped accommodation is unsuitable for practical dance work.
- Resources available throughout The Kett are not utilised as no formal links exist between sites.

258. The standards of work seen during the inspection were above average in Years 12 and 13. Students' achievement is very good considering their wide variation in performing standards when they start the course. During Year 12, students make very good progress, rapidly improving their knowledge, skills and understanding of all aspects of drama and dance through a well-planned series of topics and very enthusiastic teaching. Students enjoy the subject, work very well together and have a growing knowledge of performance techniques. In practical sessions, students relate ideas to the theme they are working with and the majority speak expressively. Their knowledge of music and its role within the performance arts is generally weaker because they do not incorporate enough music into their work.

259. Students are happy to take responsibility for their work. They use their very good relationships to bring the best from each other in group work, in taking initiative and responsibility, and in generating original ideas from outlines proposed by the teachers. In one Year 12 dance lesson, students gave imaginative performances showing the clear influence of Christopher Bruce. They gave solo and group presentations to the rest of the group, who watched with interest, showing respect for their performance. Students then appraised the performance carefully, using technical vocabulary, and suggested changes to the choreography.

260. In a Year 13 lesson, focusing on British dance of the twentieth century, students' solo and duet work incorporated common techniques used by Richard Alston, involving physical contact. Students created imaginative group work in a stately, graceful style showing the influence of the baroque music they listened to, through sensitive phrasing. Students use technical vocabulary such as 'locomoting' and 'motif' well, when describing their work.

261. Students become more confident in sharing ideas and learn to work together, in both group and whole class situations, because lessons are well planned. In one Year 12 drama session, focusing on Stanislavski's concepts of 'physical action' and the 'magic if', students explored the idea of overlapping natural dialogue within the text of 'Top Girls' by Caryl Churchill. The teacher built sequential practical tasks that resulted in the highest possible levels of concentration and interest from the students.

262. Students' very good learning is a result of the very good teaching they receive. Teaching is characterised by outstanding subject knowledge, inspirational demonstrations and a powerful passion for the subject. Students are keen to get involved in work because of the lively and stimulating way in which teachers use their own knowledge and enthusiasm. In the dance lessons seen, the teacher gave demonstrations of very complex phrasing, which inspired the students to emulate and develop. Praise is used well and helps to motivate students during performances. Teachers have high expectations and very good relationships with students.

263. Leadership of the course is good, with a shared vision for the development of the subject. The planning, to ensure that students cover all units of the course is good and, consequently, students understand the requirements of all aspects of the course and are well prepared for the examinations. Management of the course is satisfactory. The specialist accommodation being used is cramped and inadequate, in that it restricts movement and the use of space in students' work. There is no dedicated performance space. There are no formalised links between the sites so students and teachers are not aware of other resources or facilities, including good quality theatres, that could be used. Numbers studying the course are relatively low and are all female; this causes problems in choosing material to perform and study. Due to a problem with the current timetable, Year 13 students miss out on one lesson each week because there is no teacher or room available for them. As a result, they are not making as much progress as they could.



264. The performing arts department provides a very good range of enrichment performance opportunities, which are enthusiastically supported and appreciated by students and the wider community. A recent community performance, of a piece entitled “Women of Norwich”, was particularly successful and highly valued by the students.

## HUMANITIES

The inspection focused on sociology, psychology, geography and history. In addition, lessons in government and politics and general studies were observed.

Standards in the general studies course are above average and the teaching was excellent. The lesson provided a mix of different activities and supported students’ learning of aspects of the social sciences very well. Students made well-researched presentations and, with the help of the teacher, explored some important and relevant points about personal motivation and the possible tensions between these and society’s need for wealth generation.

In a government and politics lesson, the class was one student. Standards, teaching and learning were broadly sound, with some misunderstandings about terminology and pieces of key information. Opportunities for different styles of teaching and learning are restricted by the group size.

### Geography

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

#### Strengths

- Very good teaching leads to very effective learning.
- The subject knowledge of teachers and their awareness of course requirements are very good.
- Teachers give students very good feedback following assessments of their work.
- Students’ attitudes are positive and the relationships between students and teachers very helpful.

