

INSPECTION REPORT

CROFTON SCHOOL

Brockley, London

LEA area: Lewisham

Unique reference number: 100747

Headteacher: Ms Monica Duncan

Reporting inspector: Mr R Drew
7281

Dates of inspection: 2 - 6 December 2002

Inspection number: 251941

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 18 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Manwood Road
Brockley
London

Postcode: SE4 1SA

Telephone number: 0208 690 1114

Fax number: 0208 314 1859

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Ms P Morrison

Date of previous inspection: 27 November 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
7281	R. Drew	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9710	E. Burgess	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
7926	J. Bowden	Team inspector	Sociology (sixth form)	
18447	R. Cohen	Team inspector	Citizenship Business studies (sixth form)	
19586	W. Easterby	Team inspector	English English literature (sixth form)	
1759	G. Edwards	Team inspector	Design and technology	
31100	G. Hunter	Team inspector	Mathematics	
21785	V. Kerr	Team inspector	Science Biology (sixth form)	
7958	G. Lewis	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
16950	C. Orr	Team inspector	English as an additional language Modern foreign languages French (sixth form)	

31963	M. Padmore	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
19867	M. Pettitt	Team inspector	Art and design Music	
30427	F. Shuffle-Botham	Team inspector	History Religious education	
10564	J. Tomlinson	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
12972	T. Weaden	Team inspector	Physical education	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Crofton School is an 11 to 18 comprehensive school with 1064 pupils on roll, including 103 sixth form students. It serves the south London borough of Lewisham, where the range of schools, including independent and selective schools, especially girls' schools, is very wide. Currently this school has 687 boys and 377 girls on roll. Pupils come from a very wide range of backgrounds: a few are from relatively affluent homes, but many more are from economically disadvantaged families and serious deprivation is quite widely found. Currently 48 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, compared with 15 per cent nationally. The ethnic composition of the school is also wide: pupils of white (U.K.) origin comprise the largest single group, at 24 per cent of the total, with black (African/Caribbean) pupils accounting for 19 per cent, black (African) 14 per cent and black (U.K.) pupils a further 14 per cent. About 9 per cent of pupils are of mixed race, 5 per cent of Turkish Cypriot background, while other ethnic backgrounds account for the remaining 15 per cent of pupils. Nearly 400 pupils use English as an additional language and 75 of these are at an early stage of language acquisition. The attainment levels of pupils entering the school vary greatly, with some very high attaining pupils but many more have very low prior attainment. About 40 per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs compared with a national figure of 19.5; 3.5 per cent of pupils have statements of special educational need, which is significantly more than nationally.

The school was inspected in 1995 and again in 2000. Its current headteacher was appointed shortly before the 2000 inspection and has since been joined by two new deputy heads. The school is an active participant in the 'Excellence in Cities' programme. Plans exist for a new sixth form centre in the area and a new 11 to 16 building on the school site, to replace its existing premises and to unite under one roof the post-16 provision currently made by a consortium of local schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a rapidly improving school. Its overall effectiveness is now satisfactory and while it has areas requiring further improvement it is no longer a school with serious weaknesses. It benefits from very good leadership and management at senior level and sound overall teaching. As a result, pupils are making satisfactory progress and the standards they reach are rising. While they are well below national standards, they are suitably higher than those with which pupils entered the school. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. The expenditure per pupil is high, but is used effectively, and value for money is satisfactory.

What the school does well

- There is excellent leadership from the headteacher and very good overall leadership and management.
- Attitudes and behaviour are good, due to very good moral and good social provision and very good relationships.
- In many subjects good teaching is the norm.
- Good use is made of assessment and target-setting.
- Very good care is given to pupils' personal support.
- Links with other schools and colleges are good.
- Academic standards are rising.
- There are good levels of freedom from racism, sexism, bullying.

What could be improved

- While much improved, attendance levels for a significant minority of pupils are too low.
- Pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils with English as an additional language make unsatisfactory progress in Years 7 to 11.
- Standards in Year 11 are below the school's average in English, science, modern languages and physical education.
- ICT is not sufficiently integrated into the teaching of the curriculum as a whole.
- Tutorial and registration time are used too inconsistently.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection. It was required to raise attainment, improve the behaviour, attitudes and the attendance of pupils, increase the proportion of good quality teaching generally and focus particularly on improving the teaching of English and modern languages. Results in National Curriculum tests in Year 9 have risen noticeably, especially in English, and the overall standards at GCSE are higher. Attendance has risen, exclusions have been reduced after an initial marked rise, and the proportion of teaching judged satisfactory or better has increased from 91 per cent in 2000 to 96 per cent in 2002.

In addition, many other major improvements to the school's management structures and procedures have taken place. The curriculum is much improved and an ethos of high expectations has been established amongst pupils, staff and parents; as a result, the school is now fully subscribed.

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	E	E	E	C
A-levels/AS-levels	E	E	*	

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

** National comparison data for AS/A results in 2002 are not yet available*

Pupils enter the school with prior attainment levels that are very low by national standards, especially in literacy skills. By the end of Year 9, their results in National Curriculum tests are well below average, but this represents sound achievement across Years 7 to 9. Test results show a marked improvement since the last inspection in 2000.

By the end of Year 11, pupils' examination results are below the national average for all schools, but match those for schools in the same free school meals category. Results in 2002 contribute to an upward trend. Standards of work seen during the inspection confirm this trend and many subjects are now 'below' rather than 'well below' average. Achievement across Years 10 and 11 is therefore sound overall. The school's very demanding GCSE targets for 2001 and 2002 were not met, but the gap between targets and actual performance has narrowed. In a majority of lessons, the quality of teaching and learning is good and leads to equally good progress, but several factors partly counteract this positive influence: poor attendance by a minority of pupils and the unsatisfactory quality of support teaching outside lessons for pupils with special educational needs in Years 7 to 9 and for pupils with English as an additional language in Years 7 to 11.

Gifted and talented pupils make sound overall progress in Years 7 to 11 and good progress in several subjects.

Standards in the sixth form are described in the Sixth Form Annex to this report, but in summary they are below national averages, having improved significantly since the last inspection. Students make sound progress across Years 12 and 13.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The great majority of pupils are positive about learning and show pride in their school. They are keen to be involved in clubs and societies and other extra-curricular activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. In lessons, behaviour is good and pupils treat teachers with respect. They are lively but orderly in and around the school at lunchtimes. A declining minority are excluded on a temporary basis for unacceptable behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils relate well to each other irrespective of gender and ethnic background and form very good relationships with their teachers. Parents rightly believe that the school helps their children become mature and responsible.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. The levels of attendance are below national averages, but considerably better than at the time of the last inspection.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning across the school as a whole are sound; both are good in the sixth form. The overall proportion of satisfactory teaching in lessons and the incidence of good and very good teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection.

Teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science are good. This represents a recent but impressive improvement in English and science, where new leadership of these subjects is having a very beneficial impact.

Teachers are good at explaining their subject knowledge with confidence and skill; they establish very good relationships with the vast majority of pupils and manage pupils' needs and behaviour well. They are also good at using assessment data to set appropriate work for different pupils and challenging targets for them to work toward. Generally they are less successful in reinforcing basic numeracy and ICT skills in lessons. Pupils learn soundly overall and, in a majority of lessons across Years 7 to 11, they learn well. Their attitudes are good, a major improvement since the last inspection, and they are well informed on the standards they are reaching and how to improve. Teaching in Year 11 is strong, with many lessons having good or better teaching, while in Year 7 there are a lot less, and a disproportionate share of unsatisfactory teaching and learning in the school occurs here.

When pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and English as an additional language (EAL) are withdrawn from normal lessons, the teaching and learning involved is, on balance, unsatisfactory. However, the support in class for pupils with SEN is good. Gifted and talented pupils learn soundly across Years 7 to 9 and make particularly good progress in mathematics and languages.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All National Curriculum subjects are taught and other optional courses, such as sociology, are available in Years 10 and 11. These include some vocational courses, but fewer than would best serve the school's pupils. ICT provision fails to meet statutory requirements in Years 10 and 11.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. The support in lessons for pupils with special educational needs is good and overall this ensures sound progress for these pupils in Years 10 and 11. In Years 7 to 9 too much depends on support teaching outside lessons where provision is unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Unsatisfactory. The work of assessing and helping pupils with English as an additional language is unsatisfactory and those pupils needing intensive support make unsatisfactory progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. There is very good guidance for pupils' moral development and good provision for their social and cultural development. Spiritual development is unsatisfactorily promoted across the curriculum.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school is very successful at ensuring the care of its pupils, using effective systems to monitor academic and personal progress and also providing in its staff many good role models of committed, caring professionals.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Satisfactory. Parents receive valuable information about the school's activities and the progress their children are making. The overall involvement of parents in the life of the school is satisfactory compared with general practice, but links are already much better than at the time of the last inspection and continue to improve.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher continues to provide excellent leadership, as was the case at the last inspection. Her vision and actions are now supported and extended by the work of good senior and middle management colleagues. Managers have succeeded in creating a far more effective school than that inspected in 2000, with a staff united in a commitment to further improvement. Staffing and resource levels are satisfactory. Accommodation, however, is unsatisfactory and the school is wisely pursuing plans for the complete rebuilding of its premises.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors give the school a good level of strategic and moral support. They meet most statutory obligations, but not those for ICT and the daily act of worship. On many aspects of school life they are well informed, but levels of awareness about support for pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language are too limited.
The school's evaluation of	Very good. The school monitors most of its activities very well and has

its performance	shown that it can bring about marked improvements in a relatively short time.
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The strategic use of resources	Good. The school deploys its budget well and plans ahead effectively. There is extensive comparing of its performance and its cost with those of other schools and its strategic approach is illustrated by the current pursuit of new premises for the whole school.
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PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>A very high proportion of parents are pleased with the school because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they believe the school places high expectations on their children; • they find the school very approachable • their children like school; • they consider the school to be well led and managed; • they believe the school helps their children become mature and responsible. 	<p>A relatively small minority of parents are dissatisfied with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the consistency with which homework is set and marked; • the degree to which they are kept informed about their children's progress; • how closely the school liases with parents.

Inspectors judge that parents are right to hold so many positive views about the school. The school's links with parents are satisfactory compared with general practice and the same is true for the way teachers use homework. Both have strengths, but there is scope for reports to cover some subjects more effectively and for greater consistency in the way homework is set and marked.

ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM

CROFTON SCHOOL

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

Crofton School has 103 sixth form students, taught within the Crossways consortium, along with students from three neighbouring schools. Students come from North Lewisham and surrounding areas. There are many other selective and independent schools with sixth forms nearby. More of Crofton's students come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds than is usual. They represent a wide range of ethnic communities, with about 24 per cent of white (U.K) origin, 44 per cent black and 12 per cent from Turkish background. Thirty-one use English as an additional language, but none is at an early stage of language acquisition. Their standards of attainment on entry to Year 12 are well below that commonly found in sixth forms. There are 58 male students and 45 female. The consortium offers 26 A and AS level courses, three of these vocational, eight intermediate level courses, with an even mix of GCSE and GNVQ, and three foundation level courses. Crofton students participate in five of the Advanced courses, nine AS courses and several of the foundation courses. About 37 per cent of the school's Year 11 pupils stay on as sixth form students. In Year 12, about 91 per cent complete their courses and a similar proportion complete Year 13 courses.

The school left the consortium briefly between 1998 and 2000, but rejoined in 2001. There is the expectation that a purpose-built sixth form will replace the consortium in September 2004.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

This is a sound and improving sixth form. Until recently, its level of effectiveness was unsatisfactory as the achievement, or 'added-value', of students was persistently low, and many teaching groups too small to be viable. However, through rejoining the local post-16 consortium in 2000, viability has improved considerably: standards have risen, even though they remain well below national average; achievement is now satisfactory and the quality of teaching and learning is now good. The sixth form is well led and managed and provision meets the needs of its varied students satisfactorily. Spending is above average and cost effectiveness is satisfactory.

Strengths

- There is good teaching and learning, with much that is very good.
- Students' attitudes are very positive and relationships are very good.
- There is very good support and guidance and careers advice.
- Academic assessment is very good.
- Standards and 'added value' are improving.
- Students are currently making good progress in business studies, design and technology, sociology, history and ICT.
- Leadership and management are good.

What could be improved

- Retention rates are too low.
- The curriculum lacks sufficient breadth and there is scope for improvement in the match of courses to students' prior attainment and the teaching of key skills.
- Statutory requirements for religious education are not met.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory: space is limited, especially for social areas, snack bars and study areas.
- Progress across recent courses has been no better than satisfactory in English, mathematics, biology and French, whereas it has been good in most other subjects.
- Results in recent examinations are well below average in English, history and biology.

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.

Subject area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Satisfactory. Student numbers for mathematics at A level have been low in recent years, but the consortium recruits well enough as a whole to render courses viable. Teaching is good, but some students are not working hard enough to benefit fully from this, in spite of good support from their teachers.
Biology	Good. Students achieve well, exceeding the expectations based on their attainment at GCSE. This good progress is the result of effective teaching and good management of the subject.
Design and technology	Good. The ethos for learning and teacher-student relationships are good. The subject is well led and there is strong support for students. Teaching is good and has a beneficial impact on standards.
Business studies	Good. Very good leadership and management, together with good teaching, help students to make good progress. They attain standards in line with national expectations.
ICT	Provision is good . Teaching and learning are both good and the subject is well led and managed. Students' attitudes are strongly positive.
Geography	Unsatisfactory. Results show that students in previous years have made poor progress at AS and A2. Current teaching in the consortium lessons is satisfactory, but too many students fail to achieve a grade at the end of their courses.
History	Good. Students are growing in confidence and developing analytical and essay-writing skills as a result of good teaching. The very good relationships between students and teachers support good progress in lessons.
Sociology	Good. The good teaching results in effective learning. Thus all students make good progress in lessons. Standards are above average and the subject is very well led and managed. The number of students opting for the subject has risen significantly since the school rejoined the consortium.
English literature	Satisfactory. Teaching is good and students achieve soundly. Standards are below national averages, but are improving rapidly as a result of very effective leadership.
French	Satisfactory. The quality of teaching is good overall and teachers expect their students to do well. Students are positive about their language learning. The monitoring between schools of students' absences and their independent work is not thorough enough.

The sixth form also offers 'entitlement time' for tutorials and special activities each week, the quality of which is good, and there are GCSE re-sit groups in English, mathematics and science, where the standard of teaching is good, attainment is average and progress good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Very good. When considering entry to the sixth form, students receive good-quality written information about its opportunities and requirements, backed up by very effective discussion with tutors. Arrangements developed over the last two years now give students clear targets and valuable information about their academic progress. Careers advice is very good and students are helped to visit numerous colleges and universities.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Good. The sixth form is well led and managed. Over the last few years, there has been relatively little scope for leadership to establish a strong ethos and well-defined expectations because of the movement in and out of the local consortium, changes in headship in the school and the shared responsibility for leading and managing the sixth form. Since the last inspection, the head of sixth form, director of the local consortium and new headteacher of the school have collectively promoted much improved standards of attainment and quality of teaching by strong use of assessment data, broadening the curriculum, matching students to courses more effectively and building on the improving standards being reached by the school's Year 11 pupils.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<p>A very large majority of students believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they are well taught, and challenged to do their best; • they are encouraged to study and work independently; • teachers are very accessible and helpful; • the course choices allow them to follow a programme that suits them; • they are treated as responsible young adults. 	<p>A significant minority believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • careers advice could be better; • there are too few extra-curricular activities available for them; • they could be kept better informed about their progress.

Inspectors judge that students are right to think highly of the quality of teaching and the information about courses they receive. They are also justified in seeing teachers as accessible and helpful and in believing they are treated with respect, as young adults. Compared with other sixth forms, they receive better than average information about their progress and better than average careers advice, but inspectors agree that most other sixth forms are able to offer a wider range of activities beyond their formal courses.

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. Achievement, that is the medium to long-term progress made by pupils, is sound across the school. For an increasing proportion of pupils, the gains made in knowledge and skills are good. Results at Year 9, Year 11 and Year 13 are well below national averages, but pupils enter the school with poor levels of attainment, especially in terms of literacy skills, and these results and the work seen by inspectors confirm that standards in the school are rising and represent a marked improvement on those observed during the last inspection.
2. Pupils enter the school with particularly low scores on National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds and similarly low scores on tests conducted in Year 7. Nearly 40 per cent of pupils have special educational needs and a similar proportion use English as an additional language, although only 7 per cent are at an early stage of language acquisition. The school faces most of the challenges raised by these factors very well and provides sound, challenging teaching and a good overall ethos for learning in which pupils are encouraged to work hard.
3. By the end of Year 9, as a consequence, the school's results in National Curriculum tests are rising. They were amongst the lowest 5 per cent in the country in 2000, with only 20 per cent of pupils gaining level 5 or better in English, mathematics and science tests. In 2002, the proportion had reached 40 per cent. It is well below the average for all schools, but average for schools in the same free school meals category.
4. Standards of work seen during the inspection in English, mathematics and science were also well below average, confirming the improved position from 2000, when they were very low. In many of the other subjects, pupils' work shows standards that are 'below' rather than 'well below' average, representing good achievement in the light of their starting point in Year 7. In design and technology, standards in Year 9 now match those found nationally, which indicates that very good progress is being made in this subject.
5. Progress for pupils with special educational needs in Year 7 to 9 is sound and sometimes good in lessons because of effective in-class support. However, they make less progress than they should overall because the quality of support when they are withdrawn from lessons is unsatisfactory, with support teachers not working to the same high expectations as their colleagues.
6. Similarly, pupils with English as an additional language do not receive the quality of well-focused, specific help they need in individual or small group teaching, so those withdrawn for such work make unsatisfactory progress. In lessons as a whole, most teachers go to considerable lengths to ensure their instructions and materials are understood by all pupils and many pupils with English as an additional language progress soundly. Overall, the poorly managed co-ordination of this area of the school's work prevents pupils from gaining a secure grasp of English as early as they should.
7. Boys and girls attain at broadly similar overall standards in Year 9 National Curriculum tests, although this disguises a marked under-performance by boys in English, which they largely counter with a better score than girls in mathematics.
8. Gifted and talented pupils make sound overall progress across Years 7 to 9 and some, especially in mathematics, making very good progress. Several pupils, for instance, sit and pass GCSE mathematics each year while still in Year 8 or 9.
9. At the end of Year 11, public examination results are well below national averages, but match the average for similar schools. Achievement across Years 10 and 11 is sound overall. While

English and science are both rapidly improving subjects, they have not quite reached standards at Year 11, which represent satisfactory progress for Year 9. Achievement is also unsatisfactory in cross-curricular ICT.