#### Areas for improvement

- Management of provision, and communication between sites is underdeveloped.

265. Overall, the standard of work of current Year 13 students is above expectations. When prior learning is taken into account, achievement is very good. In lessons seen, students made very good progress as teacher expectations were high and the work was pitched at the appropriate and challenging level. For example, as students studied air masses and the impact of these on the weather of Britain, they achieved a very good understanding of cyclonic conditions. Students have good literacy skills and their written work is of a good quality. All students have compiled very full records of the modules covered that will support their revision. Their work shows students to have appropriate levels of knowledge, clear understanding and competence in advanced skills. Students’ research studies are developing well. In one lesson, students gave presentations to the group, which demonstrated their diligence and the very good progress they had made in establishing hypotheses and investigating their chosen topic. They were aware of the limitations of their research and responded positively to criticism by showing a willingness to reconsider their approach.

266. Year 12 students, who are currently studying weathering, have a secure understanding of the different processes involved and use advanced technical language with confidence. They have many opportunities to develop such subject skills as mapping and data analysis. Students were very well briefed prior to fieldwork in the local area, which will involve the collection, tabulation and analysis of

data to test hypotheses. They practised statistical techniques, and discussed how they would be able to apply their theoretical knowledge and understanding as they investigated different rates of weathering on headstones in a local cemetery. Their previously completed work shows that they have frequent opportunities to apply and practise their communication, number and ICT skills; as a result, standards are high. For example, teachers ensure that they develop the skills necessary to write well-structured and argued essays. This is appreciated by students, the majority of whom intend to continue into the second year of the course. Overall, students are working at the level expected at this stage in the course. A few students are not showing the levels of motivation and commitment expected at this stage.

267. The observed teaching was very good. Teachers showed their very good subject knowledge through clear exposition, and in response to questions that provided opportunities to extend students' understanding. Teachers insisted upon accuracy and precision in students' use of terms, asking follow-up questions to probe the depth of their knowledge and understanding, as in a Year 12 lesson when weathering and the processes involved were rehearsed. In all lessons, students were aware of the objectives and were actively involved. Students value the wide range of methods used that allow them to take responsibility for their learning. The continuity evident in students' previously completed work reflects the very good planning of individual lessons and the curriculum as a whole. Students in both years have the skills necessary for independent learning and teachers exploit this to good effect, for example in their research of hazards in preparation for the examinations. Carefully set work is marked thoroughly and teachers discuss strengths and weaknesses with the students. This ensures that students know what they must do to secure improvement. Students' progress is monitored and teachers keep comprehensive records. Students value the very good support provided by teachers who know them well and who are aware of the examination requirements.

268. Year 13 students, and the majority of those in Year 12, are conscientious and diligent. Always attentive and courteous, they respond very positively to the high quality teaching. Their teachers insist that they contribute to lessons and use targeted questions to ensure the involvement of all. Keen to both answer and ask questions, students can discuss confidently the topics they have covered. They feel that they have made the right choice of subject because they had been provided with very good information concerning the content and demands of the courses.

269. Students have followed three different GCSE syllabuses. There are two different advanced level syllabuses, taught by separate teams of teachers. The management of each course is effective; the teachers in charge provide good leadership and, within the teams, teachers work closely together to plan topics and lessons. However, communication between the teams is limited and this affects the success in achieving the central aims of The Kett. For example, presently, a large group is taught in a cramped room with few facilities for practical work to hand, while a small group is taught in a spacious room containing the facilities required. Teachers share a commitment to improvement.

## History

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

### Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good, based on good relationships.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and understanding of examination requirements.

### Areas for improvement

- Students have few opportunities for enrichment beyond the classroom.

270. Overall, standards of work of students in Year 13 are broadly in line with expectation, with some students above that level. This represents good achievement overall in the light of their prior attainment. In one lesson, students' computer-generated presentations of key issues in the development of Elizabeth 1's reign provided succinct summaries for others in the group. They showed good understanding of the issues, and also of the different interpretations of these that have emerged in professional debate. In another Year 13 class working on their personal research studies, higher-attaining students were working at standards above national expectations. Standards in Year 12 are currently in line with national expectations. For example, students studying the development and effect of culture in Weimar Germany were able to suggest reasons for the symbolism and representation of society and politics as depicted in the works of two major contemporary artists. Their written work showed they had acquired a sound grasp of the political context of these developments.