10. The school's GCSE targets for 2001 and 2002 were for pupils to gain points scores of 33 and 30 per cent. These were very demanding targets in terms of previous results and they were not met. However, the 2002 results showed a points score of 29, indicating that the gap between expectations and achievements is now very close.
11. However, many subjects had examination results at GCSE in 2002 that were below, but not far below, national averages. Standards in the pupils' work observed during the inspection confirm that many subjects are not far below average and in the case of design and technology and business studies they now match standards nationally. This represents good achievement in Years 10 and 11 in these subjects.
12. Boys attain less well than girls at GCSE, and because they constitute nearly two-thirds of the candidates each year, this has posed a challenge to the school as it has sought to raise standards. Girls also attain well below the national average for their gender, reflecting the fact that the intake of female pupils to the school comprises more lower-attaining pupils than usual because selective girls' schools are numerous in the locality. However, the school has begun to counter these negative factors by improved teaching quality, with attention to lesson structure and maximum pupil involvement, by its extensive use of mentoring and by successfully creating an ethos in which it is acceptable to study hard, irrespective of gender or background.
13. Gifted and talented pupils continue to make sound progress in Years 10 and 11. For pupils with special educational needs, provision is concentrated in lessons and the well-planned pupil grouping helps them to make sound progress. Pupils with English as an additional language do not make sufficient progress because support follows the same, inadequately focused, arrangements found in Years 7 to 9.
14. Poor attendance by a minority of pupils, especially in Year 11, limits the medium and long-term progress they can make. It has been a strong factor hindering improvement in standards and sustaining a higher than usual proportion of unclassified grades at GCSE. However, the school has already shown that it is capable of improving attendance and is aware that additional strategies are required to continue the positive trend.

Sixth form

15. Results in 2002 AS, A2 and GNVQ examinations were, collectively, below average. A points score of about 14 points per student (using the same calculation system as in 2000 and 2001) was reached, compared with a national figure of 18. In previous years, the school's scores have been 'well below' and amongst the lowest 5 per cent in the country, so that improvement since the inspection of 2000 has been good. Current Year 12 results indicate that students are well placed to continue this upward trend.
16. For this school's students, taught within the consortium, the standards in separate subjects vary from year to year and frequently involve low entry numbers, so that results can be statistically unreliable.
17. However, certain subjects, especially business AVCE, design and technology and sociology consistently provide results which exceed the school's average, and currently Year 12 and 13 students are also making good progress in these subjects. Examination results in English, history and biology have been particularly low and currently progress is satisfactory – while good in most other subjects – in English, biology, mathematics and modern languages.
18. Overall, improvement in the sixth form is the result of much better assessment and target-setting arrangements introduced two years ago, and of an improved match of students to courses and an expansion in provision. In addition, higher standards of commitment and in prior attainment have been typical of those entering Year 12 from the much-improved main school. Individual subjects,

especially business, design and technology and sociology, have also established a tradition of good management of teaching and course design through continuity in staffing and very good leadership.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

19. Overall, pupils' attitudes to school are good and their standards of behaviour are satisfactory. Both attitudes and behaviour have improved since the last report and now most pupils are proud of their school. Problems with bullying have been largely eradicated. Exclusions are high, but now that a clear and consistent framework of discipline and respect has been established, are beginning to be reduced.
20. Personal development and relationships in the school are good. Again, this represents good improvement. Attendance, although much improved over the past two years, is unsatisfactory and too many pupils are late.
21. Pupils' attitudes to work in lessons are generally good, and often very good. In the best lessons, pupils are focused and show a keen interest in learning. They respond very well to energetic styles of teaching, as seen, for example, in a Year 7 design and technology lesson that involved soldering components to construct a circuit. Most pupils show a good enthusiasm for school, are interested in their lessons and willing to become involved in the activities offered outside lessons.
22. Standards of behaviour in lessons and in and around the school are generally good. Younger pupils are often boisterous, but rarely aggressive, and respond quickly to adult intervention. Nevertheless, in too many lessons, progress is slowed by low-level, mildly disruptive chatter, which has to be dealt with before lessons can continue. They know when their behaviour has reached unacceptable levels and show a good understanding of the impact of their actions on other people. Movement around the school is usually orderly and the site is free of litter, except in the dining area at lunch times.
23. Exclusions, both permanent and fixed-term, usually the result of abusive or violent behaviour, are high for a school of this size. However, pupils who are referred to the school's inclusion team are carefully assessed and their performance closely monitored. This intervention results in pupils who were at risk of exclusion because of their behaviour or poor attitude coming to terms with the school's expectations of them and settling into the school community.
24. The absence of oppressive behaviour is very good, and any incidents of bullying are managed well. Older pupils said that the amount of bullying had decreased a lot since the time they joined the school, and a number of upper-school pupils have undertaken training to advise younger pupils who feel threatened by others. Sexism and racism are not tolerated and pupils of all ages and ethnic backgrounds understand this.
25. Pupils respond well to the school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. When given time to reflect, they do so well. In design and technology, for example, some very good independent research in the library and via the Internet was undertaken on other cultures in designing and making a drawstring bag in textiles. Pupils are attentive in assemblies, but periods for reflection are too short.
26. Pupils show a good respect for other people's values and beliefs and participate well in moral discussions, as, for example, in English, discussing the poems of Carol Ann Duffy or in history, exchanging views on Ann Frank's Diary. They observe and celebrate others' achievements, as was evident in a lower-school assembly when pupils were applauded for their participation in the gardening club and for their success in a story-telling competition.
27. Pupils' ability to show initiative and demonstrate personal responsibility is satisfactory. Higher-attaining pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, use their initiative well to complete independent coursework, and many pupils show a degree of independence when encouraged by their teachers, as was evident in some Year 10 sociology research. However, in too many lessons, the amount of intervention by the teachers inhibits independent learning.
28. Relationships are good, both between different groups of pupils and between pupils and adults in the school. The degree of racial harmony seen in the school is very good; this aspect was

particularly impressive in physical education, where pupils from all ethnic backgrounds worked collaboratively in teams. The school has been successful in creating an atmosphere of mutual respect. Pupils demonstrate that they are trustworthy; groups of Year 9 pupils worked sensibly in adjacent rooms without direct supervision.

29. Attendance is unsatisfactory, although for most groups of pupils it has improved significantly over the past two years. The absence of some pupils, especially lower-attaining pupils, affects standards. The school has set challenging targets for all year groups and many pupils have responded well. However, too many pupils arrive late for registration, and some, although in school, show no sense of urgency to get to lessons on time, either delaying the start or disrupting the introduction to the lesson.

Sixth form

30. Very good attitudes pertain in the sixth form in all subjects. Most lessons are characterised by warm, mature respectful relationships, both between students and staff and between groups of students. They express their ideas with confidence and value each others' contributions. Students are keen to do their best and show very good ability to concentrate. In a mathematics lesson, for example, Year 13 students worked out examples with enthusiasm and commitment, and were not embarrassed to admit their mistakes. Students develop good personal and learning skills. For example, in English, they show a hunger for knowledge, and improve their learning through regular use of computers for research. In business studies, students show a consistently good response, and apply intellectual rigour in evaluating data and ideas.
31. Students participate as fully as possible in the school community, given the nature of the sixth form arrangements that means that they are often at one of the other school or college sites. Students are happy in the sixth form and express very positive views about their experience. Attendance in the sixth form is good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

32. Teaching and learning in the school as a whole are both sound, with a significant minority of lessons in which both are good. Of the lessons observed during the inspection, about 96 per cent had satisfactory or better teaching, with 4 per cent unsatisfactory. This is a marked improvement on the outcome of the last inspection. The proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching and learning has also risen to 62 per cent, from 54 per cent in 2000.
33. Teaching of the younger pupils, Years 7 to 9, and of pupils in Years 10 and 11 shows broadly similar features. However, teachers' expectations are good in Years 10 and 11, showing a particularly clear appreciation by staff of the range of GCSE grades to which pupils are working. Satisfactory teaching and learning account for 93 per cent of lessons across Years 7 to 9, but 97 per cent for Years 10 and 11. This is the result of a slightly higher incidence in Years 7 to 9 of lessons led by supply and newly qualified teachers coupled with the fact that the younger pupils, especially those in Year 7, take some time to adjust to the school's required standards of behaviour and approaches to study. There is less variation between the quality of teaching and learning in different subjects than there was at the time of the last inspection. The quality is good in the great majority of subjects, including English, mathematics and science, and it is sound in physical education, art and religious education.
34. The key strengths in the great majority of teaching are the knowledge and communication skills of staff, their good management of pupils and the way assessment is used to help pupils to progress. Management of pupils and the use of assessment were both shortcomings two years earlier, so that improvement in these areas has been particularly marked. Planning in most whole-class teaching is good, with lesson objectives clearly displayed and discussed and a structure to the session that promotes strong pace. Teachers have created a more positive ethos

in the school to the one described in the last inspection report, so that better behaviour and greater interest in learning are apparent. The very good relationships between most classes and their teachers are both a cause and a result of these improvements. Overall, relationships and pupils' attitudes make a major contribution to the success of teaching and learning in the school. A Year 11 English lesson with very good teaching demonstrated many of these positive features: the pupils' ability to criticise their own essays on poems they had studied was helped enormously by the teacher's confidence in handling subject matter and in the clarity of explanation; pupils' prior attainment was known and acted upon so that they were all set high but different expectations; pupils with special educational needs had well-directed support. However, the absence level was high and too many pupils' progress was hampered as a result. A Year 7 design and technology lesson succeeded because the organisation of pupils, resources and the classroom were excellent and because pace and relationships in the lesson were very positive. New skills were taught in logical order with emphasis on high standards of care and safety, but above all the pupils were encouraged to talk about what was happening and confirm that they understood, and they were very good at working in pairs or groups to support each other. The commitment to learning was so strong that most pupils chose to return voluntarily during the lunch hour to continue working.

35. There are some limitations in both teaching and learning. The reinforcement of basic skills, while good in the case of literacy, is just satisfactory for numeracy and unsatisfactory for ICT. Aspects of teaching pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language are also unsatisfactory. Support for pupils with special educational needs in class is generally good, but, in out-of-lesson sessions, expectations lack challenge. Teaching of English as an additional language is unsatisfactorily managed, so that pupils' specific needs are not reliably assessed and their support lacks accurate focus. For example, in a Year 8 withdrawal session for seven pupils, there was a weaker structure than usually seen in the school, with no clear introductory or summing-up session at each end of the lesson and weak pace. Too many pupils remained uninvolved in class activities, and their learning about the key concepts remained insecure and untested at the end of the lesson.
36. Monitoring of teaching and learning has improved greatly in recent years, having had an ineffective role in the school prior to the last inspection. Senior staff have concentrated their training and evaluation on whole-class teaching with a marked beneficial impact. However, too little monitoring has taken place of the one-to-one and small group teaching of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language.
37. In most departments, good leadership and management of the subject now ensure that these strengths are consistent features of teaching. Elsewhere, changes in leadership, sometimes coupled with staffing shortages, have slowed attempts to establish continuity. As a result, teaching is more variable, although not unsatisfactory.
38. While much of whole-class teaching and learning is good, learning by pupils with special educational needs is good when supported in lessons by support assistants, but unsatisfactory when part of the withdrawal programme. Special educational needs staff operating in classes work well with subject teachers and regularly provide well-directed help for pupils across Years 7 to 11. The work of support teachers outside class lessons is less effective because it lacks sufficient ambition in the improvements it seeks to make with pupils, even though their needs are quite accurately diagnosed. Gifted and talented pupils learn satisfactorily overall and in several subjects their learning is good. In mathematics, for instance day-to-day teaching and the programme of additional opportunities for extending learning are both very successful.
39. Despite shortcomings in aspects of special educational needs and English as an additional language provision, the improved quality of teaching and learning in the school is one reason why it no longer has 'serious weaknesses'. Leadership and management have been very strong since the last inspection and a new and purposeful ethos has been established in which staff feel well supported and pupils understand that learning is their key task. Good monitoring and support systems have identified most areas of strength and weakness and put the necessary strategies for improvement in place.

Sixth form

40. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are both good. All lessons seen during the inspection had at least satisfactory teaching and in 82 per cent the quality was good or better. Teachers show particularly good specialist knowledge of their subjects and this is the basis for considerable respect from their students. Planning is consistently good, being both well structured and built around accurate assessments of students' standards and targets. Relationships are a great strength and this promotes the active involvement of students in extensive discussion, in making presentations and in evaluating their own work and that of their peers. All of these features contribute to good overall learning in sixth form lessons, and they are further helped by the very positive attitudes of students.
41. A Year 12 business studies lesson, for example, instantly conveyed assured subject expertise and a very good rapport with students. The mix of brief exposition from the teacher, students working individually, then discussing in groups and later feeding back their findings to the class provided ample variety and allowed the teacher to move between students, explaining, setting further challenges and sustaining a rapid work rate.
42. There is quite marked consistency between the quality of current teaching and learning in different subjects. However, examination results over several years and schemes of work indicate that some subjects have established a tradition of successful teaching and learning, notably business studies, sociology and design and technology. In others, such as geography, this has not been the case and its place on the curriculum has been insecure. In English, mathematics and science teaching quality and the leadership of the subject are both substantially improved since the last inspection.
43. Only a very few students in the sixth form have special educational needs or require support because they have English as an additional language. Those with special educational needs learn well because of teachers' awareness of their needs and the provision of suitable help, but the shortcomings in support for pupils with English as an additional language evident in the main school also apply to the sixth form, and students with urgent needs do not always receive additional help as soon as they should.

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

44. Overall, the quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils and students are satisfactory. In Years 7 to 11 they are good. This is better than at the time of the last inspection. The draft curriculum policy states that the school aims to foster a love of learning and to provide high achievement with a focus on progression. In many ways, these are being slowly achieved. During Years 7 to 9, pupils study all the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education, personal, social and health education, citizenship and drama. The provision for ICT now meets the requirements of the National Curriculum in Years 7 to 9, but is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. In those years, the majority of pupils are not taught ICT and there are insufficient planned opportunities in other subjects.
45. The National Numeracy Strategy is well embedded into the work of the mathematics department in all years. Audits of where the pupils need to use numeracy in the various subject areas have been carried out and have been used to draw up a whole-school policy for teaching numeracy. All departments have a policy for teaching numeracy that in some cases is reflected in their schemes of work and lesson planning. Science is now particularly strong in this respect. Following a history of poor experimental work, the need to focus more directly on numeracy skills is recognised. The department is working closely with the mathematics department to improve matters.

46. In Years 10 and 11, pupils take a broad range of courses that contribute to the core National Curriculum, but this is broadened by the addition of GNVQs in business education and in ICT and GCSE courses in sociology, drama, media studies, music, history, geography, art and design and physical education. Higher-attaining pupils have the opportunity to take GCSE mathematics before Year 10 and GCE AS level work is introduced to those pupils at an early stage. One unsatisfactory aspect is the high proportion of pupils who do not study a modern language. The regulations have been interpreted too liberally, but the school is already reviewing this situation. Most subjects are allocated an appropriate amount of time except for science, which has considerably less than the national average, and this is a major factor in the recent low standards. The time allocated to science has been slightly improved since the last inspection. In some cases, classes are too large for effective work, with a negative impact on learning, especially in Years 7 to 9, in science, physical education, English, modern languages and ICT.
47. Religious education is taught according to the Agreed Syllabus and there is a carefully structured personal, social and health education programme. The latter includes careers work and there is a useful work-experience programme. In September 2000, the school introduced a half course GCSE in citizenship as a pilot for some pupils. It is hoped to extend this to all pupils by September 2003. However, the use of tutor time is not consistent and many tutors have had insufficient training to improve this aspect of the curriculum.
48. A small number of pupils are taught as a discrete group and have work-related learning through Lewisham College. This includes, catering, childcare, fashion and ICT. These pupils receive a great deal of benefit from this course, which has improved their motivation and attitude to school, but it is important that they do not become isolated from the main school and that they retain their links with normal tutor groups and through physical education.
49. The school's provision for personal development is satisfactory and improving. There have been significant improvements over the past few years and since the last inspection in the provision for pupils' social and cultural awareness, which is good; provision for moral development is now very good. However, provision for spiritual development remains unsatisfactory. The contribution made by each subject area to personal development has not been assessed throughout the school. In general, lessons and tutorial periods do not plan opportunities to promote personal development as well as they could.
50. Good practice in enhancing pupils' spiritual awareness is seen in art and design, religious education and design and technology. For example, in art and design, Year 9 pupils were encouraged to reflect on the design and building of the Egyptian pyramids and appreciate the natural wonder of a wasps' nest, and Year 9 pupils working on the design of a theme park 'Futura' were expected to reflect on the way technology impacts on the environment. Opportunities to develop spiritual ideas are often lost because teachers feel a need to keep up the pace in a lesson. For instance, in English, when the class was discussing the use of similes in a poem, the need to complete planned work curtailed the depth of the discussion. Some assemblies give pupils time to reflect, for example, on others' achievements, but usually the time allowed is insufficient for the reflection to be of real value. Few tutorials have a reflective aspect to them. The school does not meet its statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship.
51. Provision for moral development is very good and permeates the life of the school. The concept of respect for other people, self and property is reinforced in the school's code of conduct and in many lessons. Teachers and staff set very good role models and share the headteacher's high expectations of what is acceptable in the school and wider community. When pupils breach the boundaries and are reprimanded, they show that they fully understand the difference between right and wrong, both in school and in the wider community. Many lessons provide opportunities to discuss moral dilemmas. For example, in history, pupils consider the holocaust and the development of the United Nations; they consider the effects of colonisation and the justification for dropping a nuclear bomb on Hiroshima; and a very good debate was seen in a Year 9 lesson on American attitudes to slavery and slave rights.

52. Provision for social and cultural development is good. Many lessons plan for pupils to work collaboratively in differently sized groups, as in instrumental music lessons. Discussion and practical work in groups is a feature in many effective lessons that encourage good social interaction, especially in history, religious education, science, personal, social and health education, physical education and English. Visitors, such as the school's police liaison officer, provide good opportunities for pupils to understand the role of a good citizen, and pupils have the chance to learn about individuals' roles and responsibilities in a variety of situations. The School Council provides a good forum for pupils to express their views about the school and its procedures, and those who serve on it are developing good citizenship skills.

53. Pupils are given good opportunities to learn about and understand the many cultures that they themselves represent. In art and design, drama and music, the curriculum enables pupils to experience and participate in different styles of expressive arts. History, especially, enables pupils to discuss and compare cultural changes, and visits to museums and places of interest extend pupils' learning well. Visitors, such as a local historian telling Year 9 about the home front during the Second World War, with pupils dressing up in uniforms, are used well to bring history alive.
54. The school makes satisfactory provision for extending the curriculum by arranging for visitors to speak to pupils and for pupils to take part in conferences, visit museums and theatres and work in the local area. There are a number of subject-based clubs and homework clubs to support learning. Activities planned for this term include the breakfast club, craft workshop, web club and singing. In addition, horse riding is popular along with taik wan do, working of the school magazine and first aid. The library is also available after school. International Week has recently been celebrated. A number of sports activities is provided, although there are some staffing restrictions because of many demands made on busy teachers. This term there is netball for all years, gymnastics, trampolining for Year 10, self-defence, dance, football and basketball for Years 10 and 11. During the week of the inspection, the take-up of these activities was small, but nights were dark and many parents like their younger children home at an early time. A group of pupils and staff left on a short visit to France during the inspection. Many parents feel that arrangements for extra-curricular activities are satisfactory and the inspection team agree with this view.
55. There are good links with partner institutions, even though the school draws from a very large number of primary schools. The modern language teachers and staff from the science department visit some primary schools to work with Years 5 and 6. There are good links with other sixth forms and with the further education college. Pupils are also taken on visits to universities.

Sixth form

56. The school recently rejoined the local sixth form consortium and a wide range of courses is now offered across the borough. However, given the starting point of many of this school's students the curriculum could be broader with the inclusion of some level 1 courses to match the aspirations and potential of the students more effectively. The progression from Year 11 to the sixth form is not as good as it could be because of this. The sixth form curriculum has been improved by the addition of a personal, social and health education programme and the development of courses in communications, numeracy and ICT. The recent involvement of tutors in this programme is a good development. The debate observed during the inspection was a clear indication of the improvement in the enhancement work and was valued by students. As a result of the timetable arrangements in the consortium, some students have other commitments and have to miss this programme on Wednesday afternoons. Religious education is still not part of the sixth form programme, contrary to statutory requirements. In order to include key skills, the course leading to a Community Sports Leader Award has been lost.
57. Provision for personal development in the sixth form is good. Students have many very good opportunities to participate in moral discussions. For example, in English, students expressed their views well on women's emancipation and AIDS in Africa. They study black and multicultural literature as well as English classics. The weekly entitlement sessions, which all students attend at their own school, provide social opportunities to belong to the community and to work together in tutor groups and provide a range of visits to galleries and museums. Visitors contribute to debates, such as the lively debate on 'Rap is Bad', which took place during the inspection, and contributed to moral, social and cultural development. Students undertake considerable work for charities and have participated in a National Theatre workshop on justice.
58. The extent to which students can take a full part in the life of the school is limited, because of the consortium arrangement, but they work with Year 7 pupils, helping them to settle, and provide good role models to younger pupils when they are on site. They also visit elderly people

in the community and some of the local primary schools. Some lessons provide for spiritual reflection, but, as in the main school, this aspect of development is weaker. Collective worship is not a daily provision.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

59. The school makes very good provision for the care of its pupils. It provides a safe and secure learning environment in which pupils can achieve without harassment. Very good child protection procedures are established and staff are aware of their responsibilities. Outside agencies are used effectively, including the police, welfare support, counsellor and youth workers. Many support staff are employed by the school and are fully committed to raising achievement. Amongst these, mentors are having a particularly beneficial effect. Record keeping is good and the school analyses aspects of pupil performance by gender and ethnicity, although not always by ability groups. Use of tutor time is not sufficiently well planned and does not always provide a good start to the day for all pupils.
60. The school's monitoring of academic performance and personal development is good, and very good educational and personal support and guidance are available to pupils. The inclusion team, which comprises a range of teaching and support specialists, is effective in supporting groups of pupils at risk of exclusion.
61. Procedures for monitoring attendance are very good and there have been significant improvements in the attendance rate over the past two years. Challenging targets have been set in all year groups and the school has a realistic expectation to achieve a figure close to the national average for secondary school attendance. Absence data is carefully analysed and pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern are carefully monitored. Pupils who achieve 100 per cent attendance are rewarded. Reasons for absence are sought from parents on the first day. Lateness is monitored and sanctions are in place to improve punctuality, but too many students still display a lack of urgency to arrive on time to lessons.
62. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good and discipline within the school is more consistent than at the last inspection. The code of conduct is well known to pupils and displayed around the school. Pupils with behavioural problems are monitored in the student support centre and encouraged to behave in such a way that they can be reintegrated into a normal timetable. All pupils are encouraged by the good use made of rewards and praise for personal and academic achievement.
63. Procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. Harmonious respect exists between the many racial groups in the school and the number of bullying incidents has been significantly reduced over the past two years. Students in Years 10 and 11 are trained in peer counselling to help support and reassure younger pupils.
64. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and academic progress are good and the use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is good. Information is collected on each pupil from national tests and assessed tasks, and used to build a picture of achievement from which targets for future learning can be set. Pupils in Year 11 who are identified as likely to under-perform are given a mentor to help them with organisational and learning skills. Targets are set by pupils with their tutors and shared with parents on the academic tutoring day. The data should soon be accessible to all teachers, using ICT. At present, whilst the use of tracking data is very effective in raising achievement for the majority of pupils, but it is not being used effectively to meet the needs of all pupils with special educational needs or whose first language is not English.
65. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. The pastoral teams collate a range of data that provide a clear picture of pupils' attitudes, behaviour,

achievements and involvement in school life. Pupils are helped to collate similar information to build a portfolio of their personal successes.

66. The school has 391 pupils with English as an additional language, of whom 75 are at an early stage of learning English. The team providing support for these pupils is made up of one full-time teacher who acts as co-ordinator, but who also has a commitment to teaching science, a modern languages teacher who offers three lessons of support, and two part-time assistants with a combined input of three days teaching. The total teaching time given by these teachers amounts to only 36 hours per week. About 54 pupils are given support for one lesson a week, usually in groups of two to four, occasionally individually, but always during a subject lesson. The main areas in which support is given are, appropriately, English, science and humanities lessons. No pupils with English as an additional language are withdrawn from lessons for individual support, even those at an early stage of learning English. Some good support is provided for pupils with particular needs, as in writing skills, and especially when the teacher speaks the languages of the pupils needing support, as is the case with the Somali-speaking assistant. A few pupils have even entered the sixth form with little English, and, with support, have integrated successfully. Nonetheless, overall provision is barely adequate for the numbers of pupils in need of support and is unsatisfactory overall.
67. The special educational needs department receives new arrivals to the school initially. However, new arrangements were introduced in June 2002 to assess pupils' level of fluency in English. Records of these assessments are still not complete, despite the pressing need. Records of the progress of pupils already in school are also not complete. School data are available on individual pupils' CAT test scores, national test results, academic targets, and performance in GCSE examinations, but these figures are not used by the co-ordinator to monitor the progress of pupils with English as an additional language at each stage of their school career, and to help in the assessment of their particular needs.
68. The method by which the meagre amount of teacher support is allocated to pupils is unclear, given that the base-line assessments of most pupils are not complete. In some cases, for example, in a lesson seen in Year 7 science, support was given to two pupils who had already been in this country for a considerable time. However, other pupils with a very basic understanding of English in a religious education lesson were in difficulties because they were still in the early stages of learning English and had no support. In another science lesson, the class teacher demonstrated an excellent understanding of how to deliver whole-class support for all pupils, including those with English as an additional language. As a result, the specialist teacher for the two such pupils present in the class supporting was virtually redundant.
69. There are some good features of the work of the team. The co-ordinator has encouraged pupils who are literate in both speaking and writing their home language to take a GCSE or A level examination in their home language, either at the usual age of 16 or 18 years, or as an early entry from Year 7 onwards. In 2002, around 80 pupils were entered for GCSE and A level in languages as diverse as Turkish, Persian, Spanish and Arabic. Pupils' success was celebrated at a special awards' evening.
70. The 'Club Excellence' has attracted a significant number of pupils with English as an additional language once a week after school for help with their homework and extra study. The librarian has assembled a range of small readers in a wide range of pupils' home languages, and dictionaries are available for study in the library.

Sixth form

Assessment

71. Very good procedures are in place to monitor and support pupils' academic progress. Students' are assessed on their past performance and understand how their target grades are calculated. Students are encouraged to set their own individual learning targets that match specific needs. The school is aware of the need to introduce a broader range of vocational courses which better suited to some pupils than AS and A2 levels.

72. The quality and accessibility of information, advice and guidance provided to students is very good. Individual teachers and tutors ensure that students know how they are performing and what they need to do to improve. Study skills lessons and printed guides are provided to improve research and exam techniques. Guidance from the head of sixth form and tutors on careers and university courses is very good and students value the advice they receive.

Advice, support and guidance

73. The educational and personal support and guidance for students in the sixth form is very good. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good and the school liaises well with other centres to check on students' whereabouts.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

74. Parents express positive views of the school, and appreciate the many improvements made in the past two or three years, especially in its ethos. They expressed their views in a questionnaire and at a meeting for parents with the Registered Inspector. They are impressed by the improvements made in the school by the headteacher. The environment and staff morale have improved, behaviour is better and pupils are happier. The school is responsive to suggestions, both from parents and neighbouring residents. Parents feel their children are making progress; achievement is recognised and the diversity of cultures is promoted well. Gifted and talented children are encouraged, but there are shortcomings in the provision for pupils with special educational need. Parents feel they are given appropriate information about school events and the progress of their children.
75. A number of parents said that their children are not set appropriate amounts of homework and said that behaviour is sometimes unsatisfactory. They thought that this was so especially with supply teachers. A few commented that they were not told enough about progress.
76. The inspectors agreed that the school has made good improvements in the sixth form and very good improvements in the main school, since the last inspection. They were impressed by the degree of racial harmony and the standards of behaviour that prevail and found an environment in which achievement is encouraged. Although some very good information is provided to parents, there are some shortcomings. Homework arrangements were found to be satisfactory.
77. Overall, the school has sound and effective links with parents.
78. The quality of information provided is satisfactory. General information about the school, provided through newsletters, the prospectus and an annual report from governors, is good. There are ample opportunities to provide parents with information about their son's or daughter's progress, including a meeting with their tutor and, on a separate occasion, a meeting with subject teachers. In addition, the school sends letters of praise when appropriate and always informs parents when there is a concern. However, although the format of annual written reports on progress in each subject has improved, they do not provide enough information about what pupils know and understand about each subject, and, in the humanities, there is no separate report for history and geography, which is legally required.
79. Parents have a satisfactory involvement in the work of the school. They stand willingly for election as governors and help the school through the work of the Supporters of Crofton School, either as committee members or by supporting fund-raising events and attending workshops, for example, on drugs. Communication with the school via the pupils' planners is patchy and these are not used as effectively as they could be. Most parents visit the school with their child for academic tutoring days but only about half attend parents' evenings, when subject teachers are available, which is unsatisfactory. Parents visit when they are requested to do so and the school is responsive to their suggestions or concerns.

80. Parents of sixth form students continue to be involved in their education. They attend academic tutoring days with their son or daughter and support the school through their attendance at celebrations of achievement.

81. A more effective partnership with parents has been established since the last inspection and parents are much more positive about what the school can offer.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

82. The school benefits from very good leadership and management. Since the last inspection in 2000, the headteacher has continued to provide an excellent sense of direction and purpose to the work of the school. She has strong and effective support from a restructured leadership team, and the quality of middle management is now good. As a result, improvement since the last inspection has been very marked and the school no longer has 'serious weaknesses'.

83. Crucial to the school's now effective provision is the direct influence of the headteacher. Her policies and her presence around the school have been instrumental in asserting that high expectations of behaviour are to be the norm; that respect between pupils and staff and amongst different pupil groups is essential, and that all staff, teaching and support, must show a collective resolve to providing the best for pupils. The senior leadership team has only recently been completed by two appointments at deputy head level, but already these senior colleagues are collectively very effective in helping the day-to-day and long-term management of the school, consolidating recent gains and preparing the way for future improvements.

84. Equally important is the consistency in year-group leadership and in departmental management, achieved by good appointments and monitoring. In the light of weaknesses reported in 2000 in pupil behaviour, the running of English, science, modern languages and some year groups, the very good quality of current leadership in these three subjects and of most year heads is a striking achievement.

85. Monitoring and support of staff are good overall. They have, for instance, clarified what is expected in a 'good lesson' and helped teachers achieve this goal more successfully. Managers at all levels have worked to ensure a secure grasp of assessment and its role in helping pupils' progress. They have succeeded in promoting a good use of this strategy by virtually all teachers. In some instances, the quality of support and guidance for colleagues is outstandingly good, as in the case of English, where all aspects of development planning, day-to-day preparation and the range of teaching methods are being revised in a most helpful and effective manner.

86. Early monitoring identified the need for a range of strategies for supporting the least committed and least confident pupils. As a result, several mentors are now active in the school, and in some instances are having a very beneficial impact. Mentoring with poorly motivated Year 11 pupils thought to be capable of gaining five or more A* to C passes at GCSE led to a dramatic improvement in their performances during the course of the year.

87. While the greater part of monitoring has been very successful and has led to major beneficial changes, it has made too little impact on provision for pupils with English as an additional language and on aspects of special educational needs support. The co-ordination of English as an additional language work is unsatisfactory and this has allowed staff deployment and the match between pupils' needs and the help they receive to remain less effective than it should be. The school is aware of the co-ordination issue, but overall, monitoring and subsequent action have yet to ensure adequate provision. More has been done to organise special educational needs support effectively since the last inspection and the training and deployment of support assistants working in ordinary classes is good. Too little evaluation has been made of support teaching carried on outside lessons, where the impact of such work is unsatisfactory.

88. On balance, however, good monitoring across the school's work as a whole has led to very good-quality planning. The school's strong commitment to improve has enabled staff to implement these plans effectively and bring about substantial gains in the areas identified as unsatisfactory in the last report. The ability to pursue improvement successfully is now greater than in 2000

since senior colleagues and middle managers are now better equipped to support and add to the initiative and drive supplied by the headteacher. Staff show a far greater sense of common purpose and team work than was observed at the time of the last inspection.

89. The school's governing body gives good strategic advice and strong moral support to the headteacher and staff as a whole. Most statutory duties are fulfilled, but not those regarding ICT provision in Years 10 and 11, religious education in the sixth form and the daily Act of Worship. Governors are well informed about most aspects of the school's work, but they do not liaise sufficiently well with work supporting pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Overall, the effectiveness of the governing body is sound.
90. Financial matters are very well managed and the school is good at comparing its costs, providers of services and its performance with those of other schools. It gives good value for money.

Staffing

91. Apart from in physical education, the match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory. The school has made good progress with recruitment, which was a weakness at the last inspection and a cause of parental concern. In most areas of shortage identified in the last inspection, successful appointments have been made. Some subjects, such as mathematics, music, ICT and modern languages, are just emerging from periods of staff instability. New teams have only recently come together and their work is beginning to have an impact upon pupil progress. The school now has sufficient staff to teach all the areas of the National Curriculum, but there are current weaknesses in the number of specialist staff to teach physical education, English and drama. In these subjects, the staffing situation is managed carefully to minimise the effects on the quality of education provided. Administrative, clerical and technical staff provide good support for the efficient day-to-day running of the school. The involvement of learning-support assistants and foreign language assistants is good. However, the deployment of specialist teaching staff and in-class assistants in support roles needs restructuring.
92. Induction procedures are good and teachers are well supported across the school. Teaching performance is regularly monitored and staff development is well organised. Records are detailed and due account is taken of the professional needs of individual teachers. There is clear recognition of the importance of staff development to raise standards of teaching and learning. Training is linked to priorities in subject action plans and the whole-school development plan.
93. In-service training for teachers for pupils with English as an additional language across the school has not taken place in recent years. No coherent and systematic training of teachers, even in the subject departments where support has been concentrated, has been given. This aspect of staff provision is unsatisfactory.

Accommodation

94. The accommodation overall is unsatisfactory at present. Deficiencies remain, in spite of the substantial progress made since the last inspection. Areas for improvement have been prioritised and action taken to repair roofs and guttering; cabling improvements have in turn developed computer access; sports hall floor and gym floor have been renewed; heating has improved in many areas, following installation of new boilers; and a rolling programme of refurbishment is taking place to improve the overall appearance and effectiveness of the accommodation.
95. However, there are shortcomings in several areas. Many teaching rooms are too small for the size of teaching groups, presenting cramped conditions and increasing opportunities for misbehaviour, limiting teaching strategies in geography, history, English, music and science. Ceiling tiles are missing in some rooms, contributing to a poor learning environment. There are still insufficient practice rooms for music, which is limiting the progress of some pupils in practical work. Despite some rooms being grouped, English is still taught in classrooms in different parts of the school, requiring that resources have to be transported and inhibiting teamwork within the

department. The drama room is inappropriate: it is too big, cold and offers poor acoustics. The science laboratories, while sufficient in number, suffer from faulty heating and layout is ill-designed for teaching purposes; access is poor in some cases and can disrupt other classes. In one ICT room, the width of the room prevents about a quarter of the pupils from seeing the interactive whiteboard. There is no dedicated theory room for physical education or business studies for research. Design and technology rooms are split, making the sharing of resources a problem. Despite good provision for indoor space in physical education, the gymnasium is poorly equipped and has no fixed apparatus. The sports hall is problematical for the teaching of two groups. This cold learning environment is inappropriate for use as an examination room. The floor in the dance space is poor quality for barefoot activities. Maintenance of outdoor spaces is also poor, with the Astroturf pitch showing signs of neglect and brambles growing through the fence on to the netball courts.

Resources

96. There are sufficient resources in the school throughout the curriculum. Appropriate budgeting has allowed individual subjects to increase their level of resourcing. The provision of computers is now good, although some subject areas, such as geography and business studies, still find access difficult. There is a shortage of gymnastic apparatus for physical education, which restricts pupils' learning and development in this area of the National Curriculum. In the majority of subjects, there are an appropriate range of texts and materials to support teaching. However, in design and technology, much of the equipment is old, dated and coming to the end of its life.
97. The library continues to be a very good resource. An oasis of calm, it is well furnished and offers an attractive and user-friendly environment. It is open to pupils before the school day, at lunchtimes and for an hour after school. Since the last inspection, improved computer access and hardware, including Internet access, have been added. There has also been an increased budget for books, which has allowed the number of books to be increased beyond the minimum recommended nationally. There is a good level of fiction often in dual language, aimed at meeting the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Very good management of the library ensures that the resource is used effectively in supporting teaching and learning across the school. There is a good induction programme for Year 7 pupils and the use of quizzes and other competitions stimulates an appropriate interest in pupils across the different cultures in school.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

98. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The school's sixth form is currently one of four that comprise the Crossways consortium, and its earlier membership of this organisation, its withdrawal in 1997 and re-entry in 2000 have left it little time to establish its own character and momentum towards improvement. However, the head of sixth form, director of the consortium and headteacher of the school have collaborated effectively since the last inspection and brought about good improvements over the last two years. Through the introduction of very effective assessment and target-setting measures, and a clearer expectation of hard work and commitment from students, a more rigorous approach to study has been achieved. Coupled with the decision to rejoin the consortium, which allowed more courses and more viable teaching group sizes to be made available to students, results in AS, A2 examinations and vocational courses have risen impressively.
99. The head of sixth form and his tutor team have been very successful in establishing good relationships with students and between students and very good monitoring of their academic progress and personal development. The director of the consortium provides effective medium and long-term planning of provision and good day-to-day co-ordination of the activities of all component sixth forms. The headteacher has ensured that Year 11 pupils moving into the sixth form arrive academically stronger, strongly positive in their attitude to study and well informed about the opportunities and responsibilities of sixth form life.

100. Governors are well informed about the sixth form and provide good strategic advice and day-to-day support.
101. Development planning is good and the school and its consortium partners have drawn up a clear rationale for seeking a unified site for post-16 provision in the area from 2004 onwards. This is already informing the way the school is extending the curriculum and responding to staffing, accommodation and resourcing issues.