271. Overall, teaching seen was good, and students learn well as a result. Teachers are confident in their subject and syllabus knowledge, which results in teaching clearly focused on expected outcomes. Teachers and students enjoy good relationships and teachers provide constructive advice through their assessment of students' work. Students generally work hard and are willing to take responsibility for their learning, with teacher guidance. In a Year 12 lesson, however, the unexpected lack of planned access to online research facilities resulted in an overly teacher-led session, and student progress was just satisfactory as a result. The use of ICT, such as the computer-generated presentations, provides an effective contribution to the students' key skills, in addition to supporting their learning of history. Students are recommended pertinent websites to support different aspects of the course. In Year 13, they use a wide range of text and website resources to pursue their individual research activities. Students have good access to wider reading through teachers' arrangements to introduce them to the resources of the University of East Anglia and local libraries. Wider opportunities beyond the classroom to enrich provision have been few. These are currently being considered by the teachers co-ordinating history provision across the sites.

272. Management of history in The Kett is satisfactory currently, at this early stage of development, but with a clear commitment to improve provision. For example, discussions between the sites offering history have resulted in the use of a common syllabus, and sharing of information about department resources and assessment procedures.

## Psychology

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

### Strengths

- Some excellent teaching challenges students to great intellectual effort.
- Teachers' marking is very helpful and followed up with discussion of areas for improvement.
- Students share an interest in the subject and a desire to do well, which contributes to their good achievement.
- Relationships between teachers and students are good.

### Areas for improvement

- Not all teachers have equally high expectations of students.
- The nature and requirements of the course are not defined rigorously enough.

273. Standards seen in Years 12 and 13 are average overall but range across the full spectrum of attainment. In Year 12, the majority of students are suitably matched to their course but a small minority struggle to absorb the large amount of information and the demands of a subject new to them. They use psychological terms with understanding, such as independent and dependent variables, and ecological validity. Students' work indicates a good grasp of methodology in that they are able to set out key studies and write up their own psychological investigations in a professional manner. Lower-attaining students have satisfactory knowledge but have difficulty in evaluating results of experiments. At times, their essays contain statements that are not built on or enlarged upon. Higher-attaining students have good factual recall and are able to see, for example, ethical considerations in defining mental health. Significant differences are apparent in the standards of Year 13 students. Where standards are high, there is clear evidence of developed study skills, especially independent learning and research. Written work is of a high standard and students write critically, selecting a variety of sources to support their arguments. They challenge accepted results using their own judgement. Where there is below average work, answers tend to be minimal with little evidence of research, betraying a careless approach and a lack of intellectual effort and rigour.

274. Students generally achieve well and their progress through the course is good. There is growing understanding, evident in written work, particularly of their grasp of key concepts. In discussion, students showed an ability to analyse critically and subject assumptions to close scrutiny. In one Year 13 lesson discussing use of animals in experiments, students were able to relate one study to another and showed excellent analytical skills in taking the experiments to pieces and highlighting implications, particularly ethical ones. A significant factor in students' good achievement is how much they are interested and stimulated by the subject and share a desire to do well.

275. Teaching overall is good, with some excellent examples. Where teaching is excellent, the teacher's expectations are very high, students are challenged by questions which push them to make real intellectual effort, and there is a pace and purpose to the lesson which is totally absorbing.

Independent learning is paramount, with the teacher as guide and animator. Where teaching is less effective, teacher's expectations are lower, students become passive and learning becomes more reliant on the teacher's efforts. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and enables them to help the students very effectively. For example, coursework is always marked frequently and the teachers' comments are considered very helpful by the students, as they identify key issues that are then discussed at length with the student. These, together with target setting and the students' own evaluations, have a very positive impact on learning and progress.