Resources

102. Accommodation for the sixth form is inadequate. There are limited study and social areas. Male toilet facilities are poor and little is offered in the way of catering facilities for students. The general standard of décor in this and the main building does not offer an appropriate or stimulating environment. Accommodation allows the curriculum to be taught, but in too many curricular areas, teachers have to overcome basic problems in order to teach effectively.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school as a whole, including features specific to the main school:

103. In order to build on the successful improvements since the last inspection the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) Raise attendance to meet new, higher, targets so that it ceases to be the obstacle to learning that it is for too many pupils, by:
 - developing further the links with parents and the wider community, especially those social and ethnic groups which participate least in supporting their children's education;
 - making more prominent and attractive the rewards for good attendance.
(Paragraphs: 14, 20, 29, 61, 79, 108, 118, 123, 137, 141, 158, 168, 177, 178, 182, 202, 206)
 - (2) Increase the beneficial impact of special educational needs support so that all pupils make at least satisfactory progress by:
 - restructuring staffing arrangements to give in-class support a bigger role and withdrawal groups less prominence;
 - monitoring this area closely;
 - examining support teachers' timetables in order to deploy them more efficiently;
 - providing additional training for the staff as a whole to ensure even better provision in normal lessons.
(Paragraphs: 5, 35, 36, 38, 64, 74, 87, 91, 123, 135, 136, 158, 168, 177, 203, 208)
 - (3) Raise the quality of support for pupils with English as an additional language by:
 - establishing strong and effective leadership of this area;
 - ensuring better initial assessment of pupils as they enter the school;
 - ensuring that good records of assessments and targets are kept and used;
 - ensuring, through careful monitoring, that support is substantial and accurately meets pupils' needs.
(Paragraphs: 6, 35, 36, 38, 43, 64, 66, 67, 70, 87, 93, 106, 123, 135, 136, 168, 177, 203, 208)
 - (4) Raise standards further in several key subjects where they are currently below the school's average by:
 - in English, completing the implementation of the new practices introduced by the head of department and reducing the number of unclassified grades at GCSE;
 - in science, ensuring that adequate teaching time is allocated and resolving remaining staffing issues;

- in modern languages, completing the move towards consistency in teaching approaches introduced by the new head of department;
- in physical education, ensuring that sufficient qualified staff are in place to have all aspects of the subject taught by specialists.

(Paragraphs: 4, 105, 108, 111, 137, 192, 201)

- (5) Extend the provision of ICT across the curriculum to meet statutory requirements in Years 10 and 11 and ensure that staff reinforce ICT skills in day-to-day teaching.
(Paragraphs: 9, 35, 44, 157, 172, 179, 187, 190)

Sixth form:

- (1) Raise staying-on rates from Year 11 to Year 12 to at least the target levels agreed with the local education authority by:
- improving the breadth of the curriculum, especially in terms of level 1 courses and the full reinforcement of key skills;
 - recruiting more successfully onto already available AS and A2 where take up remains too low, especially in geography and modern languages;
- (Paragraphs: 42, 56)
- (2) Improve facilities and opportunities for students by:
- increasing the range of extra-curricular activities;
 - creating social areas, catering facilities and study areas;
 - upgrading the standard of décor.
- (Paragraphs: 56, 102)
- (3) Raise the progress made from satisfactory to good in English, mathematics, biology, history and modern languages.
(Paragraphs 17, 214, 217, 219, 220, 251, 252, 253, 260, 267)
- (4) Devise strategies for introducing religious education into the sixth form curriculum to:
- meet statutory requirements;
 - extend the range of core activities available to students beyond their option choices.
- (Paragraph: 210)
- (5) Vigorously pursue the existing processes leading to the establishing of a new single-site sixth form centre for the consortium schools.
(Paragraphs: 31, 253)

Minor issues

- *Increase the opportunities for pupils' spiritual development.*
 - *Ensure that tutor and registration time is used consistently and effectively in Years 7 to 11 and that sixth form students' attendance for registration sessions reaches acceptable levels.*
- (Paragraphs: 47, 49, 59, 111)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	152
	Sixth form	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		53

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	4	32	59	50	7	0	0
Percentage	2.7	20.8	38.8	33.3	4.4	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	0	9	19	6	0	0	0
Percentage	0.0	26.5	55.9	17.6	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	961	103
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	380	24

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	37	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	420	1

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	390

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	60
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	114

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.3
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
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	136	64	200

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	58	62	53
	Girls	29	22	19
	Total	87	84	72
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	44 (26)	42 (41)	36 (33)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	8 (2)	18 (18)	10 (6)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	58	58	54
	Girls	30	20	19
	Total	88	78	73
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	44 (36)	39 (41)	36 (31)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	6	16	12
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	108	54	162

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A* to G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	21	85	96
	Girls	14	50	55
	Total	35	135	151
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	22 (18)	83 (83)	93 (88)
	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	28.5
	National	39.8

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	14	75
	National		N/a

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

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS / Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	15	9?	24?
	Average point score per candidate	96 (7.1)	76.7 (9.1)	88.75 (7.9)
National	Average point score per candidate	* (16.9)	* (18.0)	* (17.5)

		For candidates entered for GCE A / AS examinations			For candidates entered for Advanced GNVQ / VCE examinations		
		Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
School	Number of candidates	9	3	12	7	7	14
	Average point score per candidate	106.7	86.7	101.7	60	71.7	88.75
National	Average point score per candidate	*	*	*	*	*	*

** National comparison data for AS/A level results in 2002 are not yet available. Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year*

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British		50	0
White – Irish		0	0
White – any other White background		0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean		0	0
Mixed – White and Black African		0	0
Mixed – White and Asian		0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background		38	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian		5	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani		3	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi		0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background		0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean		75	0
Black or Black British – African		35	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background		48	0
Chinese		6	0
Any other ethnic group		28	0
No ethnic group recorded		0	0

Numbers on roll not held by school in these categories

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	69.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.4

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	591

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	52.4
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	27.8
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Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	4,283,537
Total expenditure	4,423,415
Expenditure per pupil	4,157
Balance brought forward from previous year	112,626
Balance carried forward to next year	-27,252

Key Stage 4	24.8
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	29
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	44

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1064
Number of questionnaires returned	243

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	45	3	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	42	41	9	2	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	44	10	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	40	16	3	3
The teaching is good.	36	49	4	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	41	11	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	40	3	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	33	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	39	42	10	3	5
The school is well led and managed.	43	42	5	1	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	43	7	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	41	8	1	9

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 **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Excellent leadership is giving the department clear direction.
- Standards are improving dramatically.
- Good teaching results in good achievement over Years 7 to 9 and improving achievement in Years 10 and 11.
- Good links with drama support pupils' achievement.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are too low in Year 11.
- Irregular attendance of pupils limits their achievement.
- The lack of stability in staffing is adversely affecting standards.
- There is insufficient provision to help pupils with English as an additional language.

104. Results in the national tests for pupils in Year 9 are well below average. They have been very low over recent years, both compared nationally and to similar schools, but improved considerably in 2002. Compared to schools with a similar intake, results in 2002 are average, though they are still well below average compared to schools nationally. Girls do better than boys. They performed similarly in mathematics and less well in science.
105. Standards seen in lessons confirm these well below average standards. Pupils are best at speaking and listening. They are worst at writing. Apart from lower-attaining pupils, who are quiet and do not join in discussion, pupils speak confidently and answer questions readily, though they lack a wide vocabulary. Higher-attaining pupils understand the implications of what they read, including Shakespeare and understand Macbeth's thoughts and Lady Macbeth's reactions. Middle attainers respond with interest to their reading, for example understanding the social conditions in 'Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry'. Lower attainers struggle to follow such complex language as Shakespeare, but try hard. They can read simple texts with help and enjoy them. The library gives good support to pupils' reading development. In their writing many pupils use colloquial language, and do not adapt their spoken language sufficiently. Many confuse their tenses, omit words and use incorrect verb endings. Higher-attaining pupils, the minority, write accurately and in a lively manner. They use paragraphing accurately and apt vocabulary. Middle-attaining pupils struggle to write at length, but can do so when given a supportive structure to help them. They sometimes use capitals and full stops, but need constant reminders. Lower attainers have very inaccurate written expression.
106. Considering the very low standards of pupils on entry to the school, this represents good achievement over Years 7 to 9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the classroom. Teachers give much individual help and work is often suitably adapted to their needs. They join in well with other pupils. In a Year 7 literacy lesson, for example, different groups of pupils worked at different levels appropriate to their needs and all made good progress. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory within lessons. Teachers are developing good resources to help them develop their English, and speaking and listening are important components of all lessons. However, their progress is not tracked closely enough and there is insufficient specialist help for them in lessons for them to make satisfactory progress over time. Gifted and talented pupils make good progress.
107. Results in examinations for pupils in Year 11 are well below average and have been so for several years. Girls do considerably better than boys, though there are many more boys than girls. Results are well below average compared to schools with a similar intake and also compared to pupils' prior attainment. Pupils do less well in English than in most other subjects.

108. Standards seen in Year 11 are well below average. Although standards are much better than they were, they are still adversely affected by too much absence. In one class observed, only 17 of the 27 pupils on roll were present. Much has been done to improve the standards and amount of coursework collected, and more is planned, but it is not yet all completed. The much-improved programmes of study have already had a beneficial impact in the classroom, but have not made an impact on examination results as yet. Problems with staff continuity last year have not been completely overcome. Hence achievement in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory, despite great strides in improvement having been made in the department. This is similar for pupils with special educational needs and for those speaking English as an additional language. Standards are higher in speaking and listening and reading than in writing. Higher-attaining pupils are fluent and accurate writers and speakers. Middle-attaining pupils understand their reading and can relate to characters. Lower-attaining pupils write very inaccurately; they understand what they read, for example, the poetry of Carol Anne Duffy, but struggle to express ideas about the poet's use of language clearly.
109. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is especially good in Years 10 and 11. In the best lessons, planning is good, taking into account all levels of ability, and making clear the purpose of the lesson so that pupils are clear about what they are doing and thus learn progressively. Teachers manage their pupils well, maintaining purposeful classrooms with good relationships so that pupils have the opportunity to learn in calm, friendly surroundings. Pupils know their own standards and how to improve their work because teachers assess work regularly and share the criteria with pupils. There is insufficient emphasis on developing vocabulary systematically, and computers are under-used to develop learning. On occasion, there is a lack of clarity about what is being taught, which leads to pupils behaving immaturely. Usually, however, they join in keenly in lessons and are polite and well-behaved, showing interest in developing their learning.
110. The quality of leadership and management is good. Present leadership is excellent, but recent. Many improvements have been introduced in a most efficient and effective manner, which are already having a beneficial effect on raising standards. Very good, helpful, monitoring, both of teaching and standards, and a more rigorous approach to assessment mean that improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

Literacy

111. Standards of literacy are very low when pupils enter the school. They improve considerably over Years 7 to 11, but remain well below average. Pupils have a restricted vocabulary, but ask and answer questions appropriately and enjoy paired work and small group discussion. They are willing to join in class discussion, which occurs frequently. Many enjoy reading, though they do not always understand the implications of what they read. The library is effective in supporting and encouraging reading and most pupils read during tutor time, though in an unstructured way. There are several useful initiatives to encourage reading, both at home and in school. Pupils are least effective at writing and many are very inaccurate in their expression, which affects standards in most subjects. Effective use is made of the two designated literacy lessons for Year 7 when assessment is used well to ensure that pupils are working at an appropriate level for their attainment.
112. The school has made satisfactory provision for encouraging all teachers to take responsibility for developing pupils' literacy. Pupils have many opportunities to practise speaking and listening. For example, in drama, pupils devise role-plays in groups, and in history, Year 9 pupils debate on the practice of slavery. There is sometimes good focus on extending vocabulary, with important words carefully taught. Pupils in Year 8 in a physical education lesson successfully understood the meaning of words such as 'pivot', because they were carefully explained and reinforced at the end of the lesson. Similarly, in a Year 7 science lesson, pupils came to understand the precise meaning of the word 'diffusion' in scientific terms, because of careful and active teaching. However, this is not done sufficiently, considering the numbers of pupils whose vocabulary is limited. Similarly, though some good work is being done systematically to improve writing, this aspect needs greater emphasis.

Drama

113. Standards of work of Year 9 pupils seen during the inspection are average. Pupils make good progress over Years 7 to 9 because they follow a well-planned series of lessons that progressively develop knowledge about dramatic techniques and encourage self-control and self-awareness. Links with English are strong, underpinning improvement in speaking and listening through constant question and answer sessions and good group discussion, where pupils work well together to develop ideas. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils extended their understanding of the themes in 'Macbeth', providing good support for their forthcoming tests. Many pupils, boys and girls, use gesture and tone effectively to convey tension, and all join in performances. They are beginning to criticise their own performances to improve them.
114. Results in the GCSE examinations for pupils in Year 11 are well below average. They have been so for the last three years. Pupils do better in drama than in most of their other subjects. Standards in Year 11 seen during the inspection confirm these well below average standards. These standards represent good achievement, since pupils enter the course with very low standards. Pupils are much better at the practical side of drama than the written side.
115. Pupils work co-operatively together, but many take a while to develop their ideas and need help from the teacher. They understand such terms as 'still image' and 'thought tracking' and can use them in performance, but many struggle to show their emotions convincingly.
116. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils learn well because teaching is animated and provokes pupils' responses. Teachers manage classes well so that pupils learn quickly. Live performances are regularly used to develop pupils' understanding of theatre. Problems with continuity of staffing detract from the effectiveness of pupils' learning at times.
117. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection, particularly in the development of links with English. Assessment is not used sufficiently to track progress and raise standards, and accommodation is unsatisfactory, either too cold or too cramped for comfortable and effective working conditions.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- There has been good improvement since the last inspection.
- Established teachers teach well.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and work hard.
- There is a challenging programme of work for the gifted and talented.

Areas for development

- Standards are well below the national norms.
- Attendance is low, especially in lower-attaining sets.
- The department is not fully staffed.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language has some shortcomings.

118. In recent years, the department has been through difficult times. The last inspection in November 2000 identified very substantial weaknesses. All of these have been addressed and most of them remedied. The use of better planned direct teaching, improved setting arrangements and better departmental management mean that class teaching has improved. Consequently pupils have gained in confidence with their mathematics and behave much better. The curriculum area leader has a clear vision of what needs to be done. New enthusiastic teachers, almost all of whom are fully qualified to teach mathematics, have also joined the team. Poor attendance is still the major

- factor leading to low examination results. In all other respects, the situation has improved and is set to improve further.
119. Pupils scored well below average in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2002, but were in line with those for pupils in similar schools. The trend over time is increasing in line with that nationally. The department recognises that girls do less well than boys and is addressing the situation. Over time, results in mathematics have been similar to those in English and better than those in science.
 120. The work of pupils in Years 7 to 9 seen during the inspection is in line with that reflected in the tests. This represents satisfactory achievement over time for pupils whose standards are well below national on entry to the school, and good achievement for the higher attainers. By Year 9, the highest-achieving pupils have already gained a GCSE at grade C or better. This is the case for about one pupil in six. Others in top sets show good algebraic skills and can balance an equation with unknowns on both sides. The work of average-attaining pupils is below the national average. They understand how to construct a pie chart, but do not know how to work out the angles. They recognise that the chance of a tail or head falling from a tossed coin is a half, but some think that the probability of drawing an ace at random from a pack of cards is 13 rather than $1/13$. Lower-attaining pupils show some knowledge of multiplication tables up to five times, but are weak beyond that. They can solve the simplest one-step equations, but when two steps are involved, for example $2a + 3 = 11$, they are in difficulties. The level of their work is well below national standards.
 121. Results in the 2001 GCSE mathematics were well below national levels for those obtaining a higher grade of A* to C and in line for those obtaining a grade G or better. These results are similar to other subjects in the school. They represent a marked improvement since the last inspection and show that, overall, pupils who attend school regularly have made good improvement upon their results in national test two years earlier.
 122. The work of the pupils currently in Year 11 seen during the inspection is well below national standards. Some of the higher-attaining pupils are above and well above the national average. Most others are below and well below. Of these, some show a secure grasp of basic arithmetic. Several, however, cannot round to one significant figure. A typical error is to round 550.3 to 500, not 600. There are examples also of failing to recognise zero as a placeholder, for example, by rounding 1890.45 to 189. Algebra is weak.
 123. The progress that pupils make and their achievement in relation to their prior learning is satisfactory overall. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and have varying levels of prior knowledge and ability. Many do not have English as the first language of the home. The achievement of these pupils is sound, as is that of pupils who have special educational needs. In most lessons, teachers, following the national strategy for teaching literacy, pay particular attention to vocabulary to make sure that pupils understand and can use new words. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their work and activities involving problem-solving are built into the programmes of study. These activities help these, and indeed all pupils, to understand their mathematics better. There is, however, room for improvement in the way in which the individual learning plans are constructed for pupils with special needs. Targets for improvement on these plans are not always appropriate to the mathematical standards of the individual pupil concerned. This is because the mathematics department does not contribute sufficiently to the construction of these targets. In general, pupils who attend regularly achieve well, but many do not attend as often as they ought. This is particularly the case for pupils in lower-attaining sets, where there were often as many as one in five absent from the lessons observed.
 124. There is very good provision made for the highest-achieving mathematicians at each level. Arrangements are made for them to enter for GCSE as soon as they are ready to take it. Currently, there are two pupils who gained a grade C or better in Year 8 last summer. A further 22 pupils passed at or above this level in Year 9 and 25 more in Year 10. Where pupils have achieved less than the highest grade, they retake. If they achieve top grades by the start of Year 11, they begin A level work. This is the case for two currently, one of whom is on course to complete an AS level by the end of the year.

125. Teaching in mathematics over time has been satisfactory, although the teaching seen in lessons during the inspection was good, with some very good and excellent. In an excellent Year 7 lesson, for example, the pupils learned how, when given two angles in a triangle, to find the third. Their enthusiasm was fired by the pace of the lesson and because it had been very well prepared with a variety of things for them to think about and do. In a very good Year 10 lesson, the pupils showed that they have learned well how to concentrate and persevere as they worked on the translation of two-dimensional shapes using vectors.
126. For some considerable time, however, it has proved very difficult to recruit qualified mathematics teachers of the sufficient quality. It appeared at the beginning of term that the department was fully staffed for the first time in recent years, but a resignation immediately before the start of the inspection has left the department short again. Temporary teachers do their best with the work they are given, but are no substitute for regular teachers. Inevitably, lessons have suffered.
127. Good contributions to pupils' learning of numerical skills are made in science and design and technology. In art and design, good and interesting teaching was seen, linking the construction of pyramids to concepts of angle and proportion. In physical education, however, there are missed opportunities when teachers do not, for example, ask pupils to work out their own body mass index, but do so for them. Similarly, there is scarcely any use of graphs in history or religious education.
128. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. In Years 7, 8 and 9, it is very good. This good behaviour stems from pupils responding well to good teaching. Relationships in the classroom, both between teachers and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are good. This, too, results from the quality of the teachers' work and their desire to ensure that their pupils succeed. The quality of these relationships does much to contribute to the pupils' progress.
129. Departmental leadership is very good. The head of curriculum area has identified the key areas in need of improvement. She works very hard and has a genuine care for her staff as well as for the pupils in her charge. The teachers' work is supported by classroom observation on at least one occasion per term and by monitoring of marking and record keeping. Teachers work very well together, with differing responsibilities skilfully allocated to so that their various talents are used well. The focus on improving teaching and learning is evident and everyone is committed to improvement.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Standards of attainment are rising.
- Pupils achieve well from Year 7 to Year 9.
- Teaching, which is based on an accurate understanding of the pupils' strengths and weaknesses, is good.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Areas for improvement

- The time allocated for science lessons in Years 10 and 11 is too low.
- The size and furnishing of the laboratories limit the pupils' experience of experimental work.
- The large numbers in some classes in Years 7 and 8, which contain a wide range of attainment, limit the ability of teachers to provide work of suitable difficulty for all pupils.

130. Standards achieved in the tests taken in Year 9 in 2002 are well below the national average and below that of similar schools. As these pupils entered the school with very low standards, this represents good achievement. Over recent years, when results have been lower than in 2002,

there has been slow but steady improvement. Attainment by the much smaller percentage of girls is better than that of boys.

131. All the evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that the rise in standards is accelerating. Pupils enter the school with poor classroom and experimental skills; many have very weak literacy and numeracy skills and their level of scientific knowledge is very low. As they move through Years 7 to 9, all these areas of weakness are addressed and improved. For example, Year 9 pupils understand energy transformations and use terms such as 'kinetic' and 'potential' with accuracy and confidence. Boys and girls show equally good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in lessons, but over time their achievement does not match that of their peers. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make unsatisfactory progress.
132. Results gained in GCSE examinations taken in 2002 are well below the national averages and well below those of similar schools. When results are compared to pupils who were of a similar standard in Year 9, they are very low. These comparisons indicate unsatisfactory achievement. Boys, who form nearly two-thirds of the year group, are further below the averages for boys than the girls are below the averages for girls. Nevertheless, the results gained in 2002 are slightly better than in recent years.
133. Standards observed during the inspection are significantly better. Pupils now follow a more appropriate modular syllabus and have a better allocation of teaching time. Pupils in the present Year 11 have already achieved higher standards in the modules examined during Year 10. If this level of progress is maintained, in 2003 the proportion gaining a higher grade (A* to C) should double. The overall pass rate should also increase, as the main reason for failing, incomplete coursework, has been successfully addressed. Improvement is evident in pupils of all levels of attainment. A higher-attaining set in Year 11 researched Gregor Mendel's work on genetics through the Internet, showing high-level ICT skills and the ability to select important information. In another lesson, lower-attaining pupils were slowly but securely gaining a grasp of the difficult concepts involved in photosynthesis.
134. Teaching and learning are good. Very few unsatisfactory lessons were observed, and in more than three out of five, teaching and learning were very good or better. In the best lessons, teachers' planning was carefully designed to give high value to pupils' strengths and to address their weaknesses. An excellent lesson with a Year 7 class cleverly used the pupils' everyday knowledge and enthusiasm to act out the behaviour of molecules in different states of matter. By the end of a most enjoyable lesson, pupils had a firm grasp of the concepts and, because of very good oral work, could all use correct terminology. Most lessons are lively, exciting and include a rich variety of activity. A combination of group work and experiments were used very well to enable the teacher and learning support assistant to give a lot of individual attention to low-attaining Year 10 pupils struggling with plant physiology. Throughout, teachers have very good relationships with pupils. Pupils recognise the care and respect given to them and respond by working hard and behaving well.
135. Occasionally, pupils do not learn effectively because teaching is too reliant on the textbook or overlong explanations and does not provide enough practical activities. In Years 7 to 9, there are times when the very best teaching does not fully meet the needs of the highest and lowest attainers. This occurs when large classes lack support for the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and pupils still learning English.
136. ICT is used well to enrich learning opportunities. Science teachers understand and are sensitive to the needs of and pupils with special educational needs and for those whom English is an additional language, but lack of specialised training and in-class support limits the learning by these groups of pupils. Problems with literacy and numeracy are dealt with very well. The emphasis on oral work to extend pupils' working vocabulary is very effective.
137. Several major factors have had a negative effect on standards over the last three years. Many changes in staffing and management have seriously disrupted the learning of most pupils. All

classes have had unplanned changes in teacher, many experiencing a succession of temporary teachers. This has had a particularly detrimental effect on GCSE classes, where coursework has been seriously affected and in some cases is simply not done. The amount of time allocated for the study of 'double science' in Years 10 and 11 has been far too low. The pupils who took GCSE in 2002 spent 13 percent of their lesson time on science compared to the national average of 20 percent. The allocation is now 17 per cent, which is still low. It is not enough time for the present Year 11 pupils to make up for the time lost in Year 10. This situation is exacerbated by the high absence rates evident in some pupils. Fixed benching in

the laboratories also has a detrimental effect on learning. There are always pupils who have to sit with their backs to the blackboard and the teacher. The space available for experimental work is too small.

138. The present head and second in department joined the school in September 2001. Supported by existing colleagues and very effective and dedicated technicians, they have achieved major improvements. A more appropriate GCSE course has been introduced. Schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 have been completely rewritten to match the national strategy for science. Pupils' work is now assessed very well. Pupils can follow their own progress by matching their standards against national attainment levels. This acts as a very good motivator and is helping pupils to understand what they need to do to get better. Assessment of pupils' work is used to check the effectiveness of teaching, which is also closely monitored by rigorous classroom observation. After a period of disturbing uncertainty, morale in the department is now high. Teachers and technicians form a mutually supportive group, sharing the determination to improve the quality of science education. Perhaps most importantly, the vision, energy and dedication of the head of department have raised the aspirations of pupils. Pupils who had lost heart are regaining their enthusiasm, working with commitment and enjoying science. The attendance at revision classes and the very successful junior science club clearly demonstrate this vital achievement.
139. Since the last inspection, almost every aspect of work then criticised has been improved. Crucially, teaching is much better and standards are rising. All the improvement has occurred since the changes in management. This is a rapidly improving department with great potential to raise standards significantly.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Teachers have a good understanding of pupils' individual needs.
- Procedures for assessment are well designed.
- Most pupils achieve a pass at GCSE.
- Pupils respond enthusiastically in art and design lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils are weak at evaluating their work and in recalling work of artists studied.
- Some lessons move at a slow pace and lack challenge.
- New staff require regular monitoring from an art and design specialist.

140. The standards of pupils' work in Year 9 are below average. Pupils enter the school with very weak skills in art and design, but achieve well across Years 7 to 9. The minority of pupils who have experienced continuity of teaching attain standards in line with or above national expectations. However, the school's recent difficulties in retaining art and design staff have hindered the acquisition of skills for the majority of pupils. Observational drawing skills are often under-developed in still life work, but copied work is better completed. Sketchbooks are not always

sufficiently utilised to refine ideas, partly because of erratic lesson attendance. In work on environmental sculpture, pupils showed some facility in designing pyramids. Pupils apply colour with some imagination, as in work in oil-pastel on insects, but projects are not always fully completed. Design skills are more secure than those of drawing and painting, as in collage work on body armour. Often, pupils find it hard to recall the work and significance of artists studied and to evaluate their own creations.

141. The standards of pupils' work in Year 11 are below average. In 2002 GCSE examinations, the number of pupils gaining A* to C grades was below the national average, but the number gaining a pass was high. Over the past three years, there has been a decline in the number of pupils gaining higher grades because of the combined effects of high staff turnover, erratic pupil attendance affecting coursework, and weak literacy levels. Results in art and design are amongst the best in the school and for many pupils, reflect a significant personal achievement. The standards of work seen during inspection ranged widely. Pupils achieve well in practical work, but display weaknesses in critical studies, evaluation and knowledge of artists. Where pupils have experienced continuity of teaching, they often produce very good work, as in projects in Cubism and portraiture. Final pieces often build effectively on careful research and good use of sketchbooks. However, for the majority of pupils, practical standards are more variable and initially imaginative ideas are frequently inhibited by inconsistent research and weak drawing skills.
142. Throughout Years 7 to 11, there are no significant differences in standards and achievement between pupils of different gender, those with special educational needs or for pupils with English as an additional language. Those identified as talented in art and design show very good achievement and do well.
143. Pupils display good attitudes in art and design lessons. They behave well, relate positively to teachers and work responsibly when engaged in practical work.
144. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen. Pupils learn with enthusiasm when teachers make good use of their expertise to demonstrate specific skills, advise on examination requirements and plan imaginative projects. Teachers make good use of formative assessment in sketchbooks, providing substantive comments and targets to improve learning. They provide imaginative homework that is carefully marked. Pupils learn effectively because teachers possess a good understanding of individual needs; where pupils are engaged in practical work, teachers circulate well to keep pupils concentrating and provide positive encouragement. Pupils develop good working habits in those lessons where control is orderly but, in some lessons, teachers accept high noise levels that inhibit progress; in one lesson, key instructions were given over a noisy class and lost their impact. Teachers assist the development of pupils' key skills, as in a Year 9 lesson where numeracy skills were linked to the making of designing pyramids; key words are explained with care. Some lessons lack challenge, activities move at a slow pace and extension tasks for higher-attaining pupils are not provided. Teachers do not always give sufficient thought to strategies to develop pupils' evaluative skills and are diffident when questioning the whole class.
145. The art and design department is satisfactorily managed. Whilst the department is currently without a lead manager, the efforts of the faculty head and committed team of teachers provide a good learning ethos. A good development plan exists, which reflects secure understanding of current needs. The subject makes an effective contribution to pupils' cultural education, with regular gallery visits and annual exhibitions of pupils' work. Art assessment is well managed and the art inclusion project is a valuable initiative for those pupils involved. New teachers in the department need a fuller programme of critical observations and support from an art and design specialist. All timetabled lessons need to be double periods to provide sufficient time for consolidation of practical skills. Further use of ICT needs developing, especially in Years 7 to 9.
146. The subject has made satisfactory improvement since the last report.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- Pupils use of a range of strategies that encourage participation in activities within lesson, where they develop skills that can be employed outside lessons.
- In Years 7 to 9, citizenship is being implemented as an integrated part of the core curriculum. It is linked to inclusion and extra-curricular activities such as the 'Clean and Green' project.
- A strength of teaching is the sensitivity universally displayed by staff when discussing difficult or controversial issues.
- The school has recently forged new links with the local Forest Hill CTC and with a professional Internet research engine company.

Areas for improvement

- Low levels of literacy and oracy prevent pupils from attaining levels, both in debate and in writing, that match national averages.
- Citizenship has not yet become fully embedded in the curriculum.

147. In Years 7 to 9, pupils' attainment is below average. Higher-attaining pupils have a broad knowledge and understanding of the topical events they study and show awareness of the rights, responsibilities and duties of citizens, and some can contribute to discussions and debate. Similarly, lower-attaining pupils explore, discuss and debate topical issues of significance and interest that are relevant to their lives. For example, pupils consider 'stereotyping' in their own lives and in the lives of their families. However, the general low levels of both literacy and oracy prevent their attaining levels, both in debate and in writing, that match national averages.
148. In Year 10, where pupils' study in discrete citizenship classes for a short course GCSE, pupils' attainment is in line with national averages. They have a good knowledge of the topical events they study. They are particularly aware of the law concerning race and gender bias. In discussion, they demonstrate a maturity of understanding, based on their own experiences. For example, Year 10 pupils, in their studies of discrimination law, point out that race, colour and nationality are not the same and make comments about how often African and African-Caribbean groups are often represented as a single homogenous group, while a white south African would not be seen as belonging to either group. They debate such issues with a personal poignancy that leads to strong debate. Although pupils make good progress in developing ideas, the lack of wider reading around the subject prevents the debate from reaching full maturity.
149. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although some lessons are good. The best lessons, particularly those in which citizenship is offered within other subject areas, such as religious education or personal, social and health education, are characterised by good planning and clear aims, understood by the pupils. In such lessons, the citizenship elements have specific references made to them. A strength is the sensitivity displayed by all staff when discussing difficult or controversial issues. A major ingredient of successful lessons is the use of a range of strategies that encourage participation in activities where they develop skills that can be employed outside lessons. For example, in some lessons, there is a high preponderance of formal debate and informal discussion, in which listening to other people's views and the formal challenging of them lead to pupils acquiring skills which they use later in practical situations, such as participation in the School Council.
150. The citizenship curriculum is developing. GCSE citizenship has been introduced in Year 10 as a pilot course and will give pupils the opportunity to take a 0.5 GCSE to dovetail with the GCSE short course in religious education. In Years 7 to 9, it is being implemented as an integrated part of the core curriculum. It is linked to inclusion and extra-curricular activities such as the 'Clean and Green' project. A draft policy exists that includes a mapping exercise. However, the policy has not been fully implemented, and with some notable exceptions, such as geography and religious studies, many subjects do not include it as a discrete part of their planning or provision. If citizenship provision does occur in these areas, it is often a matter of serendipity rather than strategy.
151. Citizenship has not yet become fully embedded in the curriculum. The school has recently forged new links with the local Forest Hill CTC and with a professional Internet research engine company to develop ICT skills, which will allow secure access for pupils to an appropriate news website. However, as with plans to institute a whole-school citizenship day to link with activities week, these developments represent a very early stage of the establishment of the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Very good leadership and management give a clear direction to the subject.
- Specialist subject teachers have very secure subject knowledge and their experience and expertise are used well.
- Teachers are highly supportive of development and work very effectively as a team to share good practice and support the management of the department.
- There is a good ethos for learning, mainly due to the effective leadership, the commitment of teachers to raising standards and very good relationships within the department. As a result pupils achieve very well in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils' behaviour is usually good.
- Teachers have a very good knowledge of their pupils.

Areas for improvement

- The department recognises the need to extend links with primary feeder schools and industry.
- Planning for development does not yet include all of the areas for improvement already identified by the department, in a short, medium and long-term strategic plan.
- The impact of ICT is beginning to show in standards of work, the department should ensure these developments are sustained along with the proposed developments in equipment and resources.
- The department should continue to improve the links between the material areas that collectively deliver the National Curriculum in design and technology.

152. Standards in design and technology on entry to the school are low. Pupils have limited appreciation of the principles of design, and practical skills are under-developed. In the 2002 national tests in Year 9 approximately four out of ten pupils reached the national expectation, level 5 or above and boys' and girls' results were similar.
153. In the work seen during the inspection, standards were often similar to national expectations by Year 9, with variations between the different material areas. This indicates very good achievement across Years 7 to 9. Pupils use a broad range of hand and machine tools safely for designing and making a range of products and are confident in the use of a broad range of resistant and compliant materials, including electronic components. They do not always recognise and use knowledge and skills acquired in earlier work to inform more demanding design and make activities. Standards in sketching are variable, which slows design fluency.
154. Research, analysis and evaluation are used effectively as methods for designing, for example, in Year 9 textiles, when designing and making a logo suitable for a new street fashion label. Here pupils used computer-assisted design and manufacture to produce work of a high quality. Good use is also made of the library, for example in Year 8, when researching patterns and colours often attributable to other cultures. Most pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject and clearly enjoy the work, in particular the practical aspects.
155. Teaching is good overall. It is always at least satisfactory and occasionally good or excellent. Lessons where teaching is satisfactory have some good features, but pupils do not learn fast enough. Plans lack imagination and challenge, teachers are over-directive and the focus of the lesson is directed towards the task at the expense of developing learning to the depth and breadth expected.
156. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A* to C at GCSE in 2002 was below the national average. Girls' results were higher than boys, significantly so in design and technology textiles, where they compared favourably with the national picture. Overall results, in all design and technology subjects, are at least twice the school average for grades A* to C. Results have improved since 2001 in textiles and resistant materials, but slipped slightly in graphics. In textiles, the improvement is significant and reverses the similar fall from 2000 to 2001. The

results in graphics have remained similar since 2001, following a significant improvement from 2000 to 2001.

157. In the work seen during the inspection in Years 10 and 11, standards are extremely variable and there is a marked improvement as pupils move through these two years. Pupils' making skills are often at least satisfactory and occasionally good when compared to designing and drawing, which are less well developed. The use of ICT is improving rapidly and extending the research and presentation elements of pupils' work. Higher-attaining pupils consolidate skill acquisition through good research, organisation and evaluation, and produce folders of a good standard, as in textiles, where pupils designed and made a drawstring bag with a logo on the pocket, suitable for commercial mass production.
158. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good. The main strengths are the teachers' good management of their classes and the provision of a clear framework for pupils' work. As a result, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are often good or very good. Pupils receive high levels of individual support, which enables all, including those with special educational needs, to make good overall progress. This achievement would be very good if it were not for the poor attendance of a significant minority of pupils, which results in unfinished work and ultimately leads to unsatisfactory progress for these pupils.
159. Leadership and management of the department are very good. A very good team supports the hard-working and dedicated head of department. Educational direction is clear and focused. There are new developments that are likely to lead to further improvements, for example, in ICT. Development plans are detailed, but do not include short, medium and long-term priorities. Links with primary feeder schools and industry have been identified.
160. Teachers keep good records of pupils' progress and use them very effectively to guide levels of individual support and keep pupils well informed of what they need to do to improve. The department has started to establish common features within each unit of work and consider ways of improving continuity within the carousel arrangement and federated areas that collectively deliver the National Curriculum. For example, the Year 9 'Futura' project, based upon a futuristic theme park, culminates in an exhibition of pupils' work showing how different solutions have evolved across the whole department.
161. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. The accommodation has not changed and although room sizes are generally adequate, the split-site arrangement does little to foster links. Opportunities for display are exploited to very good effect, not only to celebrate achievement, but also show grades or levels of assessment for each unit of work, although these are rarely used as a teaching aid during lessons.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- GCSE results have risen for the last three years.
- Pupils make good progress across Years 7 to 11.
- Teaching ensures that pupils are taught in a good learning environment.
- The development of core tasks is ensuring improved assessment of pupils.

Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient use of active forms of learning, including the use of ICT and fieldwork.
- A greater focus on 'thinking' skills and literacy is needed to ensure higher quality written work and better reasoning.
- Assessment of pupils' work does not ensure that they know their level of attainment and how to improve.
- Continue to modify teaching and learning styles to ensure that all groups of pupils have good

access to the geography curriculum.

162. Standards of work seen during the inspection are below average. Teaching is good and encourages the pupils' good learning. The achievement of Year 9 pupils, in relation to standards at the start of Year 7, is good. The achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11, in relation to their attainment in Year 9, is also good. Overall, the attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good.
163. Whilst many exercise books are well presented and show considerable effort, standards are limited because of the low levels of literacy and numeracy. Higher-attaining pupils write at some length when given the opportunity, and the work on the volcanic eruption in Montserrat illustrates this. Lower-attaining pupils describe events and places, but find it difficult to explain or give reasons for patterns and processes.
164. By the end of Year 11, too many pupils are still at a descriptive stage in their writing. They can make basic observations about land use types in urban areas and are aware of patterns, but their explanations are limited. They do not always relate new work to previous learning or to their own immediate surroundings. Most can describe the location of equatorial forests and describe their main characteristics, but few can give a reasoned account for the development of the ecosystem. Their use of technical vocabulary is limited.
165. In Years 7 to 9, teacher assessments show that pupils are below the national average by almost 20 per cent. There is little difference between boys and girls, unlike the national pattern where there is a 10 per cent gap.
166. GCSE results in 2002 were well below national average. Only one third achieved grades A* to C. Almost 10 per cent of pupils who entered for the examination failed to achieve a grade. However, the girls did very well and all of them achieved a grade in the A* to C band. Although very low, the GCSE results have risen sharply over the period since the last inspection.
167. Learning is good. In all lessons, pupils make gains in knowledge and remember most of what they have learnt at the end of the lesson. This is not sustained over longer periods and often pupils have only a general idea of what they have studied. This is clear in the limited understanding of Ordnance Survey maps, as most Year 9 pupils cannot use contours to describe landforms or describe landscape. They do learn to make comparisons between places as in the climate graphs of New York and Britain.
168. Learning is good because teachers are organised and supportive, but also because pupils generally concentrate well and show interest in their work. Pupils with special educational needs learn as well as other pupils because the teachers give good support. They do not have enough in-class support to ensure better learning. Many of the core tasks have been modified to suit the different needs of pupils. Pupils whose main language is not English learn well in oral work but have difficulties with reading and writing. Overall, they make satisfactory progress but their progress is not as carefully monitored as it could be. Learning is hindered by absence for a significant proportion of pupils.
169. Overall achievement is good across Years 7 to 11. The majority of pupils arrive in Year 7 with very low levels of general education and limited geographical knowledge. By the end of Year 9, whilst they are still below national average, they have made good progress. This good achievement is a result of the support provided by teachers and the good behaviour and motivation of the majority of pupils.
170. There is only a small uptake for GCSE courses, but good progress is made. In 2002, almost 25 per cent of pupils achieved their minimum target grade based on their results in Year 9, and 40 per cent achieved better than their predicted grade. All the under-achieving pupils were boys, an unsatisfactory situation.