276. As an overall picture, students learn well and make good progress, though this does vary with the quality of teaching. There are good relationships with their teachers. The quality of their personal development is good, especially their self-knowledge, gained through their studies of motivation and behaviour. Higher-attaining students extend their learning by attempting more demanding research. Male and female students do equally well although numbers of female students are much greater. Access to computers is satisfactory and all students use ICT with ease, including the Internet, both for research and writing up their coursework. A sufficient collection of reference books is available on both sites. Few extra-curricular opportunities are offered, for example visiting speakers, or close links with college or university psychology departments. Accommodation is satisfactory and, in most classes, wall displays reinforce key words and concepts.

277. Leadership and management are satisfactory but much work still has to be done to achieve consistency throughout The Kett. The best practice is not being shared, through monitoring of teaching and learning on both sites. Entry requirements for the course are not sufficiently rigorous or realistic.

## **Sociology**

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

### **Strengths**

- Teaching is good, resulting in good learning.
- Students' attitudes are very good, especially in Year 13 and they are very positive about the course.
- Students receive good support and guidance.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Teachers do not always use time well in two-hour lessons, to secure all students' involvement and commitment to learning.
- Marking does not consistently match examination grading levels.

278. The standards of work of students in Year 12 are close to the national average and they are achieving satisfactorily considering their attainment at the start of the course. They can identify important concepts with reference to the procedures followed in sociological studies. They understand the ethical considerations and difficulties a researcher may face in studying a group covertly, for example where criminal activities are involved.

279. Year 13 students are working at the expected level. They have a good understanding of different theoretical perspectives and can apply these to a variety of topics. They appreciate the importance of basing findings on careful observation and statistical analysis. The students can use their knowledge and understanding of underlying principles to explore cultural differences, for example the reasons for suicide in different societies. Higher-attaining students answer questions well, writing well-organised

essays with appropriate reference to the requirements of the question. Evaluations and conclusions in the essays of lower-attaining students are not so clearly related to the question, having insufficient reference to the key words in the title.

280. Teaching is good, overall. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and are fully acquainted with examination requirements. They use a variety of strategies and stimulating materials and are skilful at questioning students, who learn well as a result. For example, in a Year 13 lesson discussing the merits of experimental research, the teacher dealt with its moral, social and cultural implications. The students were able to suggest reasons why this approach compares unfavourably with other methods. This allowed them to explore an important area of study using reasoned argument and critical skills. They are keen to work independently using supplementary information from books and periodicals and to research topics on the Internet. Achievement of these students is good. Some lower-attaining students in Year 12 are not as highly motivated and teachers' expectations of these students are not as high as they could be. Consequently, teachers have to work hard to maintain their involvement, especially in the lengthy two-hour sessions. Key skills, such as the continuing reinforcement of technical terms in lessons, are not given enough emphasis. Nevertheless, when one-to-one support is given to lower-attaining students and those with special educational needs, they make good progress. Gifted and talented students are provided with extended work and are challenged by more difficult work in some lessons.

281. Marking provides students with good feedback on completed assignments and each piece of work sets targets for the next. Although marking indicates areas for improvement, especially helpful for lower-attaining students, it is not consistently matched to examination level grading.

282. Students' attitudes to the subject are very good. They like the way teachers work together and extend students' thinking through questioning and discussion, resulting in a stimulating exchange of ideas and increasingly confident dialogue. This encourages them to start to take risks when exploring new ideas, but this is still more laboured than might be expected at this level. They enjoy the relevance of the course to present day culture and feel they have a good understanding of how society functions. Overall, students make good progress and are aware of their achievements and targets.

283. Leadership and management are good. Staffing is good, with an appropriate allocation of teachers to meet the needs of the students and the course. Good monitoring systems inform teachers of students' strengths and weaknesses and keep students aware of their progress. Accommodation is satisfactory, although a specialist room is shared and teachers have to move equipment and resources. Good, complementary research books are available in the library.

## **ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION**

The Kett offers courses in English literature and English language. The inspection focused on English literature and sampled English language.

In English language, teaching is satisfactory. Students acquire a sound understanding of a range of issues to do with language use and variety, such as the use of abbreviations, and the differences between informal and formal language and its use in different settings. Standards of work are below average in Year 12 but above average in Year 13.

## English literature

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

### Strengths

- Good subject knowledge of teachers is used well in briefing and instruction.
- Whole-class discussion work with students is effective.
- Students' very good response and commitment to the subject underpins their good achievement.

### Areas for improvement

- Opportunities are too few for students to think independently and draw out ideas at length.
- An imbalance of class size across The Kett restricts the range of teaching approaches that may be used.

284. Standards of work observed in Year 12 are below those found nationally. Students acquire a thorough understanding of the texts they study in response to sensitive, well-informed teaching, which draws out their understanding and appreciation in whole class discussions. Their ability to structure and control written assignments, in order to communicate fully their understanding, is limited at this stage.

285. In Year 13, standards exceed the national expectation and students have achieved well over the length of the course. Students understand literal meanings, imagery and the historical context of poetry, as a result of thorough teaching. For example, one group identified well the multiple interpretations and resonance of particular lines in William Blake's 'Songs of Innocence and Experience', in the context of eighteenth century London. They read aloud passages from Shakespeare with understanding and expression. Students can identify and explain with insight the importance of key phrases and words, both in class discussion and in response to well-focused materials requiring them to understand, summarise and make annotated notes on the text.

286. The quality of students' response is very good, particularly in Year 13, where they contribute well when questioned as individuals by the teacher. They bring a seriousness and commitment to their studies, which leads to good progress over time. In class, they answer teachers' questions willingly, if briefly, and their files show careful, detailed recording of what they have learned. Their written work shows considerable pride and care.

287. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use good subject knowledge to brief and instruct students, and question classes productively. They mark written work conscientiously. As a result,

students acquire a thorough basic understanding of the texts they study. Nevertheless, the system for telling them how well they are doing, and what they need to do in order to improve further, lacks precision.

288. Within the picture of good learning overall, resulting from the good teaching and students' very good attitudes, a relative weakness is students' skill in learning for themselves. Teachers do not give students enough regular opportunities to think, discuss and share ideas independently. In consequence, students' capacity for autonomous thought and development of understanding is often restricted because they have not learned to express themselves to each other, in more than single words or sentences. In instances where individual students report back on their own research, learning is not consolidated within the group by debating their ideas and discussing alternatives to extend and confirm fully what they know.

289. Computers are used well, both to lay out work logically and to research background information on the Internet. Library facilities for reference and independent reading are adequate. At the same time, some students have limited access to these because they have to travel between sites in order to access the full selection of books.

290. Leadership and management are sound. The teaching of the subject is led jointly by three heads of department, who benefit from the work of a co-ordinator. Initial decisions to standardise syllabuses have prepared the ground for better Cupertino between teachers. The size of classes in Year 12 varies across The Kett, and where numbers are very low, the range of possible teaching approaches is restricted. This means that students in some groups are not exposed to a variety of ways of learning or the stimulus of their peers, and their performance is depressed as a result.

## French

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

### Strengths

- Students work confidently on a range of challenging and sophisticated topics and achieve well.
- Teachers make good use of questioning and constructive criticism.
- Constructive relationships enable students to work well together and enjoy the course.
- The curriculum is well planned and resourced.

### Areas for improvement

- Occasionally, teaching and resources do not match students' linguistic skills.
- The range of teaching media and reading material is limited.
- Students are not recruited from all partner schools.

291. The standards of work of students in Year 13 are above average. In a lesson seen, they undertook discussion of the state of the modern world, and a listening task on the same topic, with confidence. Using the knowledge and skills developed through these activities, they produced thoughtful spoken personal responses, which they would consolidate, in written form, for homework. Their written work is often of excellent quality – fluent, accurate and interesting on a wide range of topics such as pollution, euthanasia and capital punishment. Their achievement is good overall.

292. Students in Year 12 have built on good GCSE results to make the transition to advanced study.



Their written work is a particular strength – extended pieces on topics of general and personal interest, showing a good grasp of appropriate grammar, vocabulary and expression. They work enthusiastically to develop their other language skills. Their spoken French is currently the least well developed. They have had insufficient intensive practice in articulating the language in extended speech, which would improve their confidence in making personal spoken statements and responses. In the lessons seen, they performed best from prepared material, for example in discussing the positive and negative aspects of advertising or in justifying their choice of a television programme from the French national network schedules. When presented with written or spoken material that was unfamiliar or too challenging for their level of experience, they encountered difficulties. Overall, however, they have made good progress on the course.