171. Teaching is good and helps most pupils to make good progress throughout Years 7 to 11. Teaching is good when it challenges pupils and ensures that they are active learners. A Year 7 lesson that examined the environmental quality of Manwood Road had many good features, including first-hand observations, data collection and pupil involvement. A Year 11 lesson on inner-city areas was too slow moving and was dominated by the teacher, with very little involvement by pupils, so that learning was not as good as it could have been.

172. The overall leadership and management are good and geography gains from being part of the humanities area. The issues identified for development are precise and relevant. However, the schemes of work do not sufficiently identify opportunities for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and the subject does not help pupils to use ICT to enhance their work and improve learning. Opportunities for fieldwork and more active learning are missed. There is only one qualified geographer in the department, which is inadequate. The organisation of the work throughout the year does not help pupils to develop because they change between geography and history on a half-termly basis. The annual reports to parents do not meet the statutory requirements to give separate information and attainment levels to geography and history rather than the combined level that the school uses. There is a strong feeling of teamwork and a commitment to improve standards.
173. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, with GCSE results, although still very low, improving dramatically.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Pupils are actively involved in their learning and this supports the good development of their understanding.
- Topics chosen in Year 9 are relevant and support pupils' interest and concentration.
- Good relationships between teachers and their pupils encourage and support learning.
- The department makes a very good contribution to the moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.

Areas for improvement

- There are no books for use at home to encourage pupils to read, review research or prepare for their lessons.
- There is insufficient opportunity for independent research.
- There is insufficient access to ICT.

174. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 is well below average. Standards of attainment in Year 9 are below the expected level nationally and this is reflected in the teachers' assessments. A significant proportion of pupils however are reaching and in some cases passing the national average standard in class as a result of good teaching. The achievement of pupils overall is good.
175. Numbers of pupils following the GCSE course fluctuate widely each year. In 2002, numbers were low and results fell to well below the national average for pupils gaining the higher grades A* to C. In 2001, when the number of entrants was much higher, results were below the national average for the higher grades, but in line with the national average pass rate. Pupils achieved well in comparison with their other subjects; girls achieve better than boys.
176. Standards in history in Year 9 are below average. This represents good achievement given their level of attainment on entry to the school. Pupils handle sources with confidence and enjoy using them to identify the opinions of the time. A good example is the preparation for a debate for and against slavery set in the 18th century. Pupils recognised the variety of views and higher-attaining pupils could suggest reasons for the different views. Higher-attaining pupils are beginning to recognise motive and bias, although the majority of pupils do not question the reliability of a sources unless clearly directed by the teacher. In extended writing, higher-attaining pupils are beginning to support their views with evidence, but as yet they do not use evidence to argue against other opinions. The essays of lower-attaining pupils contain much information, but with little evidence of order or selection. Pupils have clearly found the work on slavery and the civil rights movement in America stimulating and this has been reflected in their work.

177. Standards in Year 11 are below average overall, although a significant number achieve higher standards. This represents satisfactory achievement, but the progress of some pupils is affected by absence and by a lack of analysis of information. Pupils have a reasonable overview of the history of medicine and most pupils identify the factors that supported developments. Higher-attaining pupils are able to make links between some of the factors and recognise that some are more significant. Most pupils, however, do not evaluate information, taking what they learn at its face value. With support from the teacher, they are developing their skills of analysis in response to questions that require them to give their opinions, although many are reluctant to develop beyond their first comments. The progress of some pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language is reduced by their low level of literacy and their limited reading skills. As a result, some are slow to settle to tasks and are reluctant to write. Though often keen to read aloud, they do not always pick up relevant points or recognise the significance of what they have read. The level of their oral work is much higher and they develop their responses more effectively when supported by their teacher's encouragement.
178. The quality of teaching is good overall and very good teaching was seen in several lessons. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of pupils. The lesson's objectives are shared with the pupils at the start so that they can focus on the key points, and teachers use them as part of their review at the end so that pupils can identify their own progress. The department is encouraging the development of literacy through the development of writing skills and carefully structured group and paired work. The choice of topics that reflect the history of other cultures encourages positive responses from the pupils and as a result they work well in class. Teachers have clear expectations that homework will be completed, but some pupils require much reminding and absence affects the continuity and development in the understanding of others. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and this enables them to use methods that involve pupils actively in group and paired work. They are enthusiastic about their subject and transmit this to pupils through brisk lessons. Teaching becomes less effective when teachers talk for too long and pupils becoming passive and distracted. Teachers have developed a series of core assessment tasks that will enable them to monitor individual progress. Good preparation before these tasks is enabling pupils to do well, though they generally put more effort into their oral work than their written work. Pupils are encouraged to succeed and the frequent reference to the requirements of the National Curriculum levels gives them the confidence and information needed to improve their work. They have no textbook for their use at home, however, which reduces the opportunities for them to review their work, extend their understanding, research, or prepare for the next lesson.
179. The management of the department is very good. Teachers work as a good team, with very clear leadership that focuses on the development of learning. The good assessment strategies that have been put in place should enable teachers to identify areas for development and the department has a determination and commitment to succeed. Appropriate areas for development have been identified, including ICT, which should be useful in raising the attainment of boys in particular. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The quality of provision in ICT is **good**.

Strengths

- A strong, well-qualified team leads the department.
- ICT resources are good.
- Good schemes of work and good support materials have been developed by the department.
- There has been significant improvement in the past year and good planning is in place to continue this improvement.

Areas for improvement

- Overall standards of attainment in all years are below national expectations.
- Cross-curricular ICT is weak and there is no scheme of work or assessment in ICT capability for pupils who do not follow an examination course in Years 10 and 11.
- The sharing of good practice has not yet resulted in the raising of teaching standards in some classes in Years 7 to 9.

180. The 2002 teacher assessments of pupils in Year 9 give levels well below national averages. These levels are a considerable improvement on assessments in the preceding two years.
181. Results at GCSE have been poor. The course attracted few pupils. The school started a GNVQ ICT intermediate course in 2001 and over 20 pupils are involved. They will complete this course in Summer 2003. Early indications show that results should be a considerable improvement on performance in the GCSE examination course.
182. Standards in the classroom by Year 9 are below national averages. Pupils' experience of ICT was patchy and unsystematic, but this situation has now been rectified. There is now a well-planned and challenging course with a suitable time allocation over Years 7, 8 and 9 that enables most pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make at least satisfactory progress. Some pupils make poor progress because of their poor attendance.
183. Most of the present Year 9 attain standards that are below national expectations when using desktop publishing and presentational software to communicate information. Some of the higher-attainers reach average standards in a database project simulating a record shop's systems of recording the titles, numbers and prices of stock. Most can successfully model financial information using spreadsheets. They also model graphical images, sometimes derived from using a digital camera. They learn about control systems and devise flow charts to describe simple input/output systems found in the world about them. Though overall standards are below national expectations, the progress Year 9 pupils are making is satisfactory given the very low levels of attainment on entry to the school and the poor provision until recently of ICT in Years 7, 8 and 9.
184. Standards in Year 11 are well below national expectations. Around one in five pupils follow examination courses. The rest derive their ICT learning from what the other subjects have to offer. The cross-curricular provision of ICT is unsatisfactory.
185. Standards in the GNVQ intermediate ICT group are around national expectations. Their progress has been good, as many have had to acquire skills that their poor ICT experience in the school in Years 7 to 9 denied them. They demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of basic relational database design when they link records for customers, suppliers and products. They show sound capability using spreadsheets when they simulate a company's payroll using formulae to calculate bonus payments, National Insurance contributions and tax. Their work is well presented and organised, but not all annotate their work to indicate a critical awareness of what they have achieved and what they can do to improve.
186. Standards in the GCSE applied ICT are well below national expectations. This is a small lower-attaining group in Year 10 who demonstrate some behavioural difficulties. They are attaining a limited but useful capability in using a suitable range of commercial software.
187. The provision of cross-curricular ICT is limited. For pupils aged 11 to 14, National Curriculum requirements are met by the well-planned and challenging ICT course. However, four out of five pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not follow an ICT course and their only chance of receiving their full entitlement is through cross-curricular ICT. A few subjects use ICT well as a tool to aid learning, but there is no whole-school scheme of work or school-wide procedures to assess pupils' performance. The school fails to meet the statutory requirement in this area.

188. Teaching of the dedicated courses is overall good. For pupils in Years 7 to 9, it is satisfactory. For those in Years 10 and 11, it is good. The full time teachers in the department have a good level of knowledge that underpins their work. They produce good schemes of work and effective support sheets, though the use of these is not extended to give greater emphasis to individual learning. They have good experience of the examination courses that have been recently introduced and this leads to good feedback to individual pupils and to teaching and learning that has good pace and direction. Lesson planning is generally good. Most teachers are developing their style of teaching to incorporate recent guidelines. Teachers' introductions are sometimes overlong, sometimes leading to lower-attaining pupils becoming distracted, and in these situations learning suffers. In the better lessons, introductory sessions are short, pupils are given plenty of time to work on machines and closing sessions are crisp and to the point. Pupils are given good-quality support material that helps them to become more independent, and targets for completion of tasks. Teachers are firm with pupils who are sometimes difficult to motivate and make sure that they are involved in lessons. Specialist teachers use their good knowledge to inform and promote progress, working around classes to promote individual progress. The best teaching features energy and enthusiasm, giving pupils the clear message that ICT is well worth the effort. Homework is often challenging, appropriately planned and set and designed to promote independent learning. In the best teaching, the setting of homework takes place during the introductory session so that the teacher can quickly and efficiently deal with any questions or problems.
189. The leadership of the department is good. Technicians provide valuable assistance. The head of department has achieved a great deal in the short time since his appointment. Before he arrived, the state of ICT in the school was poor and examination results were very low. Little ICT was taught systematically. Now ICT is progressively taught in a well-planned programme to pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. The examination courses being offered to pupils in Years 10 and 11 are a better match to their interests and individual needs.
190. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, except in cross-curricular ICT. The time allocation in Years 7 to 9 is now sufficient. There is good challenge in the courses devised for Years 10 and 11. At the time of the last inspection, leadership and management were weak, but is now good. Resources have improved, though some departments still have difficulty accessing rooms to teach their subjects using ICT as a tool to aid learning. The department is planning ahead and has already completed a lot of the groundwork that is needed to make cross-curricular ICT provision more effective.

MODERN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- New, very good leadership gives a clear direction to the subject.
- Teaching is good and pupils achieve satisfactorily.
- Teachers have introduced National Curriculum levels successfully to raise pupils' awareness of how they can improve their standards.
- Teachers manage their pupils well, and pupils realise the importance of listening carefully and behaving well.

Areas for improvement

- In a few classes in Years 7 to 9, the needs of lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are not met adequately.
- There is not enough reciprocal observation of teaching to ensure that best practice is shared among teachers.
- The absence of blinds in some rooms means that overhead projectors cannot be used effectively.

191. The results of Year 9 teacher assessments in 2001 and 2002 judged standards to be well below average, and confirmed the trend evident in recent years. In lessons and other Year 9 work seen during the inspection, standards were also well below average, but there are early signs of an improvement, as a result of more stable staffing, better teaching, and very good leadership. Even so, the well below average standards represent satisfactory achievement in all ethnic groups, when compared with prior attainment, since pupils enter the school with well below average standards in language-based subjects. In Year 9, the few higher attainers in the lessons seen responded well to opportunities to write in some detail about their families and home town, for example, but most other pupils needed much support in doing similar work. Overall, pupils present their written work well and pay good attention to accuracy in copywriting. In speaking, many pupils try hard to reproduce the excellent pronunciation of their mostly native-speaker teachers. Pupils find longer sentences difficult to say, but a significant number are willing to take part in dialogues about themselves. By Year 9, pupils have tackled reading and listening passages on a fairly limited range of topics, but many need constant repetition of vocabulary to remember what words mean. In the large, mixed-ability classes, the higher-attaining pupils make faster progress in these skills than the lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. When this last group of pupils have extra support, they maintain a satisfactory pace of learning in most lessons. Pupils with English as an additional language make progress in line with others in the class, and some make progress that is even faster, because of their experience of speaking one or more languages at home. Even though boys in nearly all classes outnumber girls, girls take part confidently in lessons when answering in front of others.
192. Results in GCSE examinations are well below average overall. The 2001 and 2002 French results were well below average, as they have been in recent years. The 2001 and 2002 German results were better, because of more stable staffing than in French, but they were still well below average in national terms. Standards in lessons and other work seen in Year 11 are also well below average but, as in the younger age group, there are early signs of an improvement in standards. Nevertheless, the present standards represent satisfactory progress from Year 9. The written work of the few higher-attaining pupils and the gifted and talented pupils develops well; these pupils make appropriate progress in learning and using tenses and writing more extensively about, for example their holidays and their school experiences. They are also prepared to use the foreign language confidently in reading and listening activities, and guess at meaning, often correctly. Many lower and middle attainers need close guidance in producing their examination coursework. They are much more hesitant in oral work, even though they generally take part well in intensive language practice. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in the small groups created for them. Pupils with English as an additional language make as much progress as others in their group. There are no significant differences in the progress made by girls and boys.
193. Teaching is good and, overall, pupils learn at least satisfactorily as a result. There are large numbers of pupils with special educational needs in the large classes and teachers have to teach well, often very well, to engage pupils' interest and concentration. Most teachers are native speakers and provide pupils with excellent models of pronunciation, since in nearly all classes the foreign language is the main means of communication. Teachers prepare their lessons very well to give pupils practice in nearly all language skills every lesson. They use methods that enable pupils to participate actively, and then reinforce this learning with well-chosen reading or listening tasks. Activities are often very relevant to pupils - for example, discussing their ideal bedroom in French or debating the merits of recycling practices in Germany. The project on Guadeloupe run by the exchange teacher has excited the pupils' real interest in letter writing, as has the new German letter-exchange in Year 8. The use of PowerPoint in several lessons is appreciated by pupils; the initiative is purposefully and successfully led in the department and all teachers are taking part in the piloting the teaching and learning strategy in Years 7 to 9. Teachers manage pupils very well, and pupils respond with good behaviour and positive attitudes; they listen well to one another and mostly take part well in pair work. In only one class were Year 7 pupils at the end of the day reluctant to concentrate and pay enough attention. In Years 7 to 9, teachers do not always ensure that the lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs have enough intensive language practice and other activities that meet their needs.

194. The department is improving under vigorous new management. It is still too early to assess management as being more than good, because changes have been too recent. However, leadership is very good and the department is developing a clear sense of direction to improve standards through greater consistency in teaching approaches, classroom procedures and assessment. Much thought has gone into the teaching and learning policy and the departmental action plan. Very good relationships among teachers mean that they work very well together and share ideas. There is, however, not enough reciprocal lesson observation to ensure that all teachers can recognise and share the best practice. The absence of blinds means that teachers cannot always use the overhead projectors. The school's decision to make languages an option in Year 10 has caused a considerable reduction in pupil numbers, which is not in the spirit of the statutory arrangements for modern languages.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils are well behaved and work with enthusiasm.
- The department has a good understanding of developmental priorities.

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation is cramped and limits performance opportunities.
- Practical activities lack progressive, short-term goals.
- Insufficient time is allotted to Year 9 music.

195. The standards of pupils' work in Year 9 are below average. Many pupils enter the school with weak musical skills, but show at least satisfactory achievement through Years 7 to 9. Pupils in many lessons have suffered from a serious loss of learning continuity, occasioned by the school's difficulty in retaining staff in the previous academic year. As a result of current committed and enthusiastic teaching, pupils strive hard to develop their skills. A minority perform with confidence, devise imaginative compositions reflecting an understanding of musical structure and can articulate their ideas. Some of these pupils have benefited from the instrumental tuition provided outside class. The majority of pupils possess more variable musical skills. Performing skills are limited in rhythmic and dynamic control, singing lacks consistent vocal control and compositions rely too much on simple repetition. Musical literacy and appraisal skills are generally weak, often further marred by low levels of general literacy. There are no significant differences in the standards and achievement of girls and boys, or those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Pupils identified as talented in music achieve well.

196. The standards of pupils' work in Year 11 are below average. Over the past few years, the numbers taking GCSE music have been low, making comparisons with national averages inappropriate. In the 2002 examination, the proportion gaining A* to C grades was below average, but included some significant pupil achievements. The number of pupils gaining A* to G grades indicates some decline over the past few years, reflecting the school's difficulties in staffing and erratic pupil attendance. In the work seen during inspection, pupils' standards ranged widely, but with the majority showing at least satisfactory achievement. A minority of pupils demonstrate confident performance skills, playing with rhythmic accuracy and stylistic sensitivity; they devise effective compositions using instruments and computer programs, reflecting understanding of a variety of structures. The majority of pupils possess more limited performing skills and produce compositions over-reliant on simple repetitive ideas; their awareness of musical terminology is very patchy and they possess weak appraisal skills, often the result of weak literacy skills. Pupils identified as talented in music achieve well. There are no significant differences in the standards of achievement made according to gender, special educational needs or for pupils with English as an additional language.

197. Pupils display good attitudes in music. They behave well, relate positively to teachers and show enthusiasm. They can be trusted to work independently on instruments and computers.
198. The quality of teaching is good. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen. Pupils learn particularly well in those lessons where teachers make confident use of their own musical skills, as in Year 7 work on African music. Teachers enable pupils to make good progress by providing challenging work, well planned to make best use of the limited time available. Rhythmic and vocal call-response activities at the start of many lessons immediately focus pupils' attention and combined with very good class discipline establish a positive ethos in musical learning. Specialist terminology is carefully explained to help pupils improve their literacy skills. ICT is well integrated in composition work. Teachers intervene effectively to provide incisive advice and encouragement, derived from skilled assessments. Pupils do not always fully understand the tasks set when teachers make insufficient use of questioning. Progress in practical work is inhibited by the absence of short-term, timed goals, especially in Years 7 to 9. Teachers provide good strategies for developing pupils' appraisal skills, but the time currently spent on this aspect weakens its effectiveness. Learning is enhanced by the imaginative range of homework. Pupils working with peripatetic instrumental teachers make good progress, because lessons focus on progressive and demanding tasks.
199. The head of music has produced a detailed development plan reflecting a good understanding of current needs. There has been a satisfactory culture of extra-curricular enrichment available to pupils, but current concert activities are limited in range and frequency. The poor quality of the current cramped music accommodation limits opportunities for essential group work. Pupils are unable to develop aural discrimination when working without earphones. The current single Year 9 weekly lesson is insufficient provision, although the decision to team-teach in Years 10 and 11 has temporarily compensated for this effectively.
200. The subject has made satisfactory improvement since the last report, in spite of a period of difficulty.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The majority of teaching is satisfactory or better, with examples of very good teaching.
- Racial integration across a range of competitive and co-operative activities is very good.
- The involvement of pupils with a variety of special needs is good.

Areas for Improvement

- Curriculum time in Years 7 to 9 is not effectively used to raise standards of performance.
- Baseline assessment of pupils on entry is not recorded and used to monitor progress over time.
- There are insufficient qualified specialist teachers.

201. Standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 are generally below average. In hockey, stick work development is at a very early stage. In basketball, the standard of passing and knowledge of rules is weak. In badminton, poor racket skills and appropriate footwork limit the ability to sustain a rally. Attainment is low and represents a significant lack of previous experience. While many pupils' standards are below average, some girls achieve well in gymnastics and on the trampoline, where good sequences are developed. In netball, some girls have developed effective footwork and shooting skills. The ability to develop critical awareness of their own and other's performance is under-developed. Better attainment is seen in single-sex groups of girls, where group sizes are significantly lower. Overall achievement over Years 7 to 9 is currently unsatisfactory.
202. By Year 11, standards of attainment in core physical education are below average in badminton, where footwork and hitting skills are not assured and knowledge and understanding of rules and

tactics are insecure. In football, many boys show good ball control and all round skill, but in basketball, the levels of passing and shooting are much lower. The ability to evaluate their own and other's performance is under-developed. In GCSE groups, the attainment of some individuals is better and some are developing an appropriate range of shots and an understanding of how to outwit an opponent on the badminton court. Attainment in physical education theory is also weak by national standards. Pupils' understanding of body composition and aspects of health and fitness is uncertain. The power to recall previous learning in the subject is poor and this, allied to some infrequent attendance, interrupts continuity and seriously affects progress. Attainment at GCSE is well below the national average and below the average for the school. However, overall results indicate that achievement in physical education for individual pupils were in line with their academic attainment in other areas, or sometimes better. There has been a slight upward trend in the number gaining A* to C grades since the last inspection and numbers taking GCSE have increased considerably. Overall achievement is satisfactory, with pupils pursuing activities of their choice in some depth.

203. It is rare that pupils with special educational needs can be distinguished from the rest and some make good progress relative to their ability. However, those in need of behavioural support or English language support sometimes struggle to maintain attention in practical sessions.
204. The majority of teaching is satisfactory, with examples of good or very good teaching. Teachers know and care for their pupils and generally have realistic expectations. There is a good balance of partner work, small group and whole-class activity in most activities. In the good or very good lessons, there is a prompt, active start and brisk pace is maintained, with a variety of challenging tasks, as in a gymnastics lesson when pupils were expected to refine and develop an increasing range of balances on different body parts. Across Years 7 to 9, activity levels in some lessons are too low and repetitive tasks over a double lesson mean the use of time is ineffective. On a number of occasions, the use of open questions to the group allows too many pupils to remain uninvolved, thus not extending their knowledge and understanding. There are missed opportunities to improve knowledge and understanding through the use of personal demonstration and the development of accurate observation skills. A distinctive feature of teaching is the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and appropriate attitudes toward competitive or co-operative situations. This is sustained across groups that often have a wide range of cultural backgrounds and sporting aspirations.
205. The department does not have sufficient full-time qualified specialists. It is experiencing difficulty in appointing well-qualified staff to replace those who have left and this has caused problems of continuity in teaching and learning. This unsatisfactory staffing situation is managed carefully to minimise the effects on the quality of physical education provided. However, the re-organisation of grouping and activities to minimise the impact of non-qualified staff and non-availability of teaching spaces has had an impact on learning overall. An effective assessment system ensures that learning outcomes are monitored, but interpretation of National Curriculum levels is currently inaccurate. No baseline assessment on entry takes place and is needed in order to assess pupil progress over time. Despite recent improvements in accommodation, resources for gymnastics are inadequate and seriously affect pupil progress and development in this activity. Curricular continuity is too often compromised by facilities being used for other activities, thus affecting pupils' progress over time.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- There are very good opportunities for pupils to discuss the issues raised in the GCSE course.
- Good relationships encourage pupils' confidence and participation.
- There is very good support for the moral and social development of the pupils.

Areas for development

- There is insufficient opportunity for pupils to consider the effects of belief on the lives and actions of believers.
- Pupils have very little record of their work in order to enable them to review, recall and develop their ideas and beliefs.
- Insufficient use is made of the locality to enrich and re-enforce the learning of pupils.

206. The majority of pupils in Year 11 follow the GCSE course and about 75 per cent take the examination. Results of the short course GCSE examination in 2002 are well below the national average for grades A* to C and just below average for grades A* to G. Over the two years that pupils have followed the short course, the trend has risen. Pupils make satisfactory achievement given their prior attainment, although high levels of absence affect the achievement of some pupils. Girls achieve a higher proportion of A* to C and A* to G grades than boys.
207. Standards of work seen in Year 9 are below average. Higher-attaining pupils are making good progress in their understanding of some of the key features of the beliefs they study and the rituals that have developed to mark significant times in our lives. They are able to compare and contrast different rituals and make simple observations about how they reflect the beliefs of the different faiths. They consider themes that are reflected in the practice of different religions, such as pilgrimage, and higher-attaining pupils can provide clear explanations of their purpose. The majority of pupils respond to simple questions in class and with encouragement consider the significance of particular beliefs, but without direct support many do not analyse what they are taught. There is very little written record of their work, so there is insufficient re-enforcement to enable them to build on what they learn or to develop deeper understanding through review of work. As a result, progress for the majority of students is just satisfactory.
208. Standards in the GCSE course are below average. Pupils have the opportunity to consider contemporary moral issues in the light of good information and are given the opportunity to discuss them in class. Higher-attaining pupils are able to present their own views, whilst recognising that there may be other valid opinions, and are willing to consider them. Pupils in Year 11 recognise the problems to be considered when facing moral issues such as abortion, and their oral responses indicate thought and sensitivity. They have insufficient information, however, about the religious concepts that underpin the standards of morality accepted as the norm in our society today. As a consequence, they do not consider how belief can affect the actions and decisions of a believer. In lessons observed during the inspection, moral issues were considered in a largely secular light and discussion did not include reference to religious as well as secular teaching. The lack of homework or a written record of class-work means that pupils have no means of re-enforcement or review of what they have learned. Many pupils in Year 11 do not have any record of work undertaken in Year 10, as books have been misplaced. This results in progress in the GCSE classes being unsatisfactory, although they are offered good opportunities to develop their own ideas and skills of collaboration. Their understanding of moral and social issues is good. The progress of pupils with special educational needs or English as a second language is affected by limited understanding of the inferences in some written questions.
209. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching is good where the teacher actively involves the pupils in their learning through group work and through decision-making exercises. Teaching becomes less effective where the teacher dominates the oral work and pupils become passive receivers of information or opinion. Teachers have very good relations with their pupils who are confident that their opinions will be respectfully received. Pupils subsequently themselves listen to each other and treat the opinions of others with respect. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and in most lessons there is little need to apply obvious discipline strategies. Teachers use vivid and sometimes provocative resources, particularly on the GCSE course, to engage pupils' interest and to encourage their active participation in the lesson. The topics selected for this course are designed to be relevant and topical, and teachers support discussion with current information about the issues discussed. Little homework is set, as many lessons are based around discussion of issues. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have insufficient written record to re-enforce their understanding once they have left the room, or to review their work before examinations. Lessons are planned and resources are well prepared, however in

some lessons teachers are over-ambitious in the amount they aim to cover, with a resulting lack of depth and re-enforcement.

210. The management of the department is satisfactory. The short course GCSE has been successfully introduced and schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 have been redeveloped and fulfil the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. They now need to be delivered and adapted in the light of practice. Resources are satisfactory, although insufficient use is made of the locality to enrich pupils' experience of other faiths, or of visitors who could support pupils understanding of the effect of belief. There is insufficient use of ICT as a resource. Opportunities for pupils to take part in group and class discussion of contemporary moral issues are providing very good support for the moral and development of pupils. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, but sixth form students are still deprived of their statutory rights to a religious education.

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

In the inspection, 9 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

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

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	2	0	62	0	15	0	1.51
Physics	2	0	52	0	4	0.50	0.90

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	10	100	96	-	46	4.0	6.57
Biology	1	-	88	-	34	-	5.25
Media Studies	6	83	93	-	31	3.33	5.35
Computer Studies	3	100	86	-	23	2.0	4.62
English Literature	10	50	95	-	37	2.0	5.91
Design and Technology	11	45	91	-	30	1.27	5.38
General Studies	4	50	85	-	30	2.0	4.91
History	8	25	88	-	35	1.25	5.45
Mathematics	7	43	87	14	43	2.86	5.80
Physics	4	75	88	25	40	4.00	5.67
Sociology	9	56	86	22	35	2.89	5.32
Business AVCE	11	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	6.55	10.45

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

211. The focus of the inspection was on mathematics and biology. In addition, chemistry and physics were sampled. Over the last four years, only two students from this school have taken A level in chemistry, and five physics. The results for the consortium as a whole show sound achievement. Results of the Crofton students vary from grade A to failure and achievement from good to unsatisfactory. Most at least match expectations based on their performance at GCSE. The results in 2001 and 2002 at AS level show sound achievement by a very small number of

students. Staff illness prevented observation of teaching in chemistry. Teaching observed in physics was very good and resulted in very good and independent learning.

Mathematics

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- Those students who work hard are enabled to make very good progress.

Areas for improvement

- Some students are not up-to-date with their work so that their progress is adversely affected.

212. The school offers courses in mathematics leading to examinations at AS level and A2 level in a consortium arrangement with two other nearby schools. There is a re-sit GCSE course for those studying A level in other subjects who did not achieve a grade C in Year 11. The teaching of application of number leading to the key skills qualification is in place for pupils in Year 12. The partnership arrangements mean that the number of students on courses is economically viable. The number of students from Crofton has varied a little from year to year, but is usually relatively small. Currently, four students study mathematics, two at AS level and two at A2.
213. Lessons were seen for Year 12 and Year 13. One class studying for GCSE retake was observed. None of the key skills lessons were seen. Work in the students' books and folders was scrutinised. Some of the pupils were interviewed to ascertain their views on the provision made for them.
214. Results in mathematics over recent years have been variable and the number of students taking the examinations is too small to enable reliable comparisons to be made with national data. A handful of students have achieved at the highest grades. In 2001, results in mathematics at A2 level compared favourably with those in other subjects across the school. Prior to this year, students who have gained a GCSE grade C or better on the intermediate rather than the higher level paper have been allowed to study advanced mathematics courses. This has led to too many failures. Students have been unable to make the step up to more difficult and rigorous work because they lack sufficient skills in algebraic manipulation. Careful analysis of data and consideration of the students' views, which are regularly canvassed both informally and by course evaluation forms, led to a decision to change this policy. Entry requirements for the courses are now more rigorous.
215. The standard of work seen in lessons and in the students' folders is directly related to the amount of effort they are making. Those who attend all lessons and keep up-to-date with their work, including that demanded of them outside lessons, are making very good progress. One, for example, starting from a relatively low baseline at GCSE is now on track for the highest grade. His work shows an increasing confidence in trying a variety of approaches to solving problems. Attending extra lessons on a Saturday morning at the London School of Economics further enhances his understanding. The consortium identified this opportunity for him and others in the set. Those who attend this course are finding it interesting, informative and a very useful adjunct to their other work. Those who are not completely up-to-date and who have had absences are not progressing as well as they ought. Overall, therefore, progress is satisfactory.
216. GCSE students are gaining in confidence and are beginning understand work which previously they found too difficult. They work hard and are making good progress, benefiting from very good teaching that inspires them to do their best
217. Teaching overall is good, with that provided by the more experienced teachers very good. Teachers are knowledgeable; lessons are carefully prepared and well presented providing the right level of pace and challenge. There is not sufficient variety in some lessons. The standard approach of presentation by the teacher, question and answer, note-taking and working examples is effectively and in some cases very effectively used. There are, however, other more imaginative approaches which are currently not being employed sufficiently. The students know how they are

progressing and where they stand in relation to examination standards because teachers mark work carefully and set very regular tests.

218. The students feel free to approach staff when they are in difficulties. They are very well supported by their teachers this year, although Year 13 students have some misgivings about last year, when they felt that elements of the course were not adequately covered. This situation has now been remedied by adjusting the time allocations to the various elements of the courses.

Biology

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good and often very good.
- Assessment of students' work is frequent, accurate and used well to give students insight into how to improve.
- The co-ordination of students' work across several subjects and institutions is well managed.

Areas for improvement

- The higher levels of attainment at GCSE required for admission to the course, which have been recently introduced, are not yet being applied with sufficient rigour.
- The equipment used for experimental work is not always of a good enough standard.

219. The very small numbers taking this subject at A level (two candidates over four years) invalidates statistical comparisons with national averages. Examination of the individual performance of these two students indicates that both achieved satisfactorily in comparison to their performance at GCSE. No-one took AS level in 2001, five entered in 2002. Again, most obtained results that indicated sound progress. There is a healthy uptake for the subject across the consortium, producing viable classes. Results for the consortium as a whole show satisfactory achievement at A level and although weaker, achievement in AS level is sound. The difference between the two is due to admitting students to the AS course with GCSE performances that are too low. Unrealistic ambition is resulting in too many failures.
220. Standards observed during the inspection are higher. Crofton students, who have already been successful at AS level, are in line to exceed expectations at A level. All the students in the AS class are making good progress which, if maintained, will result in achievement that is at least satisfactory. Students' files are complete and well organised; notes are all set at the standard required for the highest grades. Essays and experimental work is fully assessed using national criteria and confirm the rise in standards. Experimental work is a particular strength. Students in the A level class demonstrated high-level skills during an investigation of the effectiveness of different methods of preserving milk. AS level students, learning about cell division, were all able to prepare good microscope slides made of growing root tips and use the somewhat antiquated microscopes very well. This rise in standards is partly due to more careful selection of students. Because there are fewer struggling students than in past years, work is being pitched at a consistently high level and parts of the syllabus are covered more rapidly.
221. Teaching and learning are always at least good and often very good. Well-qualified and experienced teachers design lessons that are stimulating and set at a high level of difficulty. There is a very proper emphasis on students taking responsibility for their own learning and becoming independent scholars. Teachers show great enthusiasm for the subject and this communicates to students, who respond with hard work and evident enjoyment. The relationships between teachers and taught are very good; there is mutual respect and trust. The teaching methods adopted are forming a good basis for the demands of higher education.
222. The subject is well managed. The work of different teachers is well co-ordinated so that links from one part of the syllabus to another are carefully built in to the schemes of work. Within the consortium, the care with which students from three different schools are brought together and

welded into mutually supportive groups is impressive. Students from all three schools are equally enthusiastic about the quality of education they are receiving and their relationships with each other are entirely positive. Given the very wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, this level of harmony is a real achievement.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

223. The focus of the inspection was on design and technology.

Design and technology

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

Strengths

- The ethos for learning is very good, as are relationships between teachers and students.
- Good leadership and teaching result in good achievement.
- All students receive high levels of individual support.

Areas for improvement

- Links with higher education and industry specialising in design and manufacture are not formalised.
- Ensure management and co-ordination between all teachers involved in the delivery of the course are strengthened.

224. Over the last three years, compared to prior attainment, students made at least satisfactory and occasionally good progress from GCSE to A level in design and technology. In 2002, all but one of the students gained one grade above their predicted scores, at both A and AS level. Of those students who had followed a foundation course and a similar GCSE course at Crofton School, three of the seven achieved the higher grades A/B at AS level. Of the four students who took the A level examination, two achieved grades C and D.

225. Standards of work seen were extremely variable, and at best in line with what is usually expected at this stage of the course. There is evidence that students analyse problems to innovate, create and take risks when designing, as for example, in the design of a sensory garden for a wheel chair user and a solar powered lighting system for a bus shelter. Here, the design process and research skills are well developed, demonstrating understanding of the particular types of garden plants and the anti-vandalism requirements for the bus shelter.

226. The impact of ICT and use of the Internet is beginning to show in standards of presentation and depth of research.

227. Teaching is often good in the sixth form. Teachers know the students well and relationships are very good. Lessons are planned to a high standard and have suitable challenge, enabling students to move to a fuller and deeper level of understanding through a series of well-timed interventions by the teacher, such as the use of a light box to show quick sketching/enhancement techniques to good effect. Although lessons are generally planned carefully, teachers are flexible as issues arise. Students contribute a great deal to the success of many lessons: they are attentive, interested and willing to answer and ask questions. All students, including those with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language, feel equally confident to join in and make most of the work to be tackled. They are eager to participate and appreciate the high level of help and support they receive.

228. There are links with commercial and educational institutions specialising in design, but these are not yet strengthened and formalised into a clear programme of calendar events.

229. Students' work is marked regularly and the teacher's comments are helpful. Students know and understand their standards of attainment and, more importantly, what aspects they need to

concentrate on to improve. All teachers involved in the delivery of the course do not meet formally to agree the levels of regular guidance provided for each student, which contributes to the situation where final examination results are often one grade below individual coursework elements.

230. Leadership is good and the course co-ordinator leads well by example and has worked hard in terms of planning for development of the subject. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.
231. Different rooms are used by the teachers, which on occasions do not have reference materials readily available. Although the department is extremely flexible in sharing such resources, opportunities and time are wasted.

BUSINESS

232. The focus of the inspection was on business studies.

Business studies

Overall the quality of provision in business studies is **good**.

Strengths

- Results over the last two years are consistently good and are now in line with national averages.
- Teaching is good overall and occasionally very good.
- Student response in class is very good.
- There is very good leadership and management of the department.

Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient use by students of ICT to enhance learning.
- Students do not read widely. Their low levels of literacy remain barriers to even higher levels of attainment.
- The lack of appropriate in-class support has a negative impact on teaching, learning and standards.

233. Post-16, the school offers business studies at AVCE and GNVQ intermediate levels. The school also offers business studies in Years 10 and 11. Classes in these years were sampled. The inspection concentrated on provision post-16. In both 2001 and 2002, results in public examinations at both AVCE and GNVQ intermediate levels consistently improved and are now in line with national averages. The standards reached by current students, as seen in lessons and in their written work, are also average for both male and female students. There are no figures for ethnic groups. At GNVQ intermediate level, students make good progress in understanding the central ideas of the subject, including those related to employment conflicts and their resolutions. For example, in dramatic, but effective style, Year 12 students demonstrate their secure grasp of the range of methods used to resolve disputes in the work place by role- playing both a conflict situation concerning harassment and its resolution via an industrial tribunal.
234. AVCE students use case studies well to display their good understanding of how businesses work. For example, Year 12 students, using a case study of Sainsbury's, show clear appreciation of the importance of monitoring customer satisfaction in order to improve customer service. Students in Year 13 make good progress, particularly in those aspects relating to the economic environment in which business operates, and they are good at applying their understanding, in order to incorporate their theories into contextual examples. For example, students were asked to assume the role of a small training company requested to respond to a brief to train staff at various levels in a large organisation. Students working in pairs made effective presentations of their programmes to their colleagues and their teacher, who acted as the board of directors of the company concerned. Students demonstrated that they had learned much not only about presentational skills, but also about appropriate pricing and costing.