293. Teaching and learning are good overall. The strengths of the teaching are the excellent skills of the teachers, including native French speakers, the high quality of most planning and resourcing of lessons and the enthusiasm and commitment for the subject which teachers communicate. They provide excellent models of French, which is the teaching medium in lessons. Their use of questioning and constructive criticism on linguistic points are key factors in raising students' standards, notably in Year 13. Teaching is less effective when spoken or written material is chosen which does not match the knowledge, skills and understanding of students. Students' work is diligently marked and they are well supported by assessment processes.

294. Students have positive attitudes to the course and learn well in response to the good teaching. They show a high level of motivation and willingness to learn. They enjoy the challenge of discovering French culture and the broad range of social, moral and cultural topics they study. They work well independently, making good use of ICT both to produce written coursework and, through the Internet, to research topics and other areas of interest. There is a strong ethos of mutual support, notably in the Year 12 group. Students appreciate the value of an advanced qualification in languages and a number take up the opportunity of work experience in France offered by the school.

295. The course is well planned and managed. A team of teachers provides a good range of perspectives and input. The subject is well resourced, though there are no computers within the department and a satellite television facility, which could provide considerable enrichment, is not currently in use. Students would benefit from having access to a wider range of teaching media. The range of texts available for reading, both for information and pleasure, is not broad enough. The department has so far only managed to recruit students from one of the three schools.

## German

Overall, the quality of provision in German is **just satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- The small number of students who take the course have positive attitudes to the subject.

### Areas for improvement

- The course is not well co-ordinated across The Kett.
- Teaching does not always meet students' individual needs.
- Recruitment of students has shown very limited success.

296. The number of students studying German is very small and, within that picture, each year is

taught on a different site. In Year 13, the above average work seen during the inspection was built on good foundations from the previous year and a strong sense of motivation to improve steadily on performance. Achievement is good. Independent learning skills are demonstrated by the care taken over drafting and re-drafting, and the revision notes made to reinforce and improve standards of grammar. The standards seen in Year 12 were below average. Nevertheless, students are on track to reach their target grades, which broadly represents satisfactory achievement. Progress for them is slower because their learning skills are less well developed. Students display reasonable comprehension skills but have difficulty using language independently and accurately to express meaning.

297. Teaching is generally good, though with some variation. Teachers use good techniques to help their students understand the meaning of written texts. For example, they split up compound nouns, direct attention to grammatical forms, use synonyms and simplify more difficult sentences. As a result, students make informed guesses at the meaning of unfamiliar language and this gives them confidence. The textbook is used well to connect abstract topics more closely to students' own experience. Teachers are adept at linking aspects of students' learning and recapping material, both during and at the end of lessons. Students receive good oral feedback on their progress. Marking is regular, but the quality of 298. The advice given is too variable. The best marking is detailed and assesses performance in close accordance with the component parts of the marking criteria. Occasionally, the teaching is less effective in enabling the students to construct their own meanings, and exercises are insufficiently adapted to fully support students, individual needs.

299. In response to teaching, learning is good in Year 13, with active engagement in the work and setting of personal goals. Students in both years have positive attitudes towards the subject. Year 12 students are keen and enthusiastic and enjoy the topics. This encourages them to persevere when they experience difficulties. However, they show little initiative. As a result, students do not fully contribute to the work covered in class and their learning is satisfactory. This is reflected in the inconsistencies in the depth of their knowledge in the topic areas.

300. The quality of provision for students is affected by a combination of small numbers, inconsistencies in staffing, time allocation inequities and the timetable blocking system. The fact that Year 12 and Year 13 courses are taught on separate sites, by different groups of teachers, hinders a sharing of good practice and the development of a strategic overview for the subject. Current management arrangements are not securing a coherent ethos for the subject nor presenting a clear path for students who may wish to study German over the coming years.