235. Overall, students' achievement is good. The business studies department responds well to the school's philosophy of inclusion post-16. More than 60 per cent of the students in the sixth form opt to study the subject. Class sizes are, therefore, large, and classes contain a very wide ability range. The vast majority of students have low levels of attainment at entry to the sixth form. Many have low literacy skills, particularly in writing, and they do not read widely. Given these circumstances, and given the results they attain, their progress in the sixth form is good. The progress of female students, who are very much in the minority, is particularly good.
236. Students' good progress reflects the good teaching they receive. Overall, the quality of teaching on all courses is good, and occasionally is very good. The teachers' excellent rapport and expert knowledge underpin discussions and lend clarity to the explanations provided. Lessons are carefully planned and effective use is made of case studies and other activities to allow students to apply and extend their learning. Students are well supported academically by the teachers. There is, however, a lack of additional in-class support. The teachers' methodical explanations promote considerable gains in the lower-attaining students' comprehension. Teaching is very well structured, dividing the course into units that clearly specify the learning that needs to occur. Teaching is particularly strong where the teachers encourage the students to become independent learners. Marking of work is mostly very detailed and helpful, using, where appropriate, criteria used by the examination board. Relationships in classes are very good.
237. Students respond very well in lessons. Their attitudes are mostly mature and they sustain interest. Although most students maintain intellectual rigour, a few are too frequently happy to be passive recipients rather than active participants in their own learning. Students rarely portray evidence of wider reading and do not take sufficient opportunities to increase their reading.
238. Resources in the department are satisfactory. Textbooks are limited, and the lack of immediate access to ICT facilities has an adverse effect on students' progress and attainment. Although there is a suite of business studies classrooms, accommodation does not include an appropriately constituted business studies room, nor is there sufficient space for the establishment of a discrete subject-related library.
239. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department of business studies has a clear vision for the future of the department that sensibly encompasses plans to strengthen both the academic and the vocational aspect of the department's provision to meet the wide and differing needs and aspirations of future cohorts of students. Under his effective and efficient leadership, the department has produced a range of informed and informative documents that deal effectively with all aspects of the department's work. He is very well supported by his colleagues in the department, and by the senior management of the school. Together, they provide an excellent role model for a department that is committed to high standards and high achievement.
240. The department has made good improvement since the time of the last report.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

241. The focus of the inspection was on ICT.

Information and communication technology

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

Strengths

- There is good teaching in the sixth form.
- Marking and target-setting are good feature of the teaching.
- Resources are good.
- Students' attitudes are good.

- ICT as an examination course is increasing in popularity.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment are low.
- The use of curriculum materials to promote independent learning.

242. In the 2002 A level examinations, three students gained passes. This is too small a number to make statistical comparisons. Only 40 per cent of the AS level students in the 2002 examinations gained passes, an unacceptable rate of failure. The new head of department has put in place a set of measures to stop it happening again. These include more stringent entry requirements and a more rigorous system of mentoring and target-setting.
243. In the classroom, standards are below national expectations, but students have made good overall progress as a good number did not have the advantage of following a GNVQ or GCSE course prior to enrolling on the AS level course.
244. By Year 13, students are making good progress in acquiring relevant areas of knowledge and understanding. They can describe the advantages of ICT systems over paper-based approaches in business contexts. They have a sound awareness of the range of ICT resources available. They are producing coursework that considers the end users' needs, for example in producing clear and concise user documentation. They choose a suitable range of contexts from which to develop their projects. One pertinent example is the project that focuses on the need for improvements in the school's information systems. The student makes a clear statement of the problem, identifies the tracking of truancy as a weakness and suggests the incorporation of a digital image of individuals into the school's pupil database as one enhancement. Year 13 students learn to work together well in teams on tasks relating to project management. In these lessons, they make good progress in gaining an awareness of industrial and commercial practice. Year 12 students are making good progress in acquiring the technical skills to prepare themselves for project work. They have sound knowledge and understanding of aspects of health and safety as they relate to ICT.
245. Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge that they share well with students. Lessons are well planned and provide a good level of challenge that results in good progress. Some students have had a narrow experience of ICT and teachers are very well aware of this and give a lot of their time out of lessons helping students catch up. Students' learning is well directed by good quality feedback and achievable but challenging targets. The good-quality support materials and the clear guidelines given ensure that students are aware of what they have to do to make progress. Teachers develop good productive working relationships with their students, enabling a good pace in lessons.
246. There is good management of the subject in the sixth form, an improvement since the last report. Teaching has improved, as has learning. Students now have the benefit of good specialist teaching. Students value the support teachers give them and feel they are given high-quality feedback on their progress. They are clear that this helps them to be more effective learners. The improved teaching in the department has led to an increase in the numbers of students wanting to follow an ICT course in the sixth form.

HUMANITIES

247. The focus of the inspection was on history, geography and sociology.

History

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good with some very good features.
- Good relationships encourage confidence and participation.
- Good supportive planning enables teachers to have high expectations.

Areas for improvement

- Resources in the department and in the library do not support students' independent learning.
- ICT is not used as a learning tool.
- Assessment and monitoring is not sufficiently rigorous.

248. The school offers courses in AS and A level in history. The number of students following the subject fluctuates widely and in 2002, no students followed the A level course. A level results in 2001 were well below the national average for grades A/B and A to E. Of four students, one achieved a pass grade. The number of students entered for the AS examination in 2002 is too low for national comparison of their results, but the majority of students gained a pass grade. Given the level of attainment of students at the start of the course, they achieved broadly average standards, with satisfactory achievement. The majority of students who start the course, complete it. No students have chosen to continue to A level, though numbers following the AS level in Year 12 have risen.
249. The standard of work seen during the inspection on the AS course is below average. However, this represents good achievement given the students attainment on entry to the course. The students did not study history at GCSE level, but have chosen to study it at A level. Their attainment is at a level that might be expected at this stage in the course. They are growing in confidence and are prepared to present opinions that they support with reason. They handle sources well in order to select and extract relevant information and they are beginning to analyse sources critically, and recognise the need to use them to support their judgements. With advice and support from their teachers they are developing their essay-writing skills and are structuring their work logically. Writing is generally clear and organised, although at times they do not evaluate the material used and sometimes include irrelevant facts and description. Teachers encourage them to make oral presentations to the group, which encourages them to organise their ideas and thoughts clearly - through teaching others, students are re-enforcing their own learning.
250. Students have a good understanding of the events and conditions that led to the Russian revolutionary period, and recognise that a range of self-interests motivated the different groups involved. They have a clear picture of conditions in Tsarist Russia and the combination of factors that led to the discontent. Students describe events, and higher-attaining students can evaluate the significance of the factors that led to them. Lower-attaining students dwell on the facts rather than on the analysis and interpretation of them. Students are studying the history of medicine and are able to recognise the movements and influences that affected improvements in the 19th century. In response to good questioning, students develop their ideas and responses to include explanation and alternative views. They are beginning to consider the inferences to be found in text and their effects on the meaning.
251. The quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form is good. Teachers have a good grasp of their subject and students have confidence in them. Lessons are well planned and students are encouraged to become involved and to analyse what they learn. Teachers encourage students to develop their responses, and their growing in confidence enables them to support each other's learning. Teachers are conscious of the need to help students as they move from GCSE responses to those expected on an AS level course. Whilst maintaining high expectations, they ensure that explanations and resources are clear in order to enable the students to succeed and so gain confidence in their abilities. Extended writing is developed through careful in-class planning and good use is made of AS level questions to enable the students to develop the techniques required. Students feel well advised and clear in the knowledge of how they are progressing, though there is little evidence of systematic monitoring and sharing of information about their progress towards their target grades.
252. Students have a single textbook for private use, which limits the opportunities for wider reading, although teachers supplement this with photocopied extracts. Students would appreciate a greater range of texts that would encourage research and support the development of their literacy skills.
253. Management of the sixth form course is good. Teachers work well together, although there is limited opportunity for formal meetings to develop and review the course. Teachers plan their work carefully, though there is no overall scheme of work that would enable a systematic development of skills. Communication between schools in the consortium is clear, but a more immediate method of contact could support a higher level of attendance. Two-thirds of lessons take place on

the same morning, and absence on that one morning is very significant. Accommodation is in the sixth form centre, and insufficient use is made of display to re-enforce learning between lessons. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last report.

Geography

Overall the provision for geography is **unsatisfactory**.

Areas to improve:

- Progression from Y11 into AS and A level geography courses.
- Results in AS and A level examinations

254. Students wishing to take AS or A level geography can join groups at two of the other schools in the local consortium. In recent years no students from Crofton have chosen to study geography in the sixth form. This is a concern for the geography department but partly reflects the below average results that have been achieved by students in GCE geography groups. In 2002, from the consortium as a whole, three students entered for AS geography. The highest grade was D and one student was ungraded. The A level course had six students and four were ungraded. Data from the consortium indicates that the students make unsatisfactory progress. During the inspection it was only possible to observe one geography lesson in Year 12. Half the students were absent and it was not possible to reach any reliable judgements about teaching and learning or standards overall.

Sociology

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good and results in effective learning and good progress by all students.
- There is a good contribution to students' personal development and relationships.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very effective.

Areas or improvement

- Students do not have sufficient planned opportunities for the use of ICT to help them with their work.
- There is insufficient planned stress on common theoretical perspectives across the modules taught.
- Retention rates into Year 12 from those pupils who take GCSE sociology in Year 11 are low.

255. In 2002, only two students took the A level sociology course. One achieved a grade C' pass and the other a grade E. Because of the small number of candidates, it is not possible to make national comparisons, nor is it possible to comment on standards over time because of the differences in numbers taking the course. In 2002, six Year 12 students followed the GCE AS course – 80 per cent achieving a pass, including one higher-grade pass.

256. Standards of work seen in Year 13 are good. Some have a good grasp of the theoretical perspectives being used and confidently cite examples of empirical research associated with these perspectives. They are developing well their knowledge and understanding of the sociology of religion and the sociology of deviance. This represents good achievement since the start of Year 12. Their communication skills are good but there are insufficient planned opportunities for the use of ICT to help them in their work. Through the analysis of crime statistics, students are developing their numeracy skills. Year 12 students have made a secure start to the AS course and are coming to grips with the sociological terminology and concepts as applied to the sociology of education.

257. The quality of teaching is good and results in effective learning. Lessons are well planned and paced, with a variety of structured activities that meets the needs of all students. The teachers' enthusiasm, interest and very good knowledge and understanding of the subject ensure that

students make good progress and develop their interest. Students are positive and keen to do well, leading to a productive learning atmosphere in lessons. The teachers refer effectively to appropriate contemporary and established sociological research, as well as to different theoretical perspectives, which deepens students' knowledge and understanding further and develops their sociological thinking. However, there is not always planned and structured reference to the commonality of theoretical perspectives across all the modules studied. Resources are used well, as in a Year 12 lesson, for example, where students were considering the 'New Right' perspective on education. Effective questioning stretches students' intellectual capacities and engages them well in discussion that draws on their own experiences as well as on the sociological perspectives they have learned. Students show insight in lesson discussions; they express their own ideas confidently as well as listening to and respecting the beliefs and views of others. They receive very good support from the teachers to help them prepare their research for the coursework module. Good-quality marking ensures that students are aware of what they have to do to improve the standard of their work.

258. Effective assessment procedures enable the teachers to establish minimum target grades as well as individual target grades through planned discussions with students. Leadership by the head of the humanities curriculum area is very effective, with a clear focus on raising standards and the quality of provision, as well as addressing the need to recruit more students onto the course in Years 12 and 13. Post-16 sociology was not reported on at the last inspection.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

259. The focus of the inspection was on English literature and French, but German was also sampled. There has only been one examination candidate for post-16 German over the last four years. The current Year 12 teaching observed is good and students make good progress. They also benefit from effective extra support from a foreign language assistant.

English literature

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

Strengths

- Standards have improved to the point where they are now average.
- Good teaching encourages independent learning.
- Students' very good attitudes further their development.
- The course covers a wide range of interesting texts.

Areas for improvement

- Discontinuity of teaching adversely affects learning.
- The three areas of the course are not integrated sufficiently.
- Students' folders lack organisation.
- There are insufficient links between GCSE and A level courses.

260. No students were entered for examinations in Year 13 in 2002, but in the three years prior to this, results have been well below average. Students usually do as well in English literature as in their other subjects. In 2001, students did not achieve as much as they should have done compared to their attainment at GCSE.
261. Standards of work of Year 13 students seen during the inspection are average. The group is small, with only six students. Students enter the course with average standards at GCSE, so these standards represent satisfactory achievement during Years 12 and 13; a good improvement since the last inspection. Male and female students make satisfactory progress. Higher-attaining students are articulate and perceptive. Written work is clearly focused on analysis of the author's technique and the ways language is used. They have a wide range of reading experience. Middle attainers have their own ideas and can justify them closely, both in written

work and in discussion, for example of 'The Handmaid's Tale'. Lower attainers are less confident in their own ideas, but know their texts reasonably well. They join in discussion, but with generalised comments that lack detailed analysis. Students discuss animatedly, showing much involvement with their reading. They involve each other in their discussions, agreeing and disagreeing, and do not rely solely on the teacher to develop points. In Year 12, however, where there has been a lack of continuity in staffing, though discussion is lively and students interested, they do not have sufficient knowledge of the text 'Top Girls' that is being studied.

262. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Because teachers encourage independent thought, students develop confidence in their own ideas. Homework is used well for research and to prepare presentations. In Year 13, students confidently presented their analyses of chapters from 'The Handmaid's Tale'. Trips to the theatre and ballet, especially recently, extend learning beyond the set texts and provide good opportunities for the gifted and talented. Teachers have good knowledge of their subject and choose an interesting range of texts for study, including many of a multi-cultural nature, such as the poetry of Tupac Shakur. Hence students show a keen interest and learn well. Very good relationships, both with the teacher and each other mean there is a relaxed and friendly atmosphere in the group, but teachers have high expectations and students work hard. Students are aware of their own standards and how to improve. They know their target grades and marking gives clear indications of strengths and weaknesses. Folders of work, however, lack organisation. They do not show clearly criteria for assessment, course coverage or progress to date, nor are they conducive to efficient revision. Although teachers are skilled in question and answer, successfully probing and extending understanding, a wider range of methods is needed to develop students' knowledge in different areas, such as more frequent and systematic practice of short and longer pieces of writing in preparation for examinations.
263. Students are very happy with their course this year, but have concerns about the lack of continuity in their teaching last year. This lack of continuity, because of problems with staffing, remains a concern in Year 12. They also feel that the leap from GCSE to A level is too great. There are insufficient links at present between the courses in Year 11 and the start of Year 12.
264. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Schemes of work have improved, but still lack detail. The three teachers delivering the course meet regularly, but do not work closely enough together to make the course a fully cohesive unit.
265. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have improved considerably and teaching is now good.

French

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good and the students who are present in class learn well as a result.
- Relationships between teachers and students are good, and students' attitudes are positive.
- The course is well planned and students are interested in the content.

Areas for improvement

- Absence rates among students are high, and liaison between teachers in different schools is not close enough to deal with this situation effectively.
- The logging and monitoring of students' research and independent work are not sufficiently rigorous.
- There is no programme of planned study or work experience in France.

266. Results in A level and AS examinations are average overall. However, it is difficult to make reliable judgements about, or trace trends in, examination results, because the numbers of students taking French examinations have been very low in recent years. In 1999 and 2001, there were no entries, and in 2000, the two students who entered did not gain a pass grade. Records

of their earlier GCSE grades were not available during the inspection. In 2002, of the three students entered, one gained a grade A, the second grade B grade, and the third passed. These students performed as expected in comparison with their GCSE grades. In 2002, the five students who took the AS course performed much as expected given their GCSE results, with four passes, one of which was a grade A.

267. The standards of work of the three Crofton School students currently in Year 13 are average overall. Two of these students are achieving satisfactorily in relation to predictions based on their GCSE results. The third student was absent from the lesson seen; the teacher reported that persistent absences meant that this student was performing below predictions. The two other students performed satisfactorily in the lesson seen as a result of effective teaching. The lesson structure and language activities clearly focused students' learning on the formation and correct use of the present subjunctive. Students drew well on their previous knowledge of this area of grammar and moved on effectively to more complex structures and shades of meaning. One student was more fluent in speaking than the other, and quick to offer suggestions for correct usage. The other required more time to think and reply. Written work during the lesson showed careful attention to accuracy, as required by the teacher.
268. It was not possible to assess the work in lessons of the one Crofton student in Year 12 because she was absent and, the school reports, has been so for many lessons during the autumn term. The teacher has not been able to assess her work regularly. This student, who is fluent in French, missed a lesson on healthy eating in France, which would have included an introduction to the language structures and expressions met in the writing of advertisements and publicity material. The four students present (from other schools) worked hard on the carefully planned listening task. They then re-used the key phrases and structures energetically and effectively in follow-up reading and writing activities.
269. Teaching is good overall and students learn well as a result. The principal features of the teaching are clear objectives, closely focused planning and a range of methods and approaches to generate learning through the practice of all language skills. One teacher is a native speaker and conducted the lesson in rapid French with a vigorous and fast-moving approach that stimulated and raised the level of students' interests and concentration considerably. In the Year 13 lesson on the subjunctive, the teacher encouraged each student to devise the ending of sentences beginning with structures requiring the use of the subjunctive. Some students took this to mean in the most humorous way possible, thus greatly raising the level of enjoyment for both teacher and students in an otherwise rather arid task. Teachers set homework regularly. Students in Year 13 know their predicted grades. The Year 12 teacher also used a great deal of French to develop students' listening skills, and required them to answer well in French. He supported the less confident students carefully, but also drew appropriately on the expertise of a more talented student to keep up a brisk pace throughout the lesson. Pair-work and individual work were used in thoughtful proportions, as well as whole-class teaching, to break up the long double lesson.
270. Students' written work includes a close study of grammar from the beginning of Year 12. Students gain in accuracy as a result of this process. The move to writing more extended essays on topics progresses well, linked closely to the topics studied in reading and listening activities in class. All students are encouraged to use the Internet for research and independent work. However, students are not required to log this type of work, nor do teachers monitor it across schools. Evidence of this type of work is thus hard to come by.
271. The attitudes towards work of the students are positive. One of the Year 13 students takes part willingly in oral work and contributes many ideas and opinions. The other is interested in the material and responds well to the teacher's sympathetic support of a less confident student.
272. Apart from the matter of attendance, the students' work in different schools is managed satisfactorily. Teachers liaise closely and effectively over the division of responsibilities in Year 12 work, where teaching takes place in two schools. Procedures for monitoring students' absences and their independent work are not rigorous enough across schools, even in Year 13, where all the teaching takes place in one college. There are currently no planned opportunities for students

to spend time in France in study or on work experience during their AS or A2 course. Year 12 and 13 students do not have extra time with the school foreign language assistant, because they are in other subject lessons when the assistant is available. The department is seeking other arrangements for this aspect of students' work